

INDONESIA

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Elizabeth J. Harper	1952-1954	Administrative Officer, Medan
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John M. Steeves	1953-1955	Deputy Chief of Mission, Jakarta
John R. O'Brien	1953-1956	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Jakarta
Anthony Geber	1954-1957	Program Officer, Jakarta
Margaret V. Taylor	1954-1956	Public Affairs Trainee, USIS, Medan
Henry L. Heymann	1956-1958	Political Officer, Jakarta
	1959-1961	Indonesian Analyst, Intelligence and Research Bureau, Washington, DC
	1961-1965	Political Officer, Jakarta
	1965-1966	Principal Officer, Surabaya
Edward C. Ingraham	1958-1960	Political Officer, Jakarta
Michael H. Newlin	1958-1963	Political Officer, Bureau of International Organizations, Washington, DC
Jack Lydman	1958-1960	Principal Officer, Surabaya
	1960-1962	Counselor for Economic Affairs, Jakarta
	1966-1969	Deputy Chief of Mission, Jakarta
William N. Harben	1959-1960	Political Officer, Jakarta

Fred A. Coffey, Jr.	1959-1964	Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Medan
John A. Linehan, Jr.	1960-1962	Indonesia Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Ronald D. Palmer	1960-1962	Economic Officer, Jakarta
Jacob Walkin	1961-1963 1964-1965	Chief Consular Officer, Jakarta Political Officer, Surabaya
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Robert G. Rich, Jr.	1962-1963 1963-1966 1966-1967	Administrative Officer, Medan Political Officer, Jakarta Principal Officer, Medan
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Paul D. McCusker	1963-1969	Counselor for Economic Affairs, Jakarta
Derek S. Singer	1964	Peace Corps Director, Jakarta
Theodore J.C. Heavner	1964-1966	Consul and Principal Officer, Medan
Paul F. Gardner	1964-1968	Political Officer, Jakarta
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Charles Anthony Gillespie, Jr.	1965	Regional Security Officer, Jakarta
Paul M. Cleveland	1965-1968	Economic Officer, Jakarta
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Alphonse F. La Porta	1967-1969	Chief Consular Officer, Jakarta

John J. Taylor	1968-1969	Consul, Kuching
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	1976-1981	Deputy Chief of Mission, Jakarta
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	1971-1973	Consular Officer, Jakarta
John A. Bushnell	1971-1974	Program Analysis, National Security Council, Washington, DC
Erland Heginbotham	1971-1975	Head of Economic and Political Section, Jakarta
Robert E. Fritts	1972-1973	Economic Officer, Jakarta
Frederick W. Flott	1972-1974	Political Counselor, Jakarta
Margaret V. Taylor	1972-1975	Director, Binational Center, USIS, Jakarta
Phillip C. Wilcox, Jr.	1972-1976	Political Officer, Jakarta
Alexander A.L. Klieforth	1973-1975	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Jakarta
William Pierce	1973-1975	Administrative Officer, Surabaya

Bernard Lavin	1973-1977	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Jakarta
David D. Newsom	1974-1977	Ambassador, Indonesia
L. Michael Rives	1975-1978	Deputy Chief of Mission, Jakarta
Stan Ifshin	1976-1978	Economic/Political Officer, Jakarta
Greta N. Morris	1976-1978	Wife of a Foreign Service Officer, Surabaya
	1978-1980	Wife of a Foreign Service Officer, Jakarta
William H. Littlewood	1976-1981	Science Counselor, USAID, Jakarta
Lawrence P. Taylor	1977-1980	Petroleum Officer, Jakarta
Alphonse F. La Porta	1978-1981	Principal Officer, Medan
Joseph F. Stepanek	1979-1983	USAID Mission Economist, Jakarta
Francis J. Tatu	1979-1984	Deputy Political Officer, Jakarta
Joseph A.B. Winder	1980-1983	Economic Counselor, Jakarta
William Piez	1980-1982	Director, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
Charles A. Mast	1981-1984	Economic Officer, Jakarta
Susan M. Klingaman	1981-1984	Principal Officer, Medan
Joseph A.B. Winder	1983-1985	Desk Officer, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Affairs, Washington, DC
William Piez	1985-1989	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
Timothy Michael Carney	1987-1990	Political Officer, Jakarta
Bruce F. Duncombe	1987-1991	Economic Counselor, Jakarta
Marcus L. Winter	1988-1992	Director, Agriculture and Rural Development Office, USAID, Jakarta

Richard W. Teare	1989-1992	Director, Office of Indonesian Affairs, Washington, DC
Robert L. Barry	1992-1995	Ambassador, Indonesia
Edmund McWilliams	1996-1999	Political Counselor, Jakarta
William A. Pierce	1995-1999 2000	Consul General, Surabaya Temporary Duty, Medan
Greta N. Morris	2000-2003	Public Affairs Officer, Jakarta
Edmund McWilliams	2001	Retirement, Falls Church, Virginia
Alphonse F. La Porta	2004-2007	President, United States-Indonesia Society, Washington, DC

EMORY C. SWANK
Vice Consul
Batavia, Netherlands East Indies (1949-1951)

Ambassador Emory C. Swank was born in Maryland in 1922. He graduated from Franklin and Marshall College with a bachelor's degree in 1942 and from Harvard University with a master's degree in 1943. He entered the Foreign Service in 1946. His career included positions in China, Netherlands East Indies [Indonesia], the Soviet Union, Romania, and Cambodia. Ambassador Swank became a special assistant to the Secretary of State in 1960 and the Political Advisor to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic, in 1973. Ambassador Swank was interviewed by Henry Precht in 1988.

SWANK: My next assignment, however, was to Batavia, Netherlands East Indies, shortly to be renamed Jakarta and to become the capital of the populous, resource-rich nation of Indonesia. My tour began in November 1949 and ended in November 1951. Those were turbulent years for Sukarno, who took power on January 1, 1950. He had few educated Indonesians to help him govern an archipelago of several thousand islands. He had to put down a hare-brained rebellion by die-hard Dutchmen and to combat insurgent Indonesians who would have preferred monarchic rule or an Islamic state. The U.S. Embassy, under Merle Cochran, who helped negotiate Dutch withdrawal, gave friendly support to the new nation. Sukarno had not yet moved to stifle political opposition, expel Dutch business interests, and promote active non-alignment.

My work in economic reporting was interesting -- Washington wanted basic data on the new nation's shipping, airlines, industries, etc., and so I immersed myself in the Dutch literature on these subjects. But my conviction grew that I was acquiring only superficial insights into Indonesia

compared to officers who had been schooled in Indonesian language, history, and culture.

CHARLES T. CROSS
USIS
Jakarta (1950-1951)

Charles T. Cross was born in Beijing, China in 1922. He attended Carleton College, where he received his BA in 1947, and Yale University, where he received his MA in 1949. He served in the US Marine Corps from 1942 to 1946. His career has included positions in Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Egypt, Cyprus, England, Vietnam, and Singapore. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 19, 1997.

Q: When did you arrive in Jakarta?

CROSS: We got to Jakarta in early February, 1950 and we remained there until November 1951.

Q: What was the situation in Indonesia when you arrived?

CROSS: The Dutch had just transferred sovereignty to the Indonesians. So we entered a very unsettled atmosphere. Some questions were unresolved; for example, people were trying to figure out what to do with the Dutch army - in fact, a battalion of so-called native troops who were being given a choice of going to Holland or joining the Indonesian Army. That caused a lot of friction.

Then there were some Dutch renegades running around. The day we arrived in Jakarta, a Tunco Westerling, one of the renegades, cut the road from the port to the city. So we were stuck in the port for most of the day before the embassy could rescue us.

Q: What was our role in the founding of the new country of Indonesia?

CROSS: The U.S. had a "good offices" role. The thrust for independence started with VJ day. On August 17, 1945, Sukarno declared Indonesia an independent state. The Dutch had no troops on the archipelago. So the British Ghurkas arrived primarily to capture the Japanese. But Sukarno, who had been essentially a Japanese creation, and his men scrounged for arms and resisted the Ghurkas briefly. Then the Dutch arrived with their troops and began to arm their Indonesian supporters.

Indonesia is a huge country spread out for thousands of miles over innumerable islands. In 1948, a "good offices" committee was formed - I believe under UN auspices. The Indonesians were allowed to choose a member and they selected Australia. The Dutch chose Belgium. The two chosen countries then asked the U.S. to join them as the third party. We sent a cruiser - the "Grenville" - which was the name then given to the agreements that the Indonesians and the Dutch finally signed. These agreements moved Indonesia gradually towards independence. So we did play a "good offices" role.

By the time we arrived, these various accords were being implemented. It was a fascinating time because we were then beginning to be engaged with the Indonesians in their efforts at nation building.

Q Were there many expatriate Dutch and what was their attitude towards us?

CROSS: There were a lot of expatriates who were rather bitter about the U.S. Many of them had been prisoners in Japanese camps; they were bitter about the treatment they had received there. Many, of course, had led a good life in their 300-years old colony; they found it hard to give that up. The younger and more modern settlers and those who had arrived more recently from Holland were more far-sighted and understood the direction the world was taking. But I think almost all of the Dutch wondered why the U.S. was forcing them to surrender their colony. They thought we were their friend; they had supported us in the war - to the extent they could. I pointed out that we had liberated their mother country. They weren't any happier with their own government.

Q: What was USIS' mission in Indonesia at this time?

CROSS: USIS was headed by Willard Hanna. He was probably the most informed officer in the embassy. He had made an extraordinary number of friends - some of them very senior Indonesian officials - who kept him up-to-date on goings on. The Dutch were mad at him all the time. After the transfer of power, Hanna was very close to the top - people like Sukarno and Sutan Sjahrir - the leader of the socialist party. Sjahrir eventually was shoved aside by Sukarno, but at the beginning he was quite influential. As a member of the USIS staff, we were part of Hanna's network. For instance, I took movies into the hinterlands; we couldn't go very far because of security considerations, but we certainly were welcomed wherever we went.

I worked on several publications. We had on our staff one of the top Indonesian journalists; we produced a news pamphlet mostly about the U.S., but including some general subjects. It was written in Bahasa Indonesian, which was the language most used throughout the country. We had government support for this publication, so that our Indonesian editor was in effect teaching the Indonesians how to use what was to be the official language. The Indonesian government was trying to do the same thing, but couldn't match what we were putting out. So we were close to the leading lights of the new country.

We also worked very closely with the development of the educational system. We were in at the start of the university system. The Dutch had a different system from the French; only the very best Indonesian students were admitted to Dutch institutions for advanced education so that the Indonesians were quite deficient in people with advanced degrees, such as doctors, etc.

Q: Had we started bringing Indonesians to the U.S. for training?

CROSS: I was for a brief period responsible for the exchange program. We had begun to seek potential exchange students, but I don't remember now whether the first had gone to the U.S. by the time I left Jakarta. We did spend considerable time on the leader program; I think we did build a program base for exchanges and training which did become quite successful. Hanna was a great

proponent of these kinds of programs.

Q: Who was the ambassador during your tour?

CROSS: H. Merle Cochran. He had been the Treasury attaché in Paris for seventeen years. Then he became the chief of the Foreign Service Inspection Corps during the war.

Q: How did he fit into this rapidly changing and developing situation? How did he run the embassy?

CROSS: He didn't run the embassy all that well. His main concern was to insure that the U.S. - and its representatives - did not become too involved in the Indonesian struggles. He was continually concerned with us taking on more than we could deliver. He opposed the growth of the staff, partly because all of us had to live in the same hotel, at least when he first arrived. Later we did disperse, but initially, the accommodations were Spartan. Cochran was an old-line, very conservative guy. He later became deputy director of the IMF. He was a very good financial analyst. He did not support assistance per se; he was not enthusiastic about technical assistance, in part I assume, because it would have expanded the American presence in Indonesia.

Q: What about the embassy staff?

CROSS: The DCM for most of our tour was Jake Beam. He had come from serving on Secretary Marshall's staff - what is now known as S/S. He had a German background in the Foreign Service. I was told (by Beam) that he got into trouble with Marshall because Marshall had insisted that a policy issue be presented on one sheet of paper which at the bottom gave the Secretary the opportunity to vote "Yes" or "No." So the policy question had to be phrased in such a way that it could be answered either in the affirmative or the negative. Jake sent a memo to the secretary which ended in the customary "Yes" or "No" fashion, but he added the words "Don't Know" as a third option. That didn't sit too well with the Secretary, who told Beam that one should not make fun of U.S. policy. So that the next thing he knew was that he was assigned to Indonesia, despite his long background in Europe. He was a great guy. He used to serve "beamlets," gimlets in drinking glasses [tumblers].

Q: Later he became our ambassador to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Did you have any hard charging, more junior officers?

CROSS: I think we had a first rate staff. The political officer was Frank Galbraith, who also later became an ambassador to Indonesia. He became one of my best friends in the Foreign Service. He had gone to Yale to learn Indonesian at the same time I was there; the Galbraiths took us under their wing when we arrived in Jakarta. The economic section included Coby Swank, later our ambassador to Cambodia. Fred Farnsworth was the administrative officer.

Q: Did the staff, despite the ambassador's views, mix with the local officials?

CROSS: Most of the outreach was done by USIS. We were very good at that, if I may say so. We were more unrestricted than the embassy people, but, example, Frank Galbraith was superb. He

built a whole network of embassy contacts. Coby had to deal primarily with what was left of the Dutch infrastructure; the Indonesian follow-ons knew something about economics but were obviously inexperienced.

Q: What was the Indonesian government like when you arrived?

CROSS: It was just getting started. Many of the top jobs were still held by Dutch, some of whom were very conscientious and others were not. The Dutch did what they always had done and now at the same time also trained Indonesians. Some did that seriously; others were not so helpful. The security situation was very “iffy” much of the time. There were a lot of guerrilla groups still operating in areas not under the control of the government’s forces.

There was a question whether Indonesia would be a unitary state or a federal state. Indonesia is populated by many different people and cultures; the predominantly Muslim areas, such as Java and Sumatra, were viewed as separate entities; the Sulawesi was not a majority Muslim area. These tensions were resolved while we were there when it was decided to make all of the islands into a single unitary entity.

Q: You mentioned the security problem. What was it?

CROSS: The Dutch troops were leaving on schedule, so they were not concerned with the country’s security. The Indonesia army was not all that well disciplined; it included forces that had been commanded by the Dutch whose loyalty was not certain. Then there were just plain bandits running around all over the place. At one time, a Yale professor by the name of Kennedy was shot near Bandung. A couple of our friends were shot and stabbed. The embassy itself was unmolested.

Q: Did these various groups inhibit your work at all?

CROSS: We really didn’t have any major problems because we were well briefed on where we could go and where we couldn’t. I traveled throughout the country because my focus was really on the Overseas Chinese. They had their own problems; they were mistreated by the Indonesians - in some cases, something like pogroms. In some instances, the Mainland struggles between the KMT and the Communists were reflected in the Indonesian Chinese community; because of that, I spent a lot of time in that community.

Q: By this time, the Chinese civil war was over and we were looking at the Chinese communists as a major threat. Was your work influenced by this?

CROSS: The People’s Republic of China (PRC) had established an embassy in Jakarta. It was very active with the same groups with whom we had contacts - Chinese language newspapers and schools. The KMT had some very good representatives either from the mainland or Taiwan to work with the Overseas Chinese community. There was a lot of infighting between the KMT and the communist representatives for the souls of the Overseas Chinese.

Q: Were we viewing the PRC as the enemy at this point?

CROSS: Certainly. As far as we were concerned, the Cold War was going full blast and the Chinese Communists were on the other team. This made it very difficult for the Overseas Chinese who depended essentially on foreign protection to save their lives and goods from the Indonesians. While the Dutch were there, the Chinese had their protection; when the Dutch left, they had to look towards the PRC, which was a formidable power in the Far East. The communists used this opportunity to rouse the Overseas Chinese to their side.

Q: When you were in Jakarta, what was our embassy's impression of Sukarno?

CROSS: I think he was viewed as a demagogic person who was very charismatic. He was favorably disposed to the U.S. as well as to most other countries. He was trying to move Indonesia into the non-aligned world. However, from the very beginning, I think the embassy had serious reservations about Sukarno's ability to lead his country into the modern world. It should be noted that for the first few years of his reign, Sukarno was very busy consolidating his power, including military sweeps of some parts of the archipelago to put down the dissidents. He was also trying to acquire the western part of New Guinea (Irian Jaya). That consumed his public appearances, and he wished to avoid being involved in the battles of the Communists and Nationalists among the Overseas Chinese.

Q: What was Sukarno's rationale for wishing to incorporate Irian into Indonesia?

CROSS: Irian had been a Dutch colony; so the Indonesians felt that when the Dutch left Indonesia, they should also leave Irian and turn that over to the Indonesians. Of course, Irian was not a free standing island like those that composed Indonesia, but only part of an island.

Q: Was the Communist Party (PKI) active while you were in Indonesia?

CROSS: It had been badly defeated in 1946 during a battle that was fought between it and the Indonesian republican forces. One of the PKI's leaders was captured and shot. So after that, the PKI was not really a force, although Sukarno watched the communists carefully and worried about their connection with the Chinese and the Soviet Union. But both of those communist countries were very careful about their relationship to the PKI; they were much more interested in developing a close connection with Sukarno. In those days, he did not align himself with the communist world; he was much more interested in becoming a leader of the non-aligned world. In the end, of course, he became too close to the communists and was unseated.

Q: Were you aware of anything that CIA was doing in Indonesia?

CROSS: While I was in Jakarta, the CIA was just getting started. The first station chief was an odd duck who would often chase the waiters around the garden of his residence. He drank heavily. His cover position was that of Treasury Attaché. I don't think much happened during my tour in Indonesia; the station was moving along slowly, but surely, in its infancy stage.

Q: Was McCarthyism a problem for you at this stage of your career?

CROSS: It was not; I was the only Chinese expert in the embassy and therefore not a focus of any

investigations. You have to remember that by 1950, all government employees had to pass a loyalty test, which had been implemented by the Truman administration. It was a rather thorough security check. This program brought to light some notorious cases of espionage, like Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs. McCarthy just picked up the Truman program, in part, I believe, because that program was beginning to dissipate. The senator began his own investigations because the Truman loyalty program was not doing all McCarthy thought it should be doing. I will have more to say about McCarthy and his program when we get to some of my future assignments.

Q: Did our position in Jakarta change after the beginning of the Korean War on June 25, 1950?

CROSS: I don't remember anything special happening because of the Korean War. I do recall being somewhat concerned because I was in the Marine Corps reserve; if any one should have been called up, it should have been me since I spoke Chinese. But I wasn't. The Indonesian government, I think, supported the UN in its actions on the Korean Peninsula. But I am not sure how the Indonesians might have reacted had the war broken out a couple of years later, by which time, the Indonesians were not that wed to us or the West; they were concerned that we might somehow take away their independence. We also became a convenient whipping boy for Sukarno when he wanted to distract his people from any domestic concerns. But I don't remember the Indonesians making much of the Korean War.

Q: What were your experiences with the Indonesians in general?

CROSS: We did a lot of outreach to the Indonesians. Both Frank Galbraith and I had an American friend who was a movie distributor. He lived near the Punjak. He used to lend his house in the hills for weekend retreats by embassy officers. He was never bothered by bandits because he used to show movies on an outdoor screen the villagers watched; and they, in fact, became a protecting power for the distributor.

One time, we went to this village together with Mechtar Lubis, the editor of Merdeka, and Rusian Amwar, also in the newspaper business, and I think there was a third Indonesian involved in media; so it was Frank and I and those three Indonesians. The five of us spent the whole weekend talking about the state of the world. It was very hard for Americans not to mistake Indonesian politeness and smoothness for agreement; the Malays are the same way. You have to get behind this veneer to see where the tensions really lie. Indonesians liked casual conversations; they liked to laugh a lot and therefore enjoyed jokes.

Q: Did you have anything to do with Congressional delegations?

CROSS: We had some visitors. I remember one delegation headed by a State Department man which was sent to see what kind of assistance we might be able to provide. There was Congressional input into that mission. But there weren't many Congressmen who at the time cared about Indonesia. In any case, even if there had been visitors, I don't think I would have seen them, being the most junior officer in USIS.

Q: Did you see USIS as the agency with which you wanted to spend the rest of your working life?

CROSS: No, I was much more interested in political work and reporting. In some sense, my work with the Overseas Chinese community was political in nature. I wrote quite a few reports on Overseas Chinese in different places in Indonesia. I sent those through Frank Galbraith and the embassy's political section.

Q: Were these Overseas Chinese potential allies with the PRC?

CROSS: Yes, although much depended to which generation they belonged to and perhaps their economic status. The appeal of a victorious, successful China was very strong, even to those who had been born in Indonesia. There were really three groups of overseas Chinese: a) the descendants of those who had emigrated to Indonesia a long time ago - most of them had come from South China as laborers for the Dutch and then had worked their way up the economic ladder to be small shop owners or what were called "native managers." They were well established. Some of them had lost their Chineseness - had become Muslim, etc. This group stopped supporting Chinese schools in Indonesia.

The second group had arrived in Indonesia in the early part of the 20th Century. They were workers in the tin mines and other extracting industries. They were more China-oriented. Some of this group had graduated from being workers and had accumulated sufficient funds to found Chinese language schools. They lived in typical overseas Chinese enclaves all over the country. These people were the victims of periodic pogroms conducted by the Indonesians. They were careful about their support of the PRC, in part because originally they had been members of the KMT. Some of the richer overseas Chinese were shaken down by the KMT and had to pay some tribute.

The third group were people who had fled the 1930s travails of China just before and immediately after WW II. These people felt much closer to China than the other two groups.

Q: How successful were you in getting close to the Overseas Chinese?

CROSS: I worked very closely with people who had been sent to Indonesia from Taiwan. I think they were successful in maintaining good relations with the Overseas Chinese until the Indonesians began to block the publication of Chinese language newspapers. The theory in the Overseas Chinese community was that unless a large power protected them, they would become victims of the Indonesians.

Q: Did the Indonesian government try to prevent you from working with the overseas Chinese?

CROSS: No, but Ambassador Merle Cochran knew that Sukarno did not want the PRC to become too influential in Indonesia. By the same token, he did not want the U.S. to be engaged in a struggle with the PRC on Indonesian soil. Sukarno didn't want us flying the Cold War flag in his country. Cochran talked to Hanna who told me to concentrate on just learning about the Overseas Chinese and not to engage in anything that might be construed as propaganda.

PAUL M. KATTENBURG
Desk Officer, Intelligence and Research Bureau, Indonesia
Washington, DC (1950-1952)

Dr. Paul M. Kattenburg was born in Belgium in 1922 and emigrated to the United States in 1940. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina in 1943 and a master's degree from George Washington University in 1946. Dr. Kattenburg joined the Foreign Service in 1950 and served in the Philippines, Germany, Guyana, and Washington, DC. Dr. Kattenburg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Indonesia was going through a major decolonization process -- a forceful process through revolt. What was the attitude within the Department?

KATTENBURG: The attitude was that those of us in INR, working on Indonesia, along with the desk officers, and I recall very clearly who they were -- Jim O'Sullivan and his assistant Wym Coerr, who later replaced Jim and went on to become an ambassador to Latin America in the '60s. Wym Coerr, Jim O'Sullivan, who has since retired from Political Science at the University of Louisville, and Dick Stuart, Dick had also come out of OSS and had remained steadily in the same position and was really my boss, and Jack Lydman (later our Ambassador to Malaysia) who was the director of our division of Southeast Asian Studies, or Southeast Asian Analysis, whatever it was called -- our attitude was one of considerable conflict really with the Dutch Desk, headed by none other than Fritz Nolting and it seems sad to me in a way, I have never known Nolting very well, but on two occasions in my career I was at opposite ends of policy with him, but much junior to him. I sort of liked and admired the guy and felt it was a little sad that we came out on opposite sides of things. Anyway, Nolting was waging quite a battle for Holland and the survival of Dutch colonialism. He wasn't the only one, there was Bill Lacey (I hope I have the name right) who in the bureau was fundamentally opposed to us. None the less the ambassador in Indonesia, Merle Cochran, carried the day. He was really the essential policy maker. The United States agreed, largely because of his pressure, to participate in the U.N. Commission for Indonesia which was the ultimate mediating body with the Netherlands. It formulated the terms of the so called -- I have forgotten the name of the agreement that called for independence by December of 1949. There was an interim period until July '50 which was called the United States of Indonesia.

Now we are talking about a slightly later period here when I was working on it -- '50-'52 -- at which time these matters were settled, and I may have confused some of what I just said with the earlier period during the war and immediately after the war on the independence question because by the time I came back to Indonesia research in '50, Indonesia was fully independent.

So these were the first two and relatively uneventful years of Indonesian independence, although there were lots of little things going on. The main one was a rebellion by a group of right wing fundamentalist Muslims called the Darul Islam. That became a more important movement later, but that was, as I recall, the chief development internally. We had reasonably good relations with Indonesia in the period '50 to '52.

DOROTHY A EARDLEY
Clerk-Stenographer
Djakarta (1951-1953)

Mrs. Eardley was born in Wisconsin and raised in Wisconsin and Illinois. She attended Rubican Business School before entering the State Department, where in 1951 she was assigned as Clerk-Stenographer at Djakarta, Indonesia. She subsequently was posted to Berlin, Chiengmai, Paris, Libreville, Colombo, Ankara, Ottawa, Jeddah and Kigali. She also had temporary duty assignments in Djibouti, Reunion, and Johannesburg. She retired in 1980. Mrs. Eardley was interviewed by T. Frank Crigler in 2008.

Q: Your first State Department assignment was in Djakarta. For whom did you work there?

EARDLEY: Joseph Vander Laan.

Q: And what was his job?

EARDLEY: He was the economic officer, head of the economic section.

Q: So that was your first assignment in the Foreign Service. Was that a shocker? What kind of experience was that for you?

EARDLEY: Fascinating. A whole new ball game. I got there on a Saturday — Oh! It took five days to fly direct from New York to Djakarta.

Q: Five days!

EARDLEY: KLM, great airline. It had one overnight, the last night was in Bangkok. Then we stopped in Singapore and then Djakarta. I got there sort of early afternoon, I think, and I started drinking [laughs]. These people were fascinated by my coming fresh from the United States, so they were listening to every word.

Q: These were embassy people?

EARDLEY: Yes. I lived in what was called Crommat [phon.] House. It was a house that had — I don't know how many rooms. It had a big ballroom, marble floors, there was a piano in it, that's all, and then it was lined by bedrooms. And we were assigned there. I had two roommates in that bedroom, girls. The next door bedroom had three men. Separate from that building was another whole row of bedrooms, and you graduated out of the three-to-a-room to one-to-a-room over there. We had bucket baths. That was my introduction to bucket baths. But you had to walk past the breakfast room to get to them.

Q: This was in 1951?

EARDLEY: Yes. I got there on April 2.

Q: What do you mean about bucket baths? What is a bucket bath?

EARDLEY: You had a tile fixture about this high, and it was filled with water.

Q: About three feet high.

EARDLEY: Yeah, about my height. And then there was a bucket. You splashed it on you, then you scrubbed yourself and then splashed it on you to rinse off.

Q: And was there drainage somewhere?

EARDLEY: I think so. I think in the floor. Men and women both used that. That was the only bathroom on that side.

Q: If it isn't too personal, were there toilets somewhere too?

EARDLEY: In each bedroom. Each bedroom had its own toilet and wash basin, but that's all.

Q: What was your office like in the embassy?

EARDLEY: Boy, that's a long time back to remember. I think it was normal. AID (Agency for International Development) was in these — what do they call those moveable structures?

Q: Quonset huts?

EARDLEY: Something like that. But we were in a building.

Q: Djakarta was not Paris, was it?

EARDLEY: No, it was hot, humid. I loved that weather. I don't like being cold. And the first time I was borrowed there was for the accounting section. I'd had accounting in business school.

Q: What do you mean "borrowed there," "the first time you were borrowed there?"

EARDLEY: Why, I got borrowed all the time, at all of my assignments.

Q: Because there wasn't enough to do in the economics section?

EARDLEY: No, it wasn't that. They needed help. I was an expert at shorthand, typing, accounting. So, for instance, about a year after I arrived there, the United Nations brought out an ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia & the Far East) conference. They were there for a whole month in Bandung, Indonesia, which is sort of a nice place. Good hotel. We always stayed in a hotel, all of the delegates, and I was assigned for the whole month. So I took my typewriter, a safe, and writing material. Our delegation had two men from Washington, both affiliated with United Nations. One was very good, the head of the mission, Merrill C. Gay. He was good, but his cohort was lousy.

Q: What was his name?

EARDLEY: Braderman, Eugene Braderman.

Q: These were not State Department people though, these were UN people?

EARDLEY: They were . . . not Treasury. Gay was with the United Nations. An American. He was the head of the American section.

Q: Of the U.S. delegation to the conference?

EARDLEY: Yes. But Eugene Braderman was Washington. I would guess his . . . Was there an economic section?

Q: In the State Department?

EARDLEY: No, he wasn't State Department. This was strictly economic. Anyway, Merrill Gay got up early, and he would knock on my door, and I'd go down to his room. He would dictate the day's program and everything he was going to talk about that day. I'd go back to my room and transcribe it. Well, that dumb Braderman. One night he knocked on my door and said bring your book. I went down there. That jerk was unclothed. He had a dumb shawl wrapped around him, that's all. I guess he'd been drinking, I don't know. Anyway, he was disgusting. I said, "You don't need to dictate anything. I'm going home," so I left. He never bothered me after that. I didn't tell Mr. Gay about that.

Q: You did not? Why not?

EARDLEY: I thought I could take care of myself, and I can. One funny thing though. You know, we looked down on the Soviets, we didn't trust them at all. There was a Soviet attached to their delegation, nice guy. We were all in the lounge, dancing. He asked me to dance. I was almost afraid to accept. He offered me a cigarette (I was a heavy smoker then). I was afraid to take it, afraid it was loaded or something. Stupid?

Q: Not so stupid.

EARDLEY: But that's the way we looked at the Soviets at that time. Anyway, there were no problems. After a month I had to go back to Djakarta, to the embassy. But it was great fun. I enjoyed it.

Q: Where did you live in Djakarta?

EARDLEY: Djala Lambard. Djala means street, Lambard was the name of it. Not too far from the ambassador's house. First I lived in Crommat House. We all lived there when we first arrived. Married couples, singles, single men, single women. And you graduated out of that by tenure at the post.

Q: Now this is not the place you were describing that had the water bucket and you had to . . .

EARDLEY: Oh, yes! Crommat House. Probably still exists there, I don't know. I've never been back.

Q: So seniority got you a better place to live, but always in the same building.

EARDLEY: Oh, no no no! Well, that too, but we got out of that into a house with two other people by seniority at the post. So that was all right. I liked that. We had our own cook and I guess we had shower baths. I don't remember that part.

What I do remember, though, is that Eleanor Roosevelt came to the post. And we always had receptions for any VIP (Very Important Person). She was about, I thought, 78 years old. She stood in that reception line for over three hours.

Q: A reception line just to see her? What was the reception for?

EARDLEY: Well, yes! To meet her. She was very interesting. I still like her to this day. She wasn't attractive but she was intelligent. I liked her.

Q: Did she take part in the conference?

EARDLEY: Not that conference, no. She came to visit the ambassador and get acquainted with the post.

Q: The ambassador was who?

EARDLEY: H. Merle Cochran.

Q: Did they have a personal connection of some sort?

EARDLEY: I don't think so. I think, as far as I can remember, he was a political appointee, not career. He was very good, though. A nice guy. We all liked him.

Q: Why do you suppose she would have come to Djakarta?

EARDLEY: To get acquainted with it, as all these other people came to visit posts.

Q: I mean, there are so many

EARDLEY: I don't know. Maybe she was interested in the economic aspect. Maybe she even went to Bali. I went to Bali . . .

Q: Oh, did you?

EARDLEY: . . . before it was spoiled by civilization. It was very nice. Honest as the day is long. I left my diamond ring on the counter of the wash basin while I went out all day long at the beach. It was still there when I got home.

Q: That's amazing.

EARDLEY: Yes it is. For Asia, and Africa.

Q: So she might have been just there as a tourist?

EARDLEY: They usually had something on their minds. I don't know what her field was.

Q: But she was the guest of the ambassador?

EARDLEY: She was the guest of the embassy.

Q: Who else came your way?

EARDLEY: Who else did I meet?

Q: Yes.

EARDLEY: What was his name? The third John D. Rockefeller III. While he was still living, he came to the post. See, I think Djakarta, all of Indonesia, had an important economic status at that time. I don't know what for. They didn't raise opium. I don't know.

Q: Well, to have attracted Rockefeller, they must have had something important there.

EARDLEY: Well, also, for Roosevelt. I think it was their economic status. I can't remember what crops they might have raised, except rice, of course. All of Asia raises rice. And you live on it and you learn to eat it year around with the rest of them. I still like rice.

Q: In general, did you have trouble with food there?

EARDLEY: No. A lot of Americans complained about it. Our "beef" was water buffalo. I couldn't tell the difference. Now I'm not even a beef eater, but not for that reason. I don't want Mad Cow disease, and beef promotes colon cancer.

Q: But for the others, they just didn't like the taste of water buffalo?

EARDLEY: They wouldn't be able to tell the difference if someone hadn't told them.

Q: Did you have a commissary there?

EARDLEY: No, that was long before the days of commissaries. Once in a while, we ordered food from overseas but I can't remember where.

Q: How were relations with the Indonesians generally?

EARDLEY: Good. Suharto was the president, I think. He was very popular with everyone.

Q: Did you have the feeling the embassy was getting along well with the government?

EARDLEY: Oh, yes. Yes. There were no problems as there are today, because most of the present problems are caused by this fellow in the White House. He has created more harm. All of those years we had such good relations with almost all of those countries. That's way gone.

Q: What was the embassy most concerned about in those days? Did you sense that the reporting reflected some particular concern?

EARDLEY: I can't think of it. I wasn't worried about anything.

Q: No security problem?

EARDLEY: And I was too old to date. The people my age were already married; the other ones were too young. I went seventeen years without a date! And then I got sent to Turkey. The "southern flank of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)" was loaded! I at my age could go out every night with a different nationality. There were that many!

THOMAS F. CONLON
Economic Officer
Surabaya (1951-1954)

Thomas F. Conlon was born in Park Ridge, Illinois on December 5, 1924. He attended Georgetown University, where he received his BS in 1948, and served in the US Army from 1943 to 1945 before taking the Foreign Service exam in 1947. His career has included positions in Cuba, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, France, the Philippines, Australia, and Thailand. He was interviewed by Arbor W. Gray on August 12, 1992.

Q: What was your next assignment?

CONLON: Vice Consul in Surabaya, Indonesia. This was a great opportunity to apply the Indonesian language which I had studied at Yale.

Indonesia was and is a highly interesting and complex society. It was then recovering from years of war and revolution and was developing its national institutions. On the whole, it was a free and democratic country, although later on, under the leadership of President Sukarno, it moved away from democracy and toward a Left-leaning autocracy.

My duties involved mainly economic work: following trade, rubber, coffee, and tobacco developments. During my service there Indonesia recovered economically up to a point and then began to unravel.

Two of our daughters were born there, in Surabaya.

In the summer and fall of 1957 I worked closely with Ambassador Hugh Cumming, who had been ambassador in Jakarta during part of the time when I had been vice consul in Surabaya. Cumming had returned from Indonesia and became the director of OIR, which was renamed the Bureau of Intelligence Research and Analysis (INR). I participated in his regular, early morning briefing. He remembered me from Indonesia, for I had interpreted for him on a few occasions. Since I was a familiar face at his morning briefings, after which he would, in turn, brief the Secretary of State, he called me in fairly often for discussions of the deteriorating situation in Indonesia. Sometimes, after the Secretary's staff meeting, he would telephone me and ask me to prepare a memorandum on some specific aspect of the Indonesian situation. Since he never went through channels, my supervisors knew nothing of the requests and, I imagine, suspected me of making them up.

The Indonesian situation continued to deteriorate, with Sukarno openly favoring the communists, whose influence was growing. There were increasing prospects for civil war between the central government and regional, dissident groups. I think that I had an opportunity in these circumstances to nudge history. Cumming telephoned me at home one evening in January, 1958, around 9:00 PM. He asked me to prepare a paper which he described as a "lawyer's brief," justifying U. S. intervention in Indonesia, to prevent what was feared would be a communist takeover of the country. He said that President Eisenhower was strongly in favor of intervention but he indicated that Secretary of State Dulles was rather dubious about it. Cumming described this as a Top Secret project (so much for telephone security). He said that he needed the paper by the opening of business on the following morning. He authorized me to bring one other person in for consultation purposes in drafting the paper. I called up Dick Stuart, who had been my immediate supervisor some time before and who knew the Indonesian situation in considerable detail.

Direct U. S. interests in Indonesia at that time were relatively modest (oil fields and rubber plantations, in particular). However, it was the geographic position of Indonesia, across sea communications between Europe and the Far East which most concerned the president. I felt that U. S. intervention in Indonesia was potentially disastrous, as the country is spread out over an area as large as the continental U. S., and is highly diverse, culturally. Few Americans speak any of the languages in Indonesia.

Eventually, Dave Cuthell, the director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, rescued me, arranging to have me assigned to the Indonesian desk in March, 1964. He had not discussed the assignment with me, although this was the usual practice. I was appalled, as I felt that our Indonesian policy of support for President Sukarno, then in his final and pro-communist period,

was not in our interest. My position was all the more difficult, since Ed Ingraham, my immediate superior, was a convinced supporter of what I felt was a mistaken policy.

The only interesting development during this period was my accompanying Ambassador Howard P. Jones, our ambassador to Indonesia, on a call on Senator Birch Bayh (Democrat, Indiana) to discuss the situation in Indonesia. Ed Ingraham was unavailable and may have been on leave. Ambassador Jones was in Washington on leave, was very tired, and wanted to avoid calling on anyone until after Labor Day. However, Senator Bayh's staff was very insistent, and Ambassador Jones finally decided to meet with him, asking me to go with him. Jones was a very honorable and decent man, though he had become too committed to a pro-Sukarno line for my taste. At the meeting Senator Bayh said very little, asking only a couple of questions designed to give Jones an opportunity to defend the established policy of support for Sukarno. Although I did not personally agree with Ambassador Jones, I felt that he ably defended our policy. I thought that Bayh's silence indicated that he accepted this defense. After the meeting Ambassador Jones very graciously asked me to lunch at the Cosmos Club with Mrs. Jones. We agreed that he had seemed to have a positive impact on Senator Bayh. When I returned to the Department after lunch, I reported to Dave Cuthell to this effect. Dave, who had a rather sardonic manner of speech, said, "You haven't seen what Bayh has done. At 2:00 PM (in other words, just after Ambassador Jones and I had left him) he introduced an amendment to the Foreign Aid bill, cutting off all aid to Indonesia." I basically agreed with Bayh rather than Jones on Indonesia, but this was dirty pool, in my view. It was clear, in fact, that Bayh had decided to do this before he met with Jones, since the amendment had to be submitted for printing the day before. About 10 years later, some two weeks before Ambassador Jones died, he passed through Canberra, where I was then Political Counselor. He was retired by then, but I was asked to give him a briefing on the situation in Australia. I did so but I then reminded him of our call on Senator Bayh in 1964 and Bayh's subsequent action. Ambassador Jones was an active Christian Scientist and a very charitable man. He limited himself to saying that Senator Bayh had been rather "naughty" on that occasion.

ELIZABETH J. HARPER
Administrative Officer
Medan (1952-1954)

After U.S. military service overseas in the Women's Army Corps, Elizabeth J. Harper entered the Foreign Service in 1951. Her career included positions in Indonesia, Japan, Canada, and Washington, DC. Ms. Harper rose from a deputy position in the Division of Legislation and Regulations to the rank of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services. She was interviewed by William D. Morgan on June 18, 1992.

Q: So your very first assignment was overseas? After the training, after your basic course.

HARPER: Yeah, after the basic course, I went to Indonesia. I had asked for Japan, of course; I had loved Japan.

Q: If the Service knew that, they wouldn't have sent you there, though.

HARPER: Well we were signing a peace treaty there at that moment, and the Department didn't want to send ex-Occupationnaires back immediately. So I had requested anywhere in Southeast Asia except Manila. They sent me to the South-Eastest Asia post that we have. If you traveled east to get there, or if you traveled west to get there, it was within ten miles of being equidistant.

Q: You were half way around the world, from Washington.

HARPER: You were, absolutely! From Washington. Medan, Sumatra. It was a little bitty post, and so I was sort of everything, you know.

Q: And today in Indonesia. Is that correct?

HARPER: It was Indonesia then.

HARPER: Yes, it was Indonesia then and we (the United States) were very popular, because the United States cast the deciding vote on whether or not they would gain their independence. In fact, the first sentence in the Bahasa Malaya language course was, " Saya tidak orang belandja. Saya orang Amerika." Which means, "I am not Dutch, I am American!"

Q: Like me!

HARPER: That is no longer the first sentence in the Bahasa Malaya course, but it was, I can assure you, in 1952. (laughs)

Q: So your first assignment was '52?

HARPER: It was '52, and ahhh....

Q: You went through language first, some of this?

HARPER: Well, no, you learned it or you didn't, as the case may be, on the spot, on the job. Of course in those days you had to have passed a foreign language exam to be appointed. However, I did learn a fair amount of Bahasa in my two years, and translated a series of news articles as political reports. However, I continued to ask for Japan, and sure enough got Tokyo as my second post, where I was put in the consular section, in passports. So I first became really more of a passport specialist for some years than anything doing with visas.

Q: Lots of American military that needed passports?

HARPER: Lots of American military there, who were getting married, and having children, or even if they brought their wives out from home, a wife who already had children, others still got born, and so they needed passport and citizenship documents just constantly. It was a very busy, very busy passport section.

Q: In those days nationality was one of the most complex subjects that even exceeded visas, in terms of knowledge need.

HARPER: I thought so. But I did also have an interest in visas. I had written a graduate paper, at G.W.

ARVA C. FLOYD
Rotation Officer
Djakarta (1952-1955)

Arva Floyd was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Emory University and the University of Edinburgh. After serving with the US Army in World War II and in the Occupying Forces in Austria after the war, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Djakarta, Indonesia in 1952. His foreign postings include Indonesia, South Africa, Martinique and Brussels, where he dealt with matters concerning NATO, European Security and Disarmament. In his Washington assignments Mr. Floyd also dealt with these issues. From 1978 to 1980 Mr. Floyd was Foreign Policy Advisor to United States Coast Guard. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Indonesia in '52, what was it like?

FLOYD: Well, it was the early post-independence period. Djakarta is one of these huge oriental cities, which grew up around trade with Europe. It was not a traditional European city, but a teeming place that was not especially attractive or clean. Sukarno was still in the early triumphant days, a great national hero, and was running around making speeches. By and large, the Indonesians had the attitude that was typical of the newly-independent, so-called emerging countries. Sukarno was obviously somewhat of the left, and one of the originators of the Bandung Conference, which took place a couple months after I left Indonesia. It was one of the first meetings of the so-called non-aligned countries.

Q: What was your job?

FLOYD: Well, for me it was basically a training job. I worked in the administrative section for about a year, and then was put in charge of our little consular section, which was not very big. That's what I did.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

FLOYD: When I arrived, Merle Cochran. He had played a major role in negotiating with the Dutch over the independence of Indonesia. As a result, he was a man of many parts and great influence in Indonesia. He saw Sukarno frequently as he had easy entree to him. However, I did not have the impression that we were getting our way very much with the Indonesians. That initial influence he had was quite naturally dissipating as the Indonesians began to feel their oats. And, of course, Sukarno was one of the group of so-called charismatic leaders of the newly independent countries,

like Kwame Nkrumah and a bunch of others, and he was not going to be dictated by anybody, much less the U.S. ambassador, whatever role he might have played to gain Indonesia its independence.

Q: How did you find dealing with the new Indonesian government in whatever work you were doing?

FLOYD: I frankly didn't have much dealing with the Indonesian government. Of course, it was a small embassy and I knew the people who were dealing with the Indonesian government. I think that on a person to person basis there was no particular problem; they didn't resent us or anything. Our role had been, of course, to encourage the Dutch to give them their independence; and, with respect to that issue, we were on the side of the angels. There was a Communist party there. While it was not a dominant force when I was there at all, it was something Washington worried about. But, there were no riots or great demonstrations; everything was pretty calm in Indonesia itself.

Q: What about the Chinese? Indonesia has a tendency to go off in an anti-Chinese direction. I'm talking about overseas Chinese. What was happening with them?

FLOYD: At that particular time, they were making money. And while the Chinese in Indonesia could sense they were always wary of what might happen, they were going about their business and were doing it very successfully. All of the larger indigenous businesses in Indonesia were Chinese-run. There was virtually no Indonesian-run commerce or industry at all. It was much easier for us, socially and otherwise, to deal with the Chinese for some reason, than with the Indonesians. It was easier to get on a friendly footing with them; conversation would be easier and the cultural gap between us seemed to be a great deal less broad.

Q: While the Dutch were mostly out when the Japanese were there in WWII, did you have the impression that the Dutch left a big gap when they finally pulled out, or had they provided only a superficial administration as colonial overlords?

FLOYD: I don't think it was superficial. The Dutch had been there since the 17th century. They had a very large Dutch colonial service. The Dutch had to worry about defending Indonesia, but it was otherwise not a matter of military significance for Holland. They had very substantial economic interests with the oil companies, trading companies and so forth. They were still there in great numbers while I was there. The anti-Sukarno revolution, the very broad-based uprising which took place several years after I left was a complete and total surprise to me. It revealed tensions and fault lines within Indonesian society nobody dreamed existed when I was there. Even the best specialists never knew there were such things. That of course meant the beginning of the end. Too strong a word, but thereafter, (now I'm not talking from personal experience, but from what I've read) the Dutch began to leave in large numbers, and the Chinese left by the tens of thousands. Of course, many of them were massacred in that uprising.

Q: Was there any change in ambassadors while you were there?

FLOYD: Yes, Hugh Cumming replaced Merle Cochran.

Q: How was he as ambassador?

FLOYD: Well, he was very assertive and very much in charge. He tended to play things very close to the chest. He kept the staff at a – I was very junior, so I certainly wasn't in his confidence, but others on the staff were. He was stern and highly intelligent, I would say. But I think like, most Americans and indeed like most foreigners, he didn't really have any sense of the things that were going on in Indonesia. And as I say, it was that uprising against Sukarno and against the so-called communists, which revealed the fault lines in Indonesian society which, when I was there, we didn't dream existed. I don't think Hugh Cumming had any sense of all of that; but then, nobody else did either.

Q: Were there concerns about communist penetration at that time? In '52, the Korean war was just ending...

FLOYD: Yes, communist penetration was the buzzword at the time. However, in Indonesia it was a misnomer, because the lower caste Indonesians tended to be caught up within a very left-wing party with some communist influence. They were very active, but it wasn't so much penetration, as they were already there.

Q: Was the Soviet embassy a noted presence?

FLOYD: Yes, they were there certainly. Then, it was the depths of the Cold War. and junior foreign service people were not supposed to socialize with the Soviets especially. We weren't told not to, but we weren't encouraged to do so either; and, they weren't looking to associate with us. The mainland Chinese were not there then. The Soviets were obviously interested, but I don't think the Soviets had any real control over these people at all. It was a native movement based upon native, local, home-grown social tensions, which dated way back before the Western era and which took on this coloration of leftism that I'm talking about.

Q: When you were doing visa and consular work, were there many Indonesians going to be trained in the United States?

FLOYD: Yes. A fair number were being sent by our aid program. It wasn't called USAID (United States Agency for International Development) then. I forget what it was called. But, quite frankly, and for reasons why I can't explain, it's a cultural thing, as the most enterprising of the people throughout Southeast Asia tended to be Chinese.

JOHN M. STEEVES
Deputy Chief of Mission
Jakarta (1953-1955)

Ambassador John M. Steeves was born in North Dakota in 1905. He received a bachelor's degree from Walla Walla College in 1927 and a master's degree from the University of Washington in 1936. He entered the Foreign Service in 1945. His

career included positions in India, Japan, Indonesia, and Washington, DC. In 1966 he became the Director General of the Foreign Service and served in this capacity until 1969. Ambassador Steeves was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Thomas Stern in 1991.

Q: I am pushing on as there are many areas to talk about. You then went to Jakarta in 1953-55 as deputy chief of mission. How did you get that job?

STEEVES: Well, I will tell you how I got it. I was just getting ready to come back to the United States at the end of my tour and told I would be returning for another tour. At the Fourth of July party somebody came along and said I should get down to the embassy as there was a message down there that may be of interest to me. It said, "Would you be willing to forego your leave and go immediately to Jakarta to act in the Ambassador's place until we find a new Ambassador?" And you know back in those days that a question of that nature was an order. My daughter was going to be married in a little while back in Washington, but I sent back immediately that yes, I would go. I will spare you all of the gory details that I personally got involved in by closing shop in Tokyo, going back to Washington for two weeks consultation and going out to an embassy that was just on the verge of collapse either from lack of leadership, illness or disarray. Everybody was either sick or disgusted to the point where they were practically shutting up shop.

Q: What was the situation, we are talking about in 1953 when you got there? What had brought this about?

STEEVES: I regret to say that much of the problem could be traced to the Last ambassador-Cochran.

Q: He was the Ambassador?

STEEVES: He had been the Ambassador out there and had, from all reports, sat over in the residence satisfied with himself and hadn't a clue of what was going on in the place or didn't care. He had sold a bill of goods to the Department to buy all of his Louis XIV velvet upholstered furniture that he had brought from Paris and ship it to the tropics in Jakarta. None of it could be used to sit on because it wouldn't hold a normal person's weight.

He had made a deal somehow with F.B.O to pay \$40,000 for it. This gives you a little bit of a measure of the type of man he was. When I got out there the flag wasn't up, the drivers were sitting around on the stoop of the chancery with their feet up on the chairs. You could have thrown a cat through the holes in the rugs inside. I went to send a message to the code room that I had arrived and the guy said, "Sorry, the code room hadn't been in operation for three days because there was no one well enough to run it." This was symbolic of everything that was going on there. It was the closest thing to a Charles Adams novel that I have ever run into in the Foreign Service.

Q: Weren't there other people? You can have a lousy Ambassador, and I assume Cochran was a career officer...

STEEVES: He was, but what the dickens he did I don't know. We got into that afterwards. Hatta

was the opposition chap next to Sukarno. They used to say that any time they would bring Cochran a message, all he would say before brushing it aside was "Hatta didn't tell me that." And so it became a byword among the few who tried to get messages out. They used to joke and say to each other, "Hatta didn't tell me that."

Q: Hatta being...?

STEEVES: Hatta being the only opposition there was in the country to Sukarno.

Q: But somehow he had gotten the ear of the Ambassador. Had you been warned about the situation before you arrived?

STEEVES: Yes, that is the reason they had asked me to go out there. I had gotten the reputation of being a pretty good organizer and running staffs and getting along with people.

Q: Well, what about the deputy chief of mission or others there? I would have thought that others would...

STEEVES: There had been two Chargés since the Ambassador left. Hohenthal and Harry Bell. Harry Bell did his best for the short time he was in before my arrival but Harry knew he was just a caretaker and is a much better economic thinker than executive. He was the next in line in a senior capacity.

Q: Later as Director General did you ever wonder why...Indonesia after all is the fourth largest country in the world in population...did you ever wonder why this happened? Did this just happen to be the place we sent people we didn't know what to do with?

STEEVES: No. Maybe it took longer than we remember for Independent Indonesia to get our attention. There was none of what you infer as being the 'Siberia' for the unqualified. Back in those days when the Service was pretty career minded and disciplined there was less of that than now. We had a few good officers, one or two. They were pretty far down the line. Underwood, Francis Underwood, who later became Ambassador to Malaysia, a marvelous fellow. But he was a third secretary when I went down there. I found him a real stalwart. The guy that I discovered in about four hours that I could lean on for knowledge and from the standpoint of knowing what was going on in the place was the head of the CIA, Ralph Redford .. He is retired in Washington now. He knew more about Indonesia, knew the language, as did Underwood, and had a better feeling for what was going on, etc. Those two fellows helped me more than any of the others.

Q: How did you shake the embassy up?

STEEVES: Well, I will tell you what I did. I just had a visceral feeling concerning what makes people tick. Nobody ever shows any respect towards his job or his work place if it doesn't look like it deserves respect. In about 48 hours I got rid of the dirty rugs, we got the whitewashers in to clean up the outside. During the Dutch Administration there used to be an ordinance strictly enforced, for this to be done periodically. The flag pole was repaired so that we could put the flag up. The notice that was hanging akimbo on the post was immediately hung straight. If anything needed

painting or touching up I saw to it immediately. The drivers were given fresh white uniforms, which was what they wear down there. In about ten days we had the car running, we had people standing around as though they knew what they were doing and had the offices assigned where people would go to work and knew that they were expected to be there at a certain time. When they introduced me to the gal, the old New England spinster, they said, (whatever her name was)" this is the new Chargé who has come down to take charge of the embassy." I said, "I am very glad to meet you and delighted that I am going to be working with you. How long have you been here?" She said, "I have been here a year and a half. A pretty long time to be in a sinking ship don't you think?"

Q: High morale!

STEEVES: So, anyway, to make a long story short, we did whip it into line. We got people health-wise back on their feet and those who were really sick taken care of. We got some discipline back and it wasn't very long until we were going great guns.

Q: What was the political situation in this '53-'55 period?

STEEVES: The capital was practically under siege. Not against the Americans, we were in no danger at all. But against the current government and the remaining Dutch. The Indonesian government was at odds with the Darul Islam who were the orthodox Islamic fanatical rebels. You could drive outside of Jakarta five or six miles but you better be sure that they knew you were an American or they were apt to take a shot at you. We used to go up into the Punjak, which was the high hills, for weekends and these Darul Islam people would come by to see us in the evening and ask us for cigarettes, or the equivalent of two bits, wish us well and go on. They were carrying submachine guns, etc.

Q: Did we have any position vis-a-vis the local struggle?

STEEVES: Yes, we had supported the Independence effort against the Dutch. We supported Sukarno but the situation was complicated by the Communists supporting a movement where they could cause the greatest disruption. Sukarno was a man void of principle. He was playing a double game very cleverly, which was all too clear in later years. But initially he deceived many, some of our people too I am afraid, attempting in those days to play us off as real suckers by making believe that he was a great anti-communist, when he was quite helpful to them. What he was doing was playing footsie with the communist elements, and then, of course, he just completely turned over to being a full-fledged collaborator with the communists in later years and very Anti-western.

Q: Your new Ambassador was Hugh Cumming. How did you, he and others view Sukarno at the time?

STEEVES: Did you know Hugh?

Q: No, I don't think I have ever met him.

STEEVES: Hugh got a bad start and it turned out to be the reason I stayed on there a year and a half instead of 60-90 days I was supposed to. I am sorry to point out so directly to a basic flaw which

one must understand in working with Hugh. He believes in employing intrigue. That is his policy and he doesn't mind taking you aside and telling you so. He would come to me and say, "Now I tell you John, the way to keep staff in line is to find out who someone doesn't get along with and then you do the same with the other party." I said, "Mr. Ambassador, you don't treat people that way. At least I won't." So he and I didn't hit it off very good. I said, "As your Deputy, if I have to deal that way you can just get someone else because I am not going to be a party to dealing with people that way. It is not the way to gain people's confidence." He tried to get me to open people's mail to find out who was up to mischief. I refused to do that. To introduce this character flaw of Hugh Cumming is a strange way to answer your question about relations with Sukarno, but he attempted to deal with non-Americans the same way he did with his associates. He discovered he had in Sukarno, a man who dealt in the same coin. But then everything came to a roaring stop for a while.

He was a very fidgety fellow and was sitting in a camp chair in one of our American business places up in the Puunjak, Megamengdun, one night and stuck both sets of fingers into both sides of a folding chair and darn near amputated both thumbs!. My wife got him patched up well enough to get him back down to the city where our doctor got him bandaged up and splinted. Complications set in and we flew him to Manila for a long treatment. He was there over two months. So, here I was back running things again.

I should not leave the subject of Cumming without a closing word answering the question about the Ambassador and Sukarno. The word is that he attempted to outsmart Sukarno, but that did not succeed any better in his case than with others who tried it and failed.

It is quite evident that I didn't get along very well with Hugh so when I left Jakarta it was not with very good feelings about him. I may say that in later years he made a great show of asking my pardon and repenting completely for the nasty way he had acted. He was on the Board when I was on the Career Ministers List. When you are on those Boards selecting candidates for promotion, you don't go to the individuals concerned afterwards and tell them how you voted, but he did with me. He came and said, "Now I just want you to know, that I was the one who placed your name in nomination for promotion.

Q: You probably couldn't help wondering what sort of conspiracy he was working...

STEEVES: I was the Director General then when he sidled up toward me. I kind of looked out of the window while he was telling me this story.. I considered the source and let it drop.

JOHN R. O'BRIEN
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Jakarta (1953-1956)

John R. O'Brien was born in Seattle, Washington in 1918. Following World War II, Mr. O'Brien became involved with the USIS in the Japan Occupation and later served in Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, and Washington, DC. Mr. O'Brien was interviewed by Hans Tuch in 1988.

Q: Let's close off with the Japanese experience and possibly go on to something else. Your next foreign assignment, Jack, was Indonesia, where you were the public affairs officer, in this case the country director of USIS program. By that time, we had USIA and we had a fairly regular type of organization and program in Indonesia. Am I correct?

O'BRIEN: That's true.

Q: Tell me about something that particularly you found of great interest in Indonesia at this time. First of all, let's get the dates down.

O'BRIEN: I went to Indonesia in '53 and left in '56. I was there two-and-a-half years. I had been absolutely enchanted by Indonesia when I went through the area as Far East branch chief for IPS.

Q: The Press Service.

O'BRIEN: Yes. The country was just overwhelming -- 13,000 islands, over 100 million people. Communications problems of the first order, but again a willingness to hear from the outside, a desire to. We had a first-rate library in Jakarta, we had branches in Surabaya and in Medan. Surabaya is in Java; Medan, of course, is in Sumatra. Then we opened one later in Padang, also in Sumatra. We had active exchange programs, a very good use of our material by the press, and we turned out a monthly magazine which we had printed in Holland for financial reasons. There was a fairly good staff, but it was hard, frankly, to get first-rate local employees. English was a problem. We could get those who spoke Dutch fairly well. But we, nevertheless, got some good ones. I would describe the program overall as being rather soft. There was no market for vigorous anti-Communist material.

Q: This was when Sukarno was President?

O'BRIEN: That's correct.

Q: Did the government put restrictions on you?

O'BRIEN: Not directly, but as an example, if our publications went out of line, I'd get a call from the foreign office or someone else saying, "Let's not get into that subject." But overall, you had to sense how far you could go. A couple of interesting developments during that time. Ted Streibert had become, as you know, the first director of USIA, and I believe it was his first trip overseas in that capacity that brought him to Indonesia.

Ted brought with him a packet of books. This was during the period of the Army's campaign to promote people's capitalism, and he wanted to present the books to a ranking Indonesian official. I arranged for us to call on the foreign minister, a rather gentle, shy Javanese gentleman, who was pleased to receive us and pleased to receive the books, which Ted explained very carefully -- the man understood English quite well -- that it reflected an idea about America that was not commonly known overseas, and he hoped that the foreign minister would find time to read some of the books. The foreign minister thanked him and said to Ted, "I wonder if I may make a suggestion

about this program." And Ted said, "Why, by all means. Please give me your ideas." He said, "Well, I just don't think that our people will understand the term 'people's capitalism.' It's not a phrase that we're familiar with and it doesn't translate well into Indonesian." He said, "Perhaps some other term could be used." Streibert said, "Golly, I'm glad to hear you comment on this. What would your suggestion be?" The foreign minister said, "Well, maybe a term something like 'New Deal.'" [Laughter] Streibert, a card-carrying Republican if there ever was one, looked at me as if, "By golly, what kind of trap have I fallen into?" He sputtered and said, well, he didn't think that was quite appropriate for this administration. I had to explain later to the foreign minister the meaning of New Deal in the United States. It brings to mind, Tom, some of the other campaigns that we had over the years. You remember at one time we had one called "Philippines: Showplace of Democracy."

Q: Right.

O'BRIEN: Then we had one called "Militant Liberty."

Q: Right.

O'BRIEN: Then we had one called "Atoms for Peace."

Q: Right.

O'BRIEN: These were . . .

Q: "Open Skies."

O'BRIEN: "Open Skies." Well, this reflects the American desire to capsulize these ideas and concepts as they do on Madison Avenue. Which reminds me that at a later date, when Ed Murrow became director, and he was on the Hill trying to explain to a congressional committee that we were not in the business of selling soap. Little did he know that at that very minute, his man in Bangkok, Jack O'Brien, was selling soap, in effect, because Lever Brothers, which manufactures various products in Thailand, was using messages that we had devised on the back of their soap packages. [Laughter] And so around the country you could see Lever Brothers soap selling a program originated by USIS. Anyway, unfortunately, Ed died before I had a chance to tell him that story. In Indonesia, also, I'd say the high point when I was there was the Bandung Conference of 1955. This was the Asian-African Conference of some consequence.

Q: It was a Third World conference.

O'BRIEN: Yes, and it brought such people as Nehru and U Nu and Zhou En-lai, a really impressive gathering. Our instructions were to stay the hell away from it. It had absolutely nothing to do with the United States, we were not to become involved in it in any sense.

Q: What year?

O'BRIEN: '55. And so that was the word, a joint message from State, USIA, everybody else: "Stay

away from it." Well, there was one little problem -- American reporters were pouring into the place. There was never any hotel space in Jakarta anyway that was any good; it was always a tight situation. So a man named Roeslan Abdulgani, who was the ranking career man in the foreign ministry, called me up one day. He said, "Jack, old friend, I've got a problem." I said, "Now, Roeslan, what's your problem?" Roeslan Abdulgani had been giving me some bad times in the past about getting American correspondents in, so I was going to milk this for all I could. He said, "Well, some of your people (trying to put the blame on me), some of your reporters are coming to the Bandung Conference, and we have room for them at Bandung, but we hadn't realized that some of them want to stay at least overnight in Jakarta, and we simply have no room." I said, "Well, I'm not in the hotel business, Roeslan. What do you want me to do?" "Oh," he said, "come on now. Some of you Americans have big houses, and maybe you could squeeze them in." Well, I said, "I've got to get permission from the ambassador to get involved at all. You know this is not our party; it's yours." So I went to Hugh Cumming, who was the ambassador, and he said, "Well, I'll try to find out." So word came back in a day or two that PAO O'Brien and press officer Jerry Donohue would be permitted to meet the planes coming in, to try to assist American correspondents. So Jerry and I did that, and there were a lot of them. My wife went literally door to door to Americans and said, "Have you got a mattress or anyplace you can put up these guys?" And I would call from the airport -- once in a while the phone would work -- and say, in effect, "Put more water in the soup, because we've got extra guests that we didn't know about." Well, among the correspondents who came was one Adam Clayton Powell.

Q: Oh, really?

O'BRIEN: He was Congressman Adam Clayton Powell from New York State, and he sent a wire in advance, saying he did not -- repeat not -- want to be treated as a congressman, but as a reporter for the -- I've forgotten the name, some paper in Harlem. So he came in on a plane that was owned or leased by Carlos Romulo, then the foreign minister of the Philippines. Powell got off the plane, a very impressive, big guy. I introduced myself, and he said, "Where's the ambassador?" And I said, "Well, sir, we had instructions from Washington saying you did not want to be treated as a congressman. You're being treated as a correspondent, and therefore you are being met by the public affairs officer and press officer." "Take some notes," he said. He wanted me to arrange a party for all the press people, he wanted me to send a telegram to President Eisenhower saying that he'd arrived safely and everything was under control, send a personal message to his wife -- at that time, it was Hazel Scott, the wonderful jazz pianist. And so that was the beginning of my association with Adam Clayton Powell. Well, he went up to Bandung, and he was on the phone every night. We soon got to be on a first-name basis. For some reason, he wanted to get copies of Esquire magazine, which in those days, I guess, was sort of the Playboy of its day. If we ever got it at all, it would come in about a year later by schooner. Anyway, he was really after the liberation of four or five American pilots who had been downed in what we then called Communist China. So one day, at a screening of some kind at Bandung, Adam Powell arranged to seat himself next to Zhou En-Lai, and to make a pitch for the release of these American pilots. Zhou En-lai heard him for a while, and then he turned to him and said, "No speak English." Zhou En-lai spoke English as well as Adam Powell did. [Laughter] So he didn't score well on that one, but when he left Indonesia, I saw him off, he in Carlos Romulo's plane, and I was not sorry to see him go. He'd been of no help, though I had come to like him personally. So he was in the plane, and the propellers were revved up, ready to take off, and I said, "Now, Adam, you've got all your papers?" He felt

around and said, "Oh, my God, I've lost my passport." Well, I had happened to see Adam Clayton Powell with a local woman, and he was showing her his passport, apparently to let her know where all he'd been. So I raced back into the airport, and there this woman did have his passport, I snatched it from her and took it back to Adam, put it in his pocket. He fastened his seat belt. I lied and said, "Adam, come back anytime, really. You should see more of the country." A month or so later, an article appeared in a magazine in the States in which Adam Clayton Powell criticized the American embassy for not giving him proper treatment during the Bandung Conference. I never saw Adam Powell again, and I didn't want to. But the Bandung Conference was an important gathering, and it set in motion a lot of activities around the Third World.

Q: Was the USIS operation at that time and the administration of Ted Streibert in the late Fifties a sort of normal operation, the type of which we have now in our major countries, major country posts?

O'BRIEN: I think so. It was limited, as I said earlier, because there were certain political boundaries you had to observe. There was no point in coming in with a heavy anti-Communist dose; it would not have been accepted, nor would it have been permitted. But there were a number of things you could do. There was always a great interest about the United States, and you could build a lot of activities around that. Our library was first-rate, and indeed, it was drawn upon heavily by government officials. We had good relations with the press. Yes, I would say pretty much from what I understand is going on today, it was a normal program.

Q: Did you have an exchange program?

O'BRIEN: Oh, yes. It was active. One of the most successful exchanges we ever had was when Martha Graham and her people came to Jakarta. Martha Graham was an absolute whiz, a wonderful woman who did exactly the right things. She made clear to begin with that she had drawn heavily on Javanese dancing in creating her own modern dance. This, of course, struck just the right note with the Indonesians. She gave demonstrations and seminars and all that. A guy named Charlie Tambu was editor of the Times of Indonesia, an English-language paper, and he just loved to pull the eagle's feathers. It was just before Martha Graham's visit that John Foster Dulles declared that Goa should not be returned to the Indians. Well, this outraged Tambu. I had dinner with him one night at our house, and I mentioned that Martha Graham was coming. He said, "Why do you bring these silly dancers out here? We don't care about that. Bring us somebody that's important." I said, "Charlie, she's pretty good, I hear. Let's see." So when she came, I made a point of inviting Charlie and his wife to the performance, and we had a late dinner at our house after the performance. I invited the Tambus and arranged for him to sit with Martha Graham. It wasn't more than ten minutes later that I looked around, and Charlie had his face in his hand, and he was looking up admiringly at Martha Graham; she had absolutely enchanted him. She knew a lot about Islam, and she was talking about that. Charlie, in a couple of days, had an editorial in his paper, "Why can't the United States Information Service bring more people like Martha Graham here to Indonesia?" the editorial asked. [Laughter] It was a triumph.

ANTHONY GEBER

**Program Officer
Jakarta (1954-1957)**

Anthony Geber was born in Hungary in 1919 and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1949, serving in Germany, Austria, Indonesia, France, Korea, and Washington, DC. Mr. Geber was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1993.

Q: Not only a new world Tony but at that time dominated by Mr. Sukarno who had taken over after the Dutch had left and our relations were not entirely easy, I guess.

GEBER: No, Mr. Sukarno was not the easiest person to deal with. We had a very large technical assistance program covering agriculture, industry, health, including a large scale malaria eradication program, education, vocational training, housing and a contract for consultative services to the Planning Bureau of the Indonesian government. The foreign aid mission had no major capital investment program but the Export-Import Bank extended loans for the rehabilitation of the Indonesian railroad system and financed the erection of the first large cement factory.

Mr. Sukarno had a number of admirable and an equal number of less admirable qualities. He was a true patriot and a spell-binding orator who could inspire his people and imbue it with a great deal of national cohesion despite great diversity and poor communications within this far-flung island empire. But he had delusions of grandeur. He was prone to divert attention from domestic difficulties to foreign adventures. He was also much more interested in politics, and was only haphazardly and intermittently interested in promoting economic development.

Q: Tony could that partly be due to the fact that he always counted on certain oil revenues to keep his government solvent?

GEBER: Well, not so much at that time, although American oil companies were there and doing quite well. Rubber and tin were also major exports, as well as timber. Still, the economy was steadily going down hill during the years that I was there and after.

An insight into Mr. Sukarno's psyche was provided right after his state visit to the United States which our Ambassador, Hugh Cumming, arranged successfully. Mr. Sukarno was quite impressed. He was given the red carpet treatment, including visits with Hollywood starlets. He came back quite pleasantly disposed toward the United States. His feeling of goodwill toward the United States resulted in his acceptance of an invitation for the celebration of the Fourth of July, not from the Embassy -- that would have been too much to expect from him -- but from a private American society the members of which were mostly American businessmen. So there we were in a large garden in July. Turkey was just served when Mr. Sukarno launched into a more than an hour long speech. The gist of the speech was that there are two conflicts in the world, one between communism and capitalism...but this was really a sideshow, nobody ever took it very seriously, no lives were lost, etc. The other major and much more important conflict was between colonialism, neo-colonialism and national independence movements. He didn't quite say so, but the real villain was the United States. Having to listen to this for an hour and letting my turkey cool was a little

difficult to take.

August 17 is Merdeka Day, the Indonesian national holiday, which was celebrated with stunning dance performances in the garden of the presidential palace. That year Ambassador Cumming was invited as a specially honored guest in grateful recognition of having arranged Sukarno's visit to the U.S. Little did he expect that another special guest, whom he had to meet on an elevated platform, was to be Madame Sun Yat-sen, the widow of the famed Chinese national hero and the ardent supporter of the Communists in China. An elaborate quadrille was performed on that platform; when Madame Sun Yat-sen circled to the right of Mr. Sukarno Ambassador toured to the left, and vice-versa. These were the little tricks that Sukarno enjoyed playing on the Americans.

Our personal contacts with many Indonesians was most rewarding. We had many Indonesian friends. I had great respect for the ability and kindness of the Indonesians. It is true though that practically by natural selection our social contacts were with the most "westernized" members of Indonesian society. Most of them were members or supporters of the PSI, the Indonesian Socialist party, who were in the opposition to Sukarno's ruling party and whose political fortunes were declining. I witnessed the first general elections in independent Indonesia. The Embassy's projections of the likely outcome were far off the mark. Admittedly it was not easy to predict the elections. My wife and I asked our djongos, our house boy, before the elections which party he is going to vote for. He said he has not yet made up his mind, either the Masjumi, the Islamic party which at that time was leaning toward the West and was in opposition to the government, or the Communists. His choice was between the extreme opposites.

The Nahdlatul Ulama, the party of the conservative Muslim teachers, but which for opportunistic reasons supported Sukarno, made a strong showing in the elections. I remember that shortly after the results of the election became known one of the political officers came over to us in the foreign aid mission asking whether any of us had any personal contact with a member of the Nahdlatul Ulama. The Embassy had none; neither did we in the mission.

Q: Was it not at that time, Tony, that the Bandung Conference took place?

GEBER: Yes.

Q: Perhaps you might give us your impression of the situation.

GEBER: Well, it was a great propaganda coup for Sukarno. Nehru, Tito, Zhou En-lai and a host of lesser dignitaries came to the meeting. Zhou En-lai outshone them all with his winning personality. It was a three ring circus long on PR and short on specifics. But it did launch the numerically large grouping of non-aligned nations. This group was to be neutral between the Western democracies and the Soviet block nations. In practice its political and economic demands were directed against the West, simply because they knew that only from them can they obtain significant concessions. The group was far from homogeneous in its interests, but it was easy for them to suppress their divergences when it was a matter of making demands on the West. Most of these were pursued in the U.N., its functional and regional agencies, where the one-nation-one-vote favored them.

Q: Was the Embassy allowed to have any observers in Bandung?

GEBER: Oh, yes, we had observers in Bandung, and they were duly concerned about the proceedings, although at that time it was mostly the propaganda effect of the meeting which was disturbing.

Let me comment a little bit about my experience with technical assistance.

Q: Please.

GEBER: As I told you our technical assistance program was operating practically in every field. For each field of activity there was a division chief who spent much of his time at Mission headquarters do all the extensive paper work, preparing project proposals with detailed justification, budget estimates, procurement requirements. Part of his time he spent in the corresponding Indonesian Ministry or agency, discussing the projects and seeing to it that the Indonesian agencies did their part to implement the program. The projects usually consisted of two main elements, American technical experts who were to train Indonesians, and Indonesian trainees who were sent to the United States to be short term training in their respective fields. As I believe is apparent of this brief description, the implementation of these activities required exceptional management talent which was often lacking on the American side and even more in the Indonesian government agencies. We lacked an adequate experienced cadre to fill the jobs. Most of the technical experts were recruited from domestic agencies. But for instance, an employee of the American agricultural extension service may have been exceptionally competent in the area of his expertise, irrigation, soil management, etc., but when he came to Indonesia he needed additional qualifications, as organizational talent, empathy for different cultures. These were difficult to spell out in a job description. Some of them had the natural talent and did very good work; others did not. Often it took a long period for these American technical experts to settle in with their families, find their way around in the Indonesian bureaucracy. The delivery of the training materials they ordered took many months to arrive. Many of them left after the end of their two year duty, and often there was a long hiatus before their successors arrived.

Even more questionable to my mind was the overall planning of the program. Soon after I arrived in Indonesia as the Mission's Program Officer I had to go through the exercise of preparing the yearly plan to be submitted to Washington for approval. The plan had to start out with a statement on U.S. national interest and objectives in Indonesia, such as containing communism. The next step was to argue that promoting economic development supports this U.S. objective. To make these linkages down to the justification of asking for one additional trainer in automotive mechanics in a vocational training program, or to recommend the phasing out of a housing project because the Indonesian counterparts were organizationally incompetent, demonstrates the phoniness of such a highly centralized operation. One of my early battles with Washington was that in preparing the plan we had to fill out a box on a form projecting the growth rate of the Indonesian economy for several years ahead. There was a UN team at that time in Indonesia trying to construct the first national accounts for Indonesia. They were engaged in making calculations and estimates for several years back on the basis of inadequate statistics. I thought that making any GNP projection for the years ahead would be irresponsible.

In the end I lost the battle. I was told to put in any number, but it essential that I fill in the box.

Much to my amazement a couple of years later when I was back in Washington I saw a printed hard cover book on the Indonesian economy which contained those figures which I picked out of thin air.

Q: Those are one of the little triumphs we have in the Foreign Service. Let me ask you, did you have a feeling that you were in competition with your Soviet counterparts while you were in Jakarta to pour aid into the country? I know we couldn't put military aid in there because of Indonesia's neutrality policy.

GEBER: Oh, we had some military aid and we certainly had some aid to the police and security forces. Indonesia was in the throws of various regional uprisings, including banditry in the western part of Java. My director, Howard Jones, and I visited some of the military outposts there. I remember asking one of the military chiefs as to why he had so much difficulty oppressing banditry. During the day time it was quite safe to travel in the region but it was not recommended to do so at night. He said, "Who do you think the bandits are? They are my soldiers."

Actually, the aid to the military, mostly training, was a very good investment. The military leaders appreciated the aid given and were by and large western oriented, which paid off years later when the showdown came between the military and Sukarno.

Russian aid began to arrive only after I left Indonesia. The Russians were much more accommodating to Sukarno's wishes, for instance, by building a grandiose sports stadium. Mike Harris, whom I knew from Germany where he was the very able Marshall Plan administrator, and who was the Ford Foundation representative in Indonesia during the years I was there, and several years after told me a very interesting story. On his way back from Indonesia in India he was introduced by our Embassy people to a Russian diplomat who evidently held an important position previously in Moscow in the Russian foreign aid administration. His first question to Harris was how could he stand it for that many years working with the inefficient Indonesians. That question obviously opened the way for a rather frank discussion. When Harris ventured to suggest that it was easier for the Russians to extend foreign aid because they did not have to give detailed justification for everything to congressional oversight, his Russian interlocutor replied that Harris is mistaken; although there is not that close examination by often hostile committees, there is considerable political pressure on Khrushchev why Indonesia gets a sport stadium when Tiflis or Baku has none.

Q: Let me ask you one more question if I may. Our Secretary of State during those years was John Foster Dulles and I remember that he proclaimed widely that neutrality was wicked. How was this received in Indonesia and did it affect at all relations between Indonesia and our Embassy there?

GEBER: Not very significantly, at least not on the day-to-day operations of the Embassy. Sukarno and his advisers undoubtedly believed that Mr. Dulles was wrong in opposing the "non-alignment" of Indonesia and other third world countries and they were opposed to the kind of military alliances, such as SEATO, which we were promoting in those days. They were also suspicious of less militaristic projects aimed at advancing regional cooperation and cohesion, such as was to be considered at the initiative of India at a conference held in Simla, and which we supported; here it was more the Indonesians' resentment against the Indians playing big brother. Mr. Dulles and the

AID Administrator, Mr. Hollister, visited Indonesia, I believe in 1955, on their way to a Colombo Plan meeting in Singapore. They paid a call on Mr. Sukarno which went off quite well.

The kind of tendency in Indonesian politics that I described with my little anecdote about the Fourth of July speech of Mr. Sukarno continued and we had our disagreements but it really hadn't affected our relationship too much until later after when Mr. Sukarno laid eyes on Irian-Jaya, the Dutch held part of New Guinea, and his "confrontation" policies toward Malaysia and the Philippines.

While I was in Indonesia I was also sent to Cambodia in 1956 on temporary duty for a couple of months to pinch hit there as program officer in the aid mission. The poor Cambodian aid mission...I was the third or fourth temporary program officer because Washington was unable to fill the job. The director of the mission was a very attractive, cultured person who spoke impeccable French. He was a labor lawyer from Washington before he went to Cambodia to be mission director. In that job he was much too nice, especially in his dealings with Washington to be effective. He had a hard driving ambassador. When I called on him after I arrived he pulled out his desk drawer and took out a sheaf of papers, they were weekly reprimands by the ambassador on how poorly he did his job.

Q: May I interrupt to ask who the ambassador was then?

GEBER: Bob McClintock. He was very able, one of the youngest ambassadors we had. But I think an insight into his character was a framed document on his office wall from Stanford where he had won a debating prize. He was prone to shoot from the hip. I had the good fortune that he knew me from my days in Germany and so did his political counselor, Martin Herz. I did not have to struggle to establish my credentials.

The Ambassador confirmed to me that he really was having problems with his aid mission. For instance, he asked the mission to give him a projection of how long it would take to phase out the military support program. This was a very large program of commodity imports to support the Cambodian military budget. Unfortunately the aid mission could not come up with an answer, they did not have a competent economist on their staff. Ambassador McClintock then turned to his military who in good military fashion came up with a bar beautiful bar chart within the allotted deadline of one week. It showed that in the first two years the military support program would have to be kept at the same level but that it could rapidly decline in the next two years. I asked the Ambassador to let me look into this. I got hold of the Colonel who prepared the chart. The Colonel admitted that he didn't have much to go on but the presence of a fairly large aid mission whose task was to improve the Cambodian economy justified his assumption reflected in the chart. I reported back to the Ambassador that in my opinion the only basis for the chart that was that the colonel who prepared it had a tour of duty in Cambodia for the next two years after which it was to be somebody else's problem..

Q: What was the Ambassador's reaction to that?

GEBER: I think he laughed.

I came back to Washington in 1957. I continued a little while longer with the foreign aid organization as Ethiopian desk officer. I was only there for about nine months and I never got to Ethiopia. I can only say that, contrary to my expectations -- after all the Emperor was a great friend of the West -- the day-to-day dealings with the Ethiopians on foreign aid matters were even more difficult than with the Indonesians.

At the very end of 1957 I transferred back to the State Department, to the Office of Economic Development and Finance in the Bureau of Economic Affairs. There our task was to develop economic policies toward the third world, and to see to it that there was some consistency in those policies. I was involved in the preparations of the establishment of the Inter-American Development Bank, in the setting up of the Development Loan Fund which moved much of U.S. aid away from the comprehensive country program approach I described earlier to the financing of sound projects. We analyzed aid programs and projects in the various developing regions and brought our views to bear in consultations with the regional bureaus and with the foreign aid agency, whose initials were by then changed, if I remember correctly, to ICA.

We had battles with an excessively niggardly and ideologically hide bound Treasury Department; for instance, we could not clear any paper with Treasury that contained the word "planning". We also had fights with some of the regional bureaus in the Department which felt that their clients should be exempted from the application of consistent policies. An interesting example of this was the African Bureau's argument that most of the African countries cannot be expected to prepare well thought out projects for American foreign aid financing, and for political reasons, especially to counter Soviet influence, the U.S. should commit lines of credit in advance of fundable projects. ICA, with some justification, objected to this approach.

MARGARET V. TAYLOR
Public Affairs Trainee, USIS
Medan (1954-1956)

Director, Binational Center, USIS
Jakarta (1972-1975)

Margaret V. Taylor was born in San Diego, California in 1925. She received a bachelor's degree from San Diego State College in 1946 and a master's degree from Stanford University 1966. Her career in the Foreign Service included positions in Indonesia, Japan, Finland, and Burma. Ms. Taylor was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1990.

Q: So then, after you finished your tour in Tel Aviv where did you go following that assignment?

TAYLOR: I was assigned to Medan, Indonesia as a Public Affairs trainee. In Medan, I was given responsibility for running the library. I worked on exchange programs and really got a basis in cultural work there that was valuable to me during the rest of my career. Indonesia was still emerging -- developing as a republic after having won independence from the Dutch after World

War II. It was an area of low education, so there were vast numbers of people who were illiterate. Our program focus had to be on the educated, of course, as it had become evident USIS programs could not realistically reach broad masses, particularly with communications in the country being under- developed. Medan was the capital of North Sumatra in Indonesia, and while a fairly large town in population, it was a real backwater. I think it had about one million people but Indonesia was, at that time, very much a Third World country and Medan was really off the beaten track. It was a town that really only had one main street going through it -- one main business street that is -- and the rest of it was pretty hit- and-miss in terms of businesses, stores and offices. But it was a very good place for me to get the kind of broad experience that I needed in to underpin my own career.

One of my activities, a kind of developing one, was to hold some classes in the teaching of English as a Second Language, which was a wonderful entree to that area. There was great interest in learning English on the part of those who wanted to move away from the Dutch colonial past. We did had an active leader program, sending prominent people from Northern Sumatra to the United States for periods of observation and contact with their American colleagues. I worked on that program to help select them and to send them off to the United States with the necessary information about places and institutions that they might want to visit.

Q: Had the Communist threat become very great in Indonesia yet, at that time, as it did later?

TAYLOR: No, it had not. It was a period of very great hope and enthusiasm for developing an entirely new, independent nation. Sukarno, the president at that time, was a very charismatic figure. The people had rallied behind him because he brought them out of this period of colonial oppression. He was, at that time, truly a great leader of his people and really wanted to build the nation. He did not have to compromise with the Communist element, which was virtually unknown at that time.

Q: Who was the country Public Affairs Officer at that time? It had been Willard Hanna in the very early 50s, but I know he had gone to Japan by that time -- who was the PAO then?

TAYLOR: It was Jack O'Brien who ran a very good show. We got lots of support from Jakarta. Jakarta was, of course, very far away, but transportation was pretty good. There were airplanes flying back and forth between Jakarta and Medan on a regular schedule, but all other facilities were somewhat less than adequate. Ships were infrequent and there was a terrible problem of pilferage, so anything that had to be shipped up to Medan from Jakarta might or might not arrive unless it could be packed into the pouch and sent up that way. We were at the end of the line, also in terms of people support from Jakarta because they were all busy with their own jobs there. So, we had to go down there for contact with the rest of the operation.

Q: It was, I think, about that time that the original Conference of Unaligned Nations was held in Jakarta at Bandung. Were you in any way affected by that? Did you have any participation in that program?

TAYLOR: Not directly. I was, of course, very much aware of it and it was a blockbuster event in Indonesia because this was their big foray into international events. And it was sort of a takeoff

point for Sukarno and his megalomania. It was a very important conference and had important repercussions all throughout that area of the globe, but here again we were isolated from the main action because we were so far away in spirit and in distance. For the most part we could only read about it. I don't even recall a lot of discussion amongst Indonesians in Medan about the conference. I was not working directly on press things, but our USIS Branch office did supply materials to the newspapers and to the radio station. We had no radio officer, and materials were supplied to us from Jakarta.

Q: You mentioned that you had a library there. I presume that most of the books were in English and I wonder to what extent the Indonesians, at that time, were fluent enough in English or knowledgeable enough to read the books. What was your impression?

TAYLOR: Well, of course it was a very much lesser operation, precisely because of this problem of fewer English speakers. Nonetheless, there were people who spoke English and were studying English so most of our attendance at the library were students. And we were trying to work with the schools in helping out with English teaching materials, insofar as we were able to get them.

I was in Medan from 1954 to 1956, and this was really before the emphasis on direct English language training as a policy of the agency itself. But there was some beginning interest in it and we were able to order some materials and to work, to a limited degree, with English language students.

Q: You mentioned the role of women in Indonesia and said that you might like to make a few comments about that. So, why don't you take off at this point and tell your story about the women's role in Indonesia?

TAYLOR: When I was in Medan we had a rather unique office in the sense that the PAO, at that time, was a woman, Myrtle Thorn, and since I was the only other American employee, we constituted an all female Branch office. Of course, we had our Indonesian staff most of whom were male, but it was, in a sense, a very important time to be working with Indonesian women.

As I mentioned before, Indonesian women were not as subjugated as they were in the more fiercely Moslem countries, the Arab countries. And while there was open discrimination (the men, for instance, could have four wives which the women didn't like very well) still they did not suffer the same degree of suppression as in Arab countries.

There were and are some very capable Indonesian women. They had been very important in the development of the country because everybody had to work, including the women. Many got into trading jobs through marketing, that is, they got started that way. Even when I was there there were some women who were running their own businesses but they were not in very many leadership positions.

In a sense, in North Sumatra, which was less sophisticated than Java certainly, Myrtle Thorn and I were kind of role models because we were two independent women associating with a fair number of Indonesian women. It was a very rewarding experience to be working with Indonesian women and to feel that we could benefit them in providing whatever degree of insight and support we

could to help women raise their consciousness and self-esteem.

Q: I seem to remember that there were women who managed to get into positions of some prominence in the government. I do not remember what years these were, but one in particular that I recall, was actually a representative of Indonesia in one or another of the international organizations in Geneva. I'm sure she probably came from Java and you may not have been in the country at that time; does that raise any thoughts?

TAYLOR: Well, yes, it does in a general way. As I said, Indonesian women were never as subjugated as they were in some of the other Moslem countries, and I think they had enough power -- there were women's organizations that had enough power -- that they could bring some influence on the government. I remember when I was later assigned to Jakarta, that one of my chief assistants, an Indonesian woman, had been Cultural Officer at her embassy in Great Britain. And so there certainly were Indonesian women who were assigned to some positions of authority. In the early stages, it was not, by any means, a large number, but there were some very capable and influential women.

Q: Was there any requirement, in Indonesia, that the women dress as they did in some of the other, more fundamentalist Islamic countries, such as wearing the chador and so forth?

TAYLOR: There are pockets of Moslem fundamentalism in Indonesia. The women in those communities wore headdresses but not the full length chador nor veiling of the face. I don't believe that Indonesian women had ever had to cover their faces. And even today, there are some women who prefer, because of tradition, to wear a head covering. But most women are free to choose their own form of dress and to follow the fashions of other Indonesian women.

A number of women wear western dress, but for formal occasions particularly, they chose to wear their lovely sarongs and a blouse which is called a badju. And so it was always a pleasure to go to parties and see the Indonesian women in their native costume, if you want to call it that.

Q: Did you notice any resentment among the men because of the more or less liberated status of the women in Indonesia, or had that been sufficiently ongoing so that there was not any indication of resentment among the men?

TAYLOR: Well, alas, I think there is always that element. Men will be men and women will be women. So, there was some of that, but I don't think that it was a serious problem. It was not as overt perhaps as in other countries.

Q: I gather that you and Myrtle Thorn did not attempt any particular programs, aimed specifically at women, that would have encouraged any more liberalization of their status such as what was carried on in Japan, for example, during the Occupation?

TAYLOR: Well, we didn't carry on programs but we, both of us, were interested in women's groups and tried to engage in their activities as much as we could, and to work through personal contact, supplying whatever we could in the way of information about women's activities in the United States. We were even able to get some women leaders on to the leader program and send

them to the United States and to choose some women students to send to the United States. Unfortunately, the vast majority of exchangees were men, so in a sense it was tokenism, but it was something that we were well aware of in northern Sumatra. There was also a relatively receptive attitude at headquarters in Jakarta to the selection of some women in exchange programs.

Animistic Influences in Indonesian Religious Practices.

Q: Did you find that there were underlying animistic practices from ancient religions in Sumatra and, to the extent that you had experience elsewhere in Indonesia, was that true there, too? Because I have noted in Indonesia many indications of animism. Certainly the shadow plays are based on some of the mythology of India.

TAYLOR: Yes, that's very true. I think it's true of most developing or Third World countries that the practices of the past carry forward into any new religion that comes along. The big waves of religion -- the introduction of new religions in Indonesia came with the traders, coming from first, Hinduism, which swept the country, then Buddhism and then Islam coming with Arab traders.

Because of the nature of the country, situated as it is on so many islands over a broad sweep of area; and with the lack of communication, even today, with some of the outlying areas and villages deep in the interior of these huge islands, no new religions have penetrated those places and so their outright native religions include lots of animism and native practices. But even though Indonesia is about 90% or more Moslem, there is still an underpinning of animist superstitions, if you will, left over. The Function of the Wayang (Shadow Puppet Plays) in Indonesia and the use the Government Makes of Them.

As for the Wayang, the puppet plays, which are based on the Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, these are the underlying stories of the Wayang. However, the Wayang in Indonesia became very much an Indonesian art form, and has been very important in the development of the whole nation because it was a kind of unifying factor throughout all these islands. And because it goes on all night long, there is a lot of material that can be presented. One person voices all these different characters in the Wayang during the evening's presentation. Over the years these speakers (dalang) have introduced many contemporary subjects into the dialogue between the stories. This is an integral part of the Wayang now, and the Indonesian government has used that as a means of introducing issues that they want to have discussed and communicated to their people.

But we have not tried to influence those plays at all, of course. It would have been a very unwise practice to try to do so because they're basically religious in the sense that this has helped develop the character of the Indonesian people.

Q: Well, you have answered the question I was about to ask. Because I know that in other parts of the world we have sometimes tried to develop themes through the native singers or players, traveling theatrical groups going throughout the country but as you say we did not attempt that in Indonesia.

TAYLOR: Well, the constitution of the Indonesian nation written in 1946-47, specifies religious freedom and they do practice that fervently. However, because the country is primarily Moslem, about 90-93% [the high percentage of Moslem faith is probably true for most of Indonesia, except

for Bali, which practices almost universally an adapted form of Hinduism substantially underlaid with animistic beliefs] there is an inevitable bias there just by numbers and popular appeal. There are elements of fundamentalist Islam throughout Indonesia and they watch carefully for any possible infiltration of their doctrine. One would have to tread very, very adroitly to make sure that they are not trying to influence the religion.

HENRY L. HEYMANN
Political Officer
Jakarta (1956-1958)

Indonesian Analyst, Intelligence and Research Bureau
Washington, DC (1959-1961)

Political Officer
Jakarta (1961-1965)

Principal Officer
Surabaya (1965-1966)

Henry L. Heymann was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1920. He graduated in 1943 from Princeton University with a degree in history. Afterwards, he served in the U.S. Army for four years. In 1950, Mr. Heymann entered the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Germany, Italy, Indonesia, and Washington, DC. Mr. Heymann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: You went out to Jakarta in 1956, where you served from '56 to '58. What were you doing there?

HEYMANN: I was in the political section.

Q: Could you describe who was the ambassador, and how the embassy was at that time? How did they feel toward Indonesia?

HEYMANN: Frankly?

Q: Yes, frankly, absolutely.

HEYMANN: When I first went to Indonesia the Ambassador was Hugh Cumming and when I arrived there in '56 it was the time of the Suez Canal crisis. Cumming was a strong admirer of Sukarno and took an anti-colonial position. We gave the British and the French the cold shoulder. I wanted to join the British Cricket Club to play squash, but Cumming told me it was inadvisable. Strangely enough, Cumming after he left and went back to head INR reversed 180 degrees and thought Sukarno was the worst man in the world.

Q: Were you getting any intimations from the people who had served under Cumming and how he

was as an ambassador?

HEYMANN: The political officers had no admiration for his admiration of Sukarno. I did not serve long enough with Cumming to really judge how he did. I do recall a telegram he sent with a title of something like "How to Deal with Asians" which I recall as nonsense. Change in attitude toward Sukarno, viewing him first as friend then as foe, was not uncommon among those serving in Indonesia. However, it was usually a gradual change. But with Cumming it was, at least ostensibly, a sudden 180 degrees change.

Q: Do you think there was certain propensity at the time for people to come out, particularly the younger officers, but others, to go to Indonesia or some place...we're talking about in the mid-50s, and these were countries who were just coming out of colonialism, and we'd had our own colonial past, and certainly give the benefit of the doubt, and this is the brave new future. There was a feeling, could you say...

HEYMANN: It was more than that with Cumming. Sukarno flattered Cumming. One of Cumming's favorite stories was when he traveled to the United States with Sukarno, Sukarno using an Indonesian term for a respected elder called him "Pak Hugh". I would like to note that Cumming was friendly with me and after our retirement we became closer friends.

John Allison came to Indonesia in about December, 1956, replacing Cumming and stayed about a year being replaced by Howard Jones. I developed a friendly relationship with Allison later visiting him in Prague and Hawaii.

Allison, who had assisted John Foster Dulles in concluding the peace treaty with Japan had hoped to be appointed Ambassador to Japan, but instead was sent to Indonesia. He arrived a frustrated and unhappy man. However, rather quickly he began to like Indonesia and the Indonesians. At the same time the Dulles brothers and Cumming back in INR became concerned that Indonesia would fall under the communist orbit. In local elections in Central and East Java the communists emerged as the leading or number two party, I believe the former, but in any event they did very well in the elections. Also the principals in Washington did not trust Sukarno. Allison told me they were starting to think of CIA action in assisting Sumatra and Sulawesi where rebellion was brewing against the Central Government in Jakarta. (I do not recall exactly whether the rebellion had broken out or not when Allison told me this, but I believe it was the latter.) Allison, I recall in working with him on reporting Sukarno's August 17 Independence Day speech in 1957, was more concerned that Sukarno with his "guided democracy" was creating a fascist-type dictatorship. Allison's relations with Washington grew worse and worse and at the same time his irritation increased. I remember at least on one occasion Allison expressing his "surprise and amazement" at Washington's views in replying to a Department telegram. Another time Washington criticized the Embassy for not reporting something related to the Indonesian Parliament. It happened I had written a despatch on the subject and Allison took relish in telling that to Washington.

Allison was ordered out and sent to Prague. He hated to leave. In his memoirs called "Allison in Wonderland" he wrote about Cumming constantly trying to undermine him without naming him.

Howard Jones, who in the Department had worked with CIA on assisting the rebellion replaced

Allison and immediately became very pro-Sukarno. I feel quite sure he made every effort to have CIA's assistance to the rebellion called off.

Q: Was it American hostility toward Sukarno at that time, or was this the CIA doing its own thing?

HEYMANN: Sukarno always had an anti-Western, Marxist bias saying that the future belonged to the third world and we were heading for the ashcan of history. The rebel leaders probably would have been much more friendly, but they didn't have the will to fight and that's one of the reasons CIA pulled out. I think CIA saw that it was hopeless and Jones, even though he had apparently backed the policy to assist the rebels in the Department, immediately when he came out as Ambassador reversed entirely and became what he remained for the seven years he served in Indonesia, a most enthusiastic supporter of Sukarno.

Q: Could you describe, and we'll deal with this again, but we're talking about the '57 to '59 period, how Howard Jones operated, and at that time how did you view him, his ideas, and maybe your colleagues in the political section?

HEYMANN: Well, I can't say the exact year, but we became less and less in agreement with Howard Jones. Sukarno by 1960 or 1961 showed signs of an increasing antagonism toward us. Sukarno reached the point of encouraging the Chinese to take over Hong Kong. He encouraged the burning of the British Embassy and the burning of the personal property of the Embassy personnel in connection with his effort to break up the new state of Malaysia. He took over the Dutch interest and the British interests and then the American interests, but Jones seemed to think he could always do business with Sukarno.

Q: Was the political section looking at this and in basic agreement.

HEYMANN: Basic disagreement, yes.

Q: How did this manifest itself? Were you aware, or did you get involved when visitors came of explaining one side or the other, or letters back to Washington? Was the discontent known?

HEYMANN: I used to brief the press and that was one of the few opportunities to speak the truth. We were censored in our despatches and our telegrams. There was quite a bit of tension. I can think of several examples: one, Sukarno got up to give an anti-American speech, and said, "Go to hell with your aid." I was asked to report that, it was very easy to report, I thought. But the telegram came back that this should be explained. It ended up that the ambassador told me to write that Sukarno had sort of whispered this. He never said it aloud, although it was in the Indonesian press. Somehow he had only said it in a whisper.

Another example was when Prince Sihanouk was visiting. Sihanouk and Sukarno both lambasted the United States, and then Sukarno did the honors of seeing Sihanouk depart and embracing him at the airport. Howard Jones turned this around in a telegram...I forget if it was my telegram that was twisted around, but the reason Sukarno went to the airport with Sihanouk, according to the telegram, was that he wanted to make sure that Sihanouk got out of the country. There was this conflict, and we were censored. It was quite an eventful time, and it was not only the outer island

rebellion, but during this time from '56 to '59, Sukarno kicked out what he called the Kuomintang Chinese. These were the wealthier non-Communist Indonesians of Chinese extraction. Then he expelled the Dutch nationals, only a handful remained. This was because of Holland's refusal to hand over West Irian to Indonesia. To satisfy Sukarno we pushed the Dutch to transfer West Irian to Indonesia. This was part of the coddling of Sukarno by Jones. For a brief period Sukarno was more moderate and friendly and the government for a change turned to economic problems. This did not last long and Sukarno turned his attention to the dismemberment of Malaysia.

Q: I think it's interesting to look a little bit; I mean, here is I think the major example of an embassy where for seven years, as you said, you have Howard Jones in charge, and yet for most of the time the officers serving under him saw the situation completely differently. Was the word of this dissatisfaction getting back to the Desk where it's most important, and all that?

HEYMANN: I think we were always looking for tea leaves, or indications of what they were thinking in Washington. We occasionally got a telegram of Dean Rusk discussing the situation. Rusk saw the situation pretty clearly, but he reigned but did not rule.

Q: Was this Dean Rusk then...

HEYMANN: He was Secretary.

Q: He was not Secretary until 1961. So we're talking about '57 to '59.

HEYMANN: Yes, that was afterwards with Dean Rusk. I got my time frame mixed up.

Q: We'll pick that up later on. I don't know whether Robertson was still head of...

HEYMANN: What I'm talking about was later when Dean Rusk was Secretary and Harriman was Rusk's Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. Harriman didn't back us at all. He backed Jones. But we were always looking for backing from Washington, and we never got it until Marshall Green came out in '65 and replaced Jones.

Q: We're talking about the '56-'59 period, how did a young political officer work. I mean, what did you do?

HEYMANN: My job was to obtain information on the political situation. The daily developments we reported by telegram. Then there were the broader subjects such as the influence of intellectuals on Indonesia policy and analyses of the different newspapers which we reported by despatch. Our sources were the Indonesian press and personal contacts.

Q: During this period, do you remember who was the deputy chief of mission?

HEYMANN: During the '56-'59 period there were two DCMs who had memorable roles. Cottrell who was a forceful, effective and decisive Chargé following Allison's departure. Then there was John Henderson, who Jones brought as political counselor, and who became DCM and the principal enforcer of Jones' views. Perhaps he did not become DCM until 1960.

Q: Were you able to travel much during your first tour?

HEYMANN: Our travel was restricted because of the outer island rebellion.

Q: You came back to Washington in 1958, and you served '59 to '61, was it in INR?

HEYMANN: I was in INR.

Q: What were you doing there?

HEYMANN: I was the Indonesian analyst.

Q: Here you'd come from this place, and Jones had already been making his mark I take it by the time you got back. How did INR view our policy and Sukarno?

HEYMANN: They thought our policy as formed by Jones was wrong, that we were coddling Sukarno and he was taking advantage of us. We opposed helping Sukarno in regard to obtaining West New Guinea. We saw that Sukarno was friendly to, if not encouraging, the Communist party he excluded from power, and in some cases interned moderates with whom we could do business. We were shocked at Jones' uncritical and apparently credulous reporting of his meetings with Foreign Minister Subandrio, who was a smooth master of duplicity.

Q: How about the desk? Was the desk more or less in agreement with INR? Were you getting that too, or did you have much dealings with the desk?

HEYMANN: Some desks worked closely with INR; this was not the case with Indonesia since our views were so far out of step with U.S. policy which was largely determined by Jones. I learned later that the reports I wrote in INR were not circulated when they reached the Embassy.

Q: You left INR and went right back to Jakarta as a political officer.

HEYMANN: Yes.

Q: I'm sort of surprised. I would have thought that Jones would have said, no, to your coming back.

HEYMANN: Jones was an affable person, probably not overly concerned with what his junior officers thought. On one occasion Frank Galbraith, who was DCM, had a sharp exchange with Jones which I witnessed. I had done a draft on Sukarno's Independence Day speech. Jones began altering it playing loose with the truth. They argued. Finally Frank shaking with anger said, "You can't do this, Howard." Jones replied, "Be careful Frank, your career is in jeopardy." Frank survived and became Ambassador to Singapore and Indonesia. While talking about Sukarno's annual Independence Day address (August 17), Sukarno would bluntly lay out his intentions and thinking. He used a sort of Aesopian style, but if you were familiar with the Indonesian political situation it was easy to understand. Jones seemingly refused to understand.

Q: When you went back, you were there in '61 and you were there at the time Sukarno and the September coup. While Jones was there did you find that the political section was still feeling very strongly about...they thought Sukarno was bad news, while Jones didn't. Was that still pretty prevalent?

HEYMANN: Yes they felt strongly and increasingly so. But the Political Counselor kept us in harness by censoring our reports. It was frustrating; we had the most contact with the Indonesians and knew what was really happening.

Q: Did you find yourself in reporting as you drafted things learning how you had to pull your punches?

HEYMANN: Yes we almost constantly pulled our punches and on rare occasions we slipped through some hard truths. By the way, the examples I gave about Sihanouk's visit and Sukarno's saying "to hell with your aid" happened after I came back, not in the first two years. Shortly before leaving INR, I wrote a report on Indonesian communism. And soon after my return to Indonesia, my report arrived at the Embassy. Howard Jones didn't like it. Being an INR report there was no name on it. The Political Counselor then asked me...

Q: Who was he?

HEYMANN: John Henderson, who Jones had personally brought out as Political Counselor, asked me to write a rebuttal, which I did. It was a silly exercise. The rebuttal went back as a letter to INR from John Henderson, where probably nobody gave it any attention.

Q: This must have been a little soul searing...it wasn't as though Indonesia was a minor player. Indonesia was the Third World, non-aligned, with Vietnam cranking up, it was not an unimportant country. Of course, it's a very large and rich and wealthy country, and here are Foreign Service officers taking an oath to the constitution, with a political appointed ambassador whom they think is dead wrong, not just being inept, but I mean really wrong. There's quite a difference between somebody you can get and somebody that's not very good. This must have really done terrible things to people.

HEYMANN: It frustrated the hell out of you. Jones tried to hoodwink us into joining in on his starry view of Sukarno. One time he had a visiting friend of his, whom he had taken with him to meet Sukarno, address an Embassy staff meeting. It was weird to have Jones' words come out of the visitor, who had a mixed Harvard, New York accent. There was one addition: Sukarno's eyes resembled the visitor's own mother's and therefore he had to be a good man. Jones even had Sukarno speak to the Embassy staff after the burning of the British Embassy and the personal belongings of the Embassy staff, which needless to say had shocked many of the American staff. Sukarno spoke in English. What he said was about the opposite to what he orated to the Indonesians. He was a golden tongued orator and some of the Americans fell hook, line and sinker.

Q: Were there networks of official-informal, or just informal-informal letters back to the desk? Or when the desk officers or others would come out would they be told how people felt?

HEYMANN: We tried to convey our message when visitors came out of Washington. Bobby Kennedy arrived on a fact finding mission so I thought I was going to give him some facts. I saw him in the hall standing alone and approached him intending to tell him of Sukarno's encouragement of the communists and the internment of the moderate leaders. He gave me a big political handshake. I couldn't get a word in. He was looking for my vote. Probably the most effective thing I did was the briefing of the American press reporters. I knew the USIS press officer well and he had confidence that I could accurately provide the political situation. James Forrestal's son (I forget his first name), came out several times to gather information for President Kennedy. I was with him several evenings usually as an interpreter for a Sukarno speech. I talked to him, but it was like talking to the wall. Jones was his source.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from Jones about your press briefings, or not?

HEYMANN: No, not really. I don't think I ever had any unpleasantness with him. One time I was duty officer and had to go over to his house. We discussed the political situation. He understood it far better than he conveyed in his reports. Sometimes we do things for small reasons. I hate to say this.

I think Howard enjoyed Indonesia and the prestige of his position so much that he didn't want to have the place blow up or for Sukarno to declare him persona non grata. He had an exaggerated view of the importance of Indonesia; on one occasion he told me he thought it was of equal importance with Vietnam in the eyes of the American public.

Q: This is not unknown. I mean this, of course, is one of the most egregious examples, but it's certainly true. I mean not on my watch. From accounts I've heard, he was Christian Science which meant a lot to him, which meant he tried to keep an optimistic attitude towards things, and a very nice person. And he was a former newspaperman so he could write well, and knew how to use writing.

HEYMANN: Oh, he knew how to make Sukarno look friendly and understanding in his telegrams. They were full of quotes. If they were accurate, Jones must have had a super memory.

Q: What about with the Kennedy administration? Harriman was the Assistant Secretary for East Asia, and a power unto himself. How did Harriman fit into this?

HEYMANN: Kennedy and Harriman followed Jones' line. Harriman seemed to like Sukarno. He did not like the Tunku in Malaysia. Harriman liked our enemies better than our friends. When Bill Bundy came in under Lyndon Johnson there was in the beginning a little more realization of the Indonesian situation. But Vietnam soon seized their attention.

Q: What about in the time that you were there under Sukarno, events were building up. I mean for a long time, but in Vietnam. Did Vietnam play much of a role? How did you all see the Indonesian, or at least Sukarno's attitude towards events in Vietnam?

HEYMANN: Well, Sukarno would support anything that would be against us. But as far as

Indonesian attention toward Vietnam, Indonesians are very insular. The world begins and ends with Indonesia. I don't agree with the view that our firm hand in Vietnam restrained Sukarno.

Q: Did you have any problems during this time under Sukarno seeing Indonesian officials, dealing with them at all as a political officer?

HEYMANN: The Indonesians individually are very pleasant people. I interpreted for several of them for the Ambassador and if I missed a word they were very considerate. This included the first crypto-Communist that Sukarno appointed to his cabinet. Once I went over to Communist Party headquarters to interpret for a Communist specialist. We spoke to the number two in the party and he was extremely affable on the personal level.

Q: Jones left when?

HEYMANN: '65. He left before the coup. And Marshall Green came.

Q: How was Marshall Green received by the embassy?

HEYMANN: He had been in EA in the Department and already had an inkling of what was happening. We had briefing papers for Marshall on which we had worked our heads off and at last it came out. We were free under Green to write the truth as we saw it. It was a relief when the coddling of Sukarno stopped, and we cut off all aid except military aid.

Q: You were there during the coup of '65.

HEYMANN: I was there during the coup.

Q: Can you tell your recollection of how you heard about it, and what you and the embassy did at that time?

HEYMANN: Our first inkling that something had happened was when we saw troops in the square in front of the Embassy and facing the Embassy. We later learned they were an East Java battalion brought to Jakarta by the coup leadership. For a week the situation remained murky and we had only bits and pieces of what was happening. The language officers in the political section took turns staying overnight and listening to the radio news. At one point we observed or rather heard a plane flying over Jakarta, which later helped put together the pieces of what was happening. A cabinet was announced which was a real mish-mash, including the Army Chief of Staff (who probably had been murdered by the time the cabinet was announced) and a top Communist Party member. Sukarno had disappeared.

About a week before the attempted coup (defeated by Suharto's counter-coup) we learned that the government was going to declare the Consul in Surabaya persona non grata. This was not surprising, USIS and AID had been kicked out and USIS libraries had been seized. The coup was to be the finale with Sukarno and the Communists taking over and the Army leadership annihilated.

Marshall Green had decided that I would go to Surabaya as Consul and take charge without notifying the authorities. At the same time the former Consul was to quietly depart.

A week after the coup I went to Surabaya under changed political conditions. (The previous Consul had departed quietly as planned just prior to the coup.) However, the political situation in East Java of which Surabaya is the capital, was not so different as it had been before the coup. The left wing of the PNI (Indonesian Nationalist Party) infiltrated by communists remained a formidable force. With the assistance of the local police and Marines they were seeking to gain political supremacy. This remained the situation until June 1966, just prior to my departure, when Suharto's troops arrived and took control.

Q: So you got up there very shortly after the coup. I know you've been asked by newspaper people, but there's this talk about this great massacre of Communists in Indonesia, and yet there has never been a real figure put on this from western sources. There really hasn't been many witnesses to this. Did you have any knowledge, or were you getting any intimations of what was going on in Surabaya?

HEYMANN: There were many stories of massacres. The Brantas River, on which Surabaya is located, was reportedly running red with blood. One story had it that a raft had been sighted with decapitated heads on poles. I went to the river frequently to observe, but I never saw anything. I believe all these stories were gross exaggeration. The only seemingly valid report was from the British Consul. The Consulate was located near the river and the Consul saw three bodies which had been washed up on the river bank. It is apparently going down in history that there was a huge massacre of Communists in Indonesia. I forget whether it was supposed to have been a million, or hundreds of thousands. It was probably in the five figures. From my experience in Surabaya, it seems there was a lot of exaggeration and imagination. Perhaps the reason is that Indonesians like to say things pleasing to their listeners and they thought that the massacring of the Communists was what Americans would like to hear. There may have also been a macho element behind the exaggeration.

Q: What about your dealings in Surabaya with the local officials? Whom were you dealing with, and how did they work with you?

HEYMANN: The officials were pleasant but reserved. In my conversations with the Governor of East Java, I don't recall any conversation containing more substance than his enthusiasm for American cars.

An incident of interest. One day I could not get into the Consulate; it was surrounded by a mob. I called the police who after quite a delay dispersed the mob. I learned later that it was a friendly group whose main purpose was to block the leftists who reportedly had planned to take over the building that day.

Q: You left Surabaya in 1966.

EDWARD C. INGRAHAM
Political Officer
Jakarta (1958-1960)

Edward C. Ingraham was born in Mineola, New York. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1943 and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He entered the Foreign Service in 1947, in which he served in Bolivia, Hong Kong, Australia, India, Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan and Singapore. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 8, 1991.

Q: Careerwise what happened next?

INGRAHAM: I decided I wanted to be a political officer and the avenue to that was language-area training. So I applied for Indonesian language training, was accepted and brought back to the States. I spent about six months in Washington on Indonesian language training and was then sent off in September for an academic year at Cornell for more language training and Southeast Asian area courses. Cornell was one of the centers of Southeast Asian, particularly Indonesian, area studies at that time. In the summer of 1958 I left for Jakarta as a political officer.

This was my first time, except for that period in La Paz, in an embassy. This was at a time when...we tend to forget Indonesia has disappeared from everyone's attention, you rarely see any mention of Indonesia in the newspapers. These days we tend to forget that around 1958 or '60, if you polled the State Department on which country was the greatest menace in Southeast Asia some would say Vietnam, but many would say Indonesia.

Q: There was Sukarno who was turning from just a plain nationalist into a nationalist who was part of the nonaligned movement which was getting close to the communists.

INGRAHAM: Yes. Here again, this was the period when everything was black or white as far as we were concerned, until 1960 anyway. We were still trying to work with Sukarno. One of the people I admired most in the Foreign Service was Howard Jones, our Ambassador.

Q: I want to talk to you about that. So you got out to Jakarta in the summer of 1958 and stayed until 1960.

INGRAHAM: Jakarta and Medan. In the spring of '59 our consul in Medan, in Sumatra, was bitten by a mad dog, became quite sick, was rushed off to Singapore and had to be transferred out. He would have been transferred in a few months anyway and his replacement was in the process but wouldn't be arriving for a few months. So they sent me there for five months, with my family, to take over the consulate in Medan. So I was in Jakarta for about eight months; in Medan for about five months; then back to Jakarta for the rest of the tour. It was very useful because I came back to Jakarta as the most knowledgeable officer on things Sumatran. And it was at this time, of course, that there was a rather major regional rebellion against the Sukarno government, promoted and supported by the United States. The basic document was declassified in the 1970's so I can talk about it.

Q: How did you and the Embassy when you first arrived see the internal situation and Sukarno?

INGRAHAM: When I got there, the 1958 rebellion had just been put down by the army under General Nasution, who is still alive. The Indonesian army had shown far more ability than we anticipated, and the officers had shown far more political savvy. At the time we were beginning to see that the eventual struggle within the country would not be between left and right as such but between Sukarno and the army. Actually it was between the communists and the army, with Sukarno increasingly on the communist side. We began to understand this just about the time I arrived.

Indonesia had a parliamentary system in 1958. Piece by piece Sukarno dismantled it and put himself in a position of ever greater personal authority. He was a lousy administrator, but to the average Indonesian in the street he was the embodiment of Indonesian nationalism. He was a magnificent speaker. Here was a person with a very healthy ego, a great deal of talent, a strange grab-bag mind full of all sorts of bits and pieces. Sukarno was no more of a communist than I was because he couldn't accept any authority higher than himself. Here was a case where you could actually watch power corrupting. I don't mean in a monetary sense, but in the power sense. Sukarno would get more power and then go on to seize more and more. He began to see himself as the embodiment of Indonesia. He had enough ability to carry the Indonesian people along with him.

Then things started to go to hell. There was a show-down with the Dutch. The Indonesians nationalized Dutch industries, those that were pouring money into the country, and they soon collapsed. Economic conditions got worse and worse. More circuses, parades and speeches by Sukarno, less money and more hungry people. Meanwhile the army was coalescing and moving away from Sukarno.

Now through all this, Jones had established a unique personal relationship with Sukarno. Jones has been widely criticized for being taken to the cleaners by Sukarno, but that is nonsense. He knew exactly what Sukarno was doing. He would explain to me, "Ed, we have got to hang on here. Sukarno is moving away from us. He has given us (let's say it was 1960, getting pretty late in the game) due cause to break relations but we will be the losers if we leave Indonesia to the other side. If we have to undergo humiliations here, we are a big country and can stand it. Live through it if we must, but stay on because something is going to happen." "Well, Mr. Ambassador, like what?" "Ed, I don't know. But something is going to happen and we have to be here when it does. And perhaps to try to help it happen." This was his whole approach.

Q: There were partisans on both sides. That Sukarno would be making a speech condemning the United States and Jones would just sit there rather than walk out. How about you and other officers in the Embassy? How did you feel about this? What was the atmosphere, particularly in the political section?

INGRAHAM: It was a bit mixed, but basically I think we understood what Jones wanted and what he meant. Basically we were on his side, I think. There was some criticism. A number of us felt on a few occasions he might have gone too far. Sukarno would get up and dance an Indonesian folk dance and Jones would be right up there with him. Jones was the last Westerner who had entrée to

Sukarno. Sukarno would make an anti-American speech and Jones would just sit there. But later on Jones would go see Sukarno and say, "Damn it..." I accompanied him on one or two of those calls. Jones would speak frankly to Sukarno. He was such a sunny, pleasant guy that he could say some pretty nasty things but say them in a way that Sukarno would take. Sukarno, at least at that stage, wasn't beyond reach. He was a warm person himself and he responded to Jones' personal approach. I think if you dug down deep enough in his psyche, Sukarno was a colonial subject who wanted to show the world that he was as good as the white men who had run Indonesia for 300 years.

Q: Were there instructions from the Desk to the Embassy saying to get a little tougher or...?

INGRAHAM: Yes there were. Washington was inclined to want to push Sukarno harder. It was a difference of degree. The people on the Desk in Washington at that time knew Indonesia. Frank Underhill in particular, an old Indonesian hand. Others on the Desk also knew the area reasonably well and understood what was going on. One of the problems, as I later found in Washington, was trying to sell it to the 7th floor of the State Department.

Anyway, I think Jones did keep us in there long enough so that when the inevitable--which he knew was going to happen--did happen, we were still there.

Q: That was in '63?

INGRAHAM: '65. It was funny. Jones left about six months before the 1965 explosion. He had really worn himself out. But he kept us in there for a long time.

Q: While we were trying to keep a foot in the door how did you see the role of CIA?

INGRAHAM: They were there. They were all over the place. But the operation that they were so happy about, the '58 rebellion, had simply fallen apart. While we were in Medan those five months there was a lovely resort up at Lake Toba but we couldn't use it because it was still in rebel hands. I can remember driving down to the Goodyear rubber estate at Wingfoot, about a hundred miles south of Medan. There was an area through which you drove as fast as you could, because it was rebel-held. When you visited the big rubber estates, you would find the foreign staff all hunkered down in a series of isolated strong points with the police all around them. They were under siege by the rebel forces that had lost the rebellion but were still fighting a guerrilla war against Jakarta, trying to cut off its sources of foreign exchange by destroying the rubber estates. I would drive down to visit the estates and talk to the British and Americans there. At Goodyear, for example, they would tell me, "Well, damn it, the rebels did such and such and chopped down 600 of our trees. Just two weeks ago they shot up one of the collection stations." And so on. It was a nuisance warfare because the rebels had been beaten. They had started out big by taking over the oil facilities in Palembang but the army under Nasution mounted an operation that drove them out into the jungle and broke the back of the rebellion in Sumatra. The rebels fought on longer in Sulawesi but in a month or so they were defeated there too.

Then of course there was that last incident in the 1958 rebellion, that happened just before I got there. The rebels had an air force of about a half dozen U.S.-supplied B26s which operated over

eastern Indonesia. One day in May 1958 they dropped a few bombs over Ambon. One bomb killed a fair number of people. Somebody managed to fire an anti-aircraft gun and hit the B26 and out came two parachutes. One of them was an Indonesian and the other was a man named Allen Pope. In his pocket was a membership card to the officer's club at the American air base at Clark Field. Pope was in jail the whole time I was in Indonesia. His trial took place in Jakarta, broadcast to the whole population. Pope was found guilty, sentenced to death and held in a prison in the Jakarta suburbs. His main complaint while he was there was that he didn't get enough exercise. We junior embassy officers would bring mail to him. Pope maintained from the very beginning, "Well, yes I was in the American air force and used to fly for Air America in Vietnam but I decided on my own that I would leave the air force because I wanted to join the Indonesian rebels in fighting the communists." He stuck to that story. The Indonesians knew he wasn't telling the truth. And he knew that they knew. But he stuck to the story. After they sentenced him to death, he was kept in a small cottage inside the prison walls. I remember that I once had to carry some weights over to him because he wasn't getting enough exercise. He was an impressive guy. He was not a brilliant man of the world, but he stuck to his cover story to the end.

Eventually we all realized that the Indonesians were not going to execute him even though he was under a death sentence. Our problem then was to get him freed. After I left Indonesia, Bobby Kennedy came out to Indonesia. This was when the Kennedy Administration was making an all-out effort to reverse the trend and try to win back Sukarno. Bobby asked Sukarno what could be done about Pope. "Isn't there some way?" Sukarno said he would take care of it. A few months later there was a brief item in the local newspapers--"The following former rebels have been released:" There followed a long list of Indonesian names. Nestled in the middle of them was "Allen Pope".

Q: Even though we were on opposite sides, it sounds as if the Indonesian leaders at least were accessible.

INGRAHAM: Yes, however bad the relations between our countries were and however much we disliked what they were doing, they were accessible. Jones could see Sukarno. He could just walk in. Jones' most regular contact was Subandrio. He was one of the most utterly amoral and brilliant men I have ever come across. He was the Foreign Minister and deputy Prime Minister. Machiavelli was a child compared to Subandrio. But he was always accessible. Not to me, but to Jones and his DCM.

I could call up the people in the Foreign Ministry--it would take about six hours to make a phone call because the phones didn't work, but once I got someone they would say, "Sure come on over." They were accessible.

And traveling around the countryside, yes, we did a lot of traveling. You would go to a town, say, in central Java where there were a lot of communists moving out into the countryside. You would go to a village and you could talk to the villagers. Most of us spoke enough Indonesian so that we could carry on a reasonable conversation. You could ask them how things were going, what about the communists, etc. They were always accessible. They told us what we wanted to hear, but they were accessible. We went all over the country. We couldn't travel in areas where there was actual fighting going on, but just about everywhere else.

Q: When you left Jakarta, how did you feel about Indonesia?

INGRAHAM: I felt Indonesia was going pretty much to hell. I didn't know what was going to happen to the country, except one niggling thought at the back of my mind that these people were not fanatics, that there was an element of reason behind most of them and they were not going to go over the precipice into something like China in 1948. I thought, "There is a way out of this, and the main obstacle is Sukarno."

When I left Jakarta I had been overseas for 15 years so I had a tour of duty in Washington. I initially spent two years as Desk officer for Australian Affairs. It was a pleasant two years. My main job was negotiating and riding herd on various defense agreements that we and the Australians were working on to use Australian territory in satellite reconnaissance and other such projects. We were just beginning to get into space.

The Australians were probably the most cooperative of all our Allies at that time. Our way of life was compatible so it was one of the military's favorite countries for locating such installations as the one in Northwest Cape for tracking submarines in the Indian Ocean. The Australians were totally cooperative.

Then, of course, these were the big China days, when the Sino- Soviet bloc was coming apart and we worried most about China. We saw Australia as one of the southern bastions against expanding Chinese power.

It was a pleasant but not too exciting two years. Then I was named Indonesian Desk officer.

Q: This was '62?

INGRAHAM: 1962-65 I was Indonesian Desk officer. That was one of the more fascinating, challenging jobs I have ever had because it was the time when things were going from bad to worse with Sukarno in Indonesia. The Communist Party, the PKI, by that time had become the third largest in the world after China and the Soviet. Most of the members weren't dedicated Communists. For 90 percent of them, if you said "Marx" and they had been to a movie they would think "Groucho." They didn't necessarily know communism. All they knew was that they were poor and there were richer people than they. The communists told them they could have more goodies such as education for their children if they joined the party. The Communist Party was growing by leaps and bounds.

Java is intrinsically a poor part of the world. I believe Java and Bangladesh are the two most densely populated rural areas on earth. It is very fertile land but mountainous. The Javanese had evolved a strange intricate system, a labor-intensive society where everything was interlocked and ruled by tradition. You couldn't cut the rice with a large scythe, you had to use little hand knives and cut one grain at a time. The reason--you don't want to disturb the rice goddess. The people are Muslims, but not intense Muslims. They would burn a pinch of incense to the tree goddess before going to the mosque on Friday. But basically the problem for them was to spread the labor. There were landowners and the landless. It was the landless who became PKI members. The landowners

were not fat cats with huge holdings. Usually they owned only four or five acres. And they lived on the land and their family worked on the land and they hired landless labor to supplement their own work. And tradition dictated which landless labor they hired and how many. It was a system in which some people were much better off than others, but nobody was living really high on the hog.

Then the PKI moved in. They began to indoctrinate the landless labor, who had plenty of reason to feel sorry for themselves. Into the intricate Javanese system they brought a new element, a very disruptive element, that turned the landless against the civil authorities and the peasants who had land...brought a split into the society and threatened the society. Something was going to do that anyway, I suppose. It greatly increased tension throughout Java and tremendously increased the power of the Communist Party in Java.

One of the PKI's main sources of strength was Sukarno. He was not a communist, he saw himself above politics, but when he gave a speech...they were marvelous speeches...the Communists could rally 100,000 people to stand and scream their support. It was the Communist Party that could organize great numbers to march through the streets and snarl at us while passing the American Embassy. They were not anti-American because they didn't like Americans, they were anti-American because they didn't like a country being so nasty to Sukarno.

Anyway, it got worse and worse. Sukarno was using as one of his primary weapons Indonesia's claim to West Irian, the Indonesian name for the former Netherlands New Guinea, the western half of the island of New Guinea that the Dutch kept from the Indonesians in 1949 when they conceded the rest of the Netherlands Indies to the Indonesian nationalists. For years Sukarno insisted that West Irian was part of Indonesia. The Dutch would claim that the people of West Irian were not Indonesians, that they were totally different people and must be protected by the Dutch until they were mature enough to become independent. They had nothing to do with Indonesia, according to the Dutch.

Well this wasn't true. The people of West Irian were not of Malay origin as were most Indonesians but of Melanesian origin. But so were many thousands of people in the eastern Indonesian islands, while millions more were a blend of Malay and Melanesian. Getting West Irian from the Dutch became a great goal for Sukarno and the Indonesians.

The Indonesians pushed the issue in the United Nations and everywhere. Sukarno, especially, used it for beating the West as a whole. It also split the State Department because the Dutch were one of the most cooperative of all our NATO Allies. Naturally the European Bureau said we couldn't do anything to upset the Dutch while the East Asian Bureau was saying, look, you can't lose Indonesia just to placate the Dutch.

I was part of it. I was the one writing the East Asia Bureau's memos and position papers, arguing with the European Desks and fighting the bureaucratic wars. The end result was paralysis. The Administration's position became one of neutrality, supporting neither the Indonesian nor the Dutch. Since the Dutch physically held West Irian, we kept arguing that our policy wasn't so much neutral as pro-Dutch.

Anyway, this went on through the end of the Eisenhower Administration. Then Kennedy came in and said, "Let's try an entirely new approach." Let us try to settle the West Irian issue, which we did. Ellsworth Bunker was named by Kennedy to mediate the dispute and he did, with the active support of the White House. By that time the Dutch were becoming just a little bit tired of the whole thing. It was costing them a fortune. They were honest. Their principles were that the people of West Irian were wards and they had to stay with them. They were also madder than hell at the Indonesians because, after all, they had fought a 4-year war of independence against the Dutch. So, with a good deal of prodding and careful work by the Kennedy Administration, Bobby Kennedy in particular...it was the only time I ever met him. I remember Jones and I went to call on him on one occasion. Bobby Kennedy knew a surprising amount about Indonesia, Sukarno, West Irian and all that. He had informed himself on the topic. And, yes, we worked out a settlement between Indonesia and the Netherlands.

Interestingly enough, way back in 1959 John Henderson, our political counselor in Jakarta, got his political officers together and said, "Let us work out what we think should happen. The big issue is West New Guinea. Let's have a seminar among ourselves." First we worked out a rationale for changing our policy-- about 15-18 pages--and then a proposal for how to change it. I was the one assigned to writing them up. They were not my ideas, they were joint ideas. Jones signed my two despatches and sent them to Washington. And it was exactly the course we eventually followed three years later.

So the Kennedy Administration did work out the agreement that turned West Irian over to the United Nations, just as we in Jakarta had proposed in 1959. The United Nations governed it for a year and then held a sort of plebiscite.

Q: It would be pretty hard to hold a plebiscite.

INGRAHAM: Well, first of all they were holding a plebiscite asking people whether they wanted to be part of Indonesia or part of the Netherlands. They were asking a bunch of people who would reply: "What is Indonesia, what is the Netherlands?" Anyway, West Irian was turned over to Indonesia. The next August 17, Indonesian Independence Day, Sukarno entitled his speech "A Year of Triumph."

We thought, fine, everything is on track again, our great impediment is wiped out and we will now be able to draw Indonesia back into "the free world." Well that lasted about a year and then the Brits decided to do something with Malaya and Singapore and their North Borneo Territories, Sabah and Sarawak. The British idea was to combine them into the new nation of Malaysia-- a very sensible idea. The Brits made one great mistake and I think privately they will admit it. If they had gone to Sukarno at the very beginning and said they were thinking about doing this and what did he think about it--work with him, it would have been okay. But they completely...I think they just forgot to.

So Malaysia is announced. Sukarno rises in wrath and complains, "I was not consulted." The next thing you know a little rebellion breaks out in Sarawak, I think, and in Brunei. And the Indonesians support it by sending arms and guerrillas across the border and we have the Malaysia/Sarawak/Borneo crisis. The crisis continued right up to the end of the Sukarno regime.

That got worse, and worse and worse. Sukarno was supporting the overthrow of the Malaysia project. We were saying, "No, no, please don't do it." He was ignoring us. We still were trying to capitalize on what we felt was the advantage gained from our role in the West Irian settlement. Power had really corrupted him by that stage. He just thought, "I can do no wrong." And the Chinese and the Russians were flattering the hell out of him. The Russians began to give him lots of modern military equipment. We weren't terribly worried because the Indonesian army, good as it was, wasn't on the same level as we were beginning to discover the North Vietnamese army was. But in the early '60s, let's say '63, '64, '65, if you stopped anybody in the State Department who had been dealing with East Asia, he would be hard pressed to say whether the worse menace was in Vietnam or in Indonesia. Of course, Indonesia was so much larger and more strategically located than Vietnam. A lot of us thought "the hell with Vietnam; Indonesia is where its going to happen." Well, of course, it did in 1965.

But in the meantime I was the Desk officer and I was getting it from all sides. I never worked harder and longer in my life. I would get home about 8:00 at night. The phone would ring at 2:00 in the morning and I would hear, "Hello, Mr. Ingraham, this is the Watch Officer, I thought you would want to know they just burned down the library in Surabaya." And I would say, "For Christ sake, what am I supposed to do about it at two a.m.?" He would say, "I don't know Mr. Ingraham, I was just told to call you." So I would lie awake the rest of the night with my stomach churning.

Q: Averell Harriman was Assistant Secretary for East Asia at that time. How did he deal with you and what was his attitude towards Indonesia?

INGRAHAM: It was interesting. He accepted, by and large, the Jones theory that we had to hang on until the last bitter gasp because we gain nothing by leaving. By this time we could easily have broken relations and taken action against...not quite militarily, although military could have been on the horizon. Harriman fought against this. He was a strange man. His factual knowledge of the area was just about nil. He learned a bit, but he wasn't a great student. But he had the most exquisitely honed political instincts. You would go up to him and say, "This, this and this have happened. We think you should do this, this and this." He would ask some very sharp questions and then say, "Okay go ahead and do it." You could ask him, "Well, why do you think we should?" And he would snap, "Never mind. Go ahead and do it." The "never mind" was a way of saying, "I haven't the faintest idea about the details of what you have proposed, but my instinct tells me to do it." And it was a good instinct.

There was no one that Harriman would kowtow to. He fought our battles against the European Bureau, which had switched about a bit. First it was the Dutch but now it was the Brits, with the Indonesian attack on Malaysia. Of course, we also had Malaysia in our area, so even within the East Asia Bureau there was somewhat of a split. Meanwhile Jones was out there saying, "Hang on, hang on, hang on;" seeing Sukarno probably every third day and saying, "For God's sake don't do this."

Q: Were you feeling media and/or Congressional pressure about this policy?

INGRAHAM: Yes. Once Evans or Novak--can't remember which-- had me out for lunch at the Metropolitan Club as I filled him in on Indonesian lore. Yeah. The press was always calling me.

Every morning we worked out the line we were going to use with the press that day. I was in the middle of everything. I got hauled up to the Hill for...actually I wasn't the main one, I would go along while Harriman or more likely one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries would go up to the Hill to testify. Congress was always angry at Sukarno because he was so damn flamboyant.

So it went on, getting worse and worse and worse. Then came the night of September 30, 1965.

Q: You were still Desk officer?

INGRAHAM: No.

Q: When did you leave?

INGRAHAM: A month earlier in August, 1965. After three years on the Desk I was assigned to the next National War College class. My successor took over and within a month everything...

MICHAEL H. NEWLIN
Political Officer, Bureau of International Organizations
Washington, DC (1958-1963)

Ambassador Newlin was born in North Carolina and was raised there and in the Panama canal zone. After graduating from Harvard he joined the Foreign Service in 1952 and was posted to Frankfurt, Oslo, Paris, Kinshasa and Jerusalem, where served as Consul General. During his distinguished career, Ambassador Newlin served in several high level positions dealing with the United Nations and its agencies and NATO. He served as Ambassador to Algeria from 1981 to 1985 and as US representative to the United Nations Agencies in Vienna, 1988-1991. Ambassador Newlin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: Well then in 1958, whither?

NEWLIN: In 1958, as I said, we got married in '55. My wife, Milena, came to Norway and was with me for the last two years. In '58 we were transferred to the State Department. The idea being that since I had married a foreign national, that we should be in Washington so that my wife could become more Americanized. So Frances Willis, then the career ambassador, she wanted me, I found out later, I didn't know, she wanted me to be assigned as the Norwegian desk officer. But the European bureau had their own candidate so that didn't happen. But because she had made the request, I was assigned as a political officer to the Bureau of International Organizations. The office was called UNP (United Nations Political Affairs). The heads of the office were William Cargo and Joseph John Sisco. That turned out to be a very interesting place to be at that time.

Q: Well first will you talk about Bill Cargo and then about Joe Sisco. Particularly Sisco is renowned . But first let's talk a little bit about Cargo, and then we will talk about Sisco.

NEWLIN: Well both men worked very closely together. Bill Cargo predated Sisco in the Department. He was involved I think along with some of the others in the top secret planning during WWII for the UN, so we wouldn't have another debacle like we did after the First World War when we did not join the League of Nations. Sisco I think started out in CIA and I suppose Joe couldn't stand not telling people where he worked or what he did. So he transferred to State and was Cargo's deputy. As a result of this he was not accepted by the old foreign service crowd as a genuine FSO that had come in the front door through the examination procedure. I got along with them very well. My immediate boss was Elizabeth Ann Brown. She, I think too, had done some of the planning during the war.

Q: She had been involved with the United Nations for a long time.

NEWLIN: Yes, that's right.

Q: I knew her when she was the chief of the political section in Athens when I was consul general.

NEWLIN: Ah-ha.

Q: What piece of the action did you have?

NEWLIN: Well I started out working on general political things, whatever came up that Sisco would assign me. I had a minor role in the cold war. After the Soviet invasion of Hungary in '57, I thought up a gimmick to use in the UN that in the credentials committee, we would not accept the credentials of the soviet puppet Hungarian regime. I knew that it would be a major fight to reject the credentials and we probably would have some defections, but if we took no action on the Hungarian credentials, then this would cast a shadow on the Soviet installed communist regime. I remember there were various views in the Department. Sisco and Cargo were both for it, as was the IO (International Affairs) assistant secretary. I remember that the assistant secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Mr. Robertson, whose mission in life was to protect Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalists. It finally got all the way up to Dulles' office. So I found myself with Sisco going into Dulles' office. Robertson was there, and Robertson was worried that this would set a precedent, and maybe the soviets then would say we ought to take no action on the Chinese credentials. So we had quite a debate. Finally, Dulles agreed that this is what we would do. So for years, this went on. We always lined up a majority vote in the committee. I know that it annoyed the Soviets because at one stage Khrushchev complained publicly. He said, "This is something intolerable, and it is a rat in the throat of the United States, the capitalists." I started out in UNP in the old State Department Building. The new State Department Building was just being finished, and so it wasn't long that we moved into the present building. By that time, the Kennedy Administration had come in and there were great changes all around. I by that time, had been made officer in charge of dependent area affairs which in colonial times had been headed by a very senior officer who ran it as his fiefdom. Now this was on the eve of all of the colonial entities becoming independent. So I got involved in all of that. Rwanda and Burundi, and even then I remember there were tensions between the Hutu and the Tutsis, and what was going to happen when the Belgians suddenly left. Then there was a serious problem with West New Guinea, which was then known in Indonesia as West Irian. The Dutch when they granted independence to Indonesia, which they had to do after the war, had left this one remaining part out. So the Dutch

still occupied West Irian. They had never done anything there. The indigenous people were a fascinating thing for anthropologists to study because they were stone age people. No roads, No schools, no hospitals, but still. So Sukarno the first president vowed to reunite West Irian. In the early '60s there was a political tidal wave of post colonial leaders. You had Nehru in India. You had Nkrumah in Ghana. You had Nasser in Egypt and Sukarno in Indonesia. You had Tito in the non aligned movement. This became a political issue in the Netherlands. Sukarno took over Dutch businesses and expelled Dutch businessmen. The Dutch said the problem should be solved through negotiations and the administration backed them up. I was involved in all of these discussions. Then U Thant of Burma had become the Secretary General of the UN. We worked out an arrangement whereby Ellsworth Bunker would be designated by U Thant as his representative, and he would invite the Dutch and the Indonesians to meet to discuss the future of this. This was really my introduction to the important international negotiations. Ellsworth then had two State Department aides. I was one, and there was a fellow foreign service officer from the Far East Bureau who was the Indonesian desk officer. We met secretly in a plantation near Middleburg owned by a Texas millionaire. It was a plantation house built in colonial times, well staffed, beautiful grounds and everything. The Indonesian ambassador, Malik, was very capable. The Dutch team were too. Bunker did a very good job. My job, and the job of the other foreign service officer was to take notes of the meetings and make sure to inform the Department of what was going on. We found that there was quite a bit of agreement as to what should really happen, that finally the future should be determined by some kind of form of consulting the people whether they wanted to join Indonesia or not. There should be an interim UN administration of the area prior to the actual consultation. We had gotten quite along when the Dutch said, "I think we ought to draw up a piece of paper saying what we agree on." Bunker said, "Yes. Mike, will you draw up this piece of paper." So I drew up a list of all the things that had been agreed on, and so that was the core of what became the basic agreement. Even though the talks were going well Sukarno behaved badly and kept issuing threats. Suddenly it looked like we wouldn't have any agreement. The negotiations adjourned. Then the foreign minister of Indonesia came to Washington, and Kennedy received him. Later on when Jim Bell, who was the office director for Indonesia went to get debriefed, the foreign minister said, "This is the first time as foreign minister that I have ever been threatened." Kennedy said to him, "You have got to settle this thing diplomatically, and I want to let you know that if you try to use military force, the seventh fleet is in the area." That broke the ice, so we then reconvened, got the treaty done, went up to New York and got U Thant's blessing and the Security Council. In addition to drawing up the draft that became the basic treaty with minor changes, the other thing that I did was I put in a provision that the cost of the UN administration, the interim administration, would be borne jointly by the parties, because I didn't want this to get hung up by people who didn't like the agreement for some reason in the non-aligned or elsewhere., to hold it up in the UN budget committee and that kind of thing. There were people in the State Department who said, "No, we can't have that kind of thing. This is a UN undertaking and the UN ought to pay for it." I stuck to my guns. I said, "This is trying to facilitate UN approval." So this was one of the successes of the Kennedy Administration. It wasn't very widely noticed, but we did have the interim administration. Bunker went out and was in Jakarta. Eventually they had something called mujawara a consultation of the local people. During the negotiations we would occasionally have to have a day or two of no activity while the two parties got instructions. This was certainly true of the Indonesians, and the Dutch too. Afterwards, Hydecoper came to see me in the Department later and said, "Mike, I want you to know that we had no instructions. Lunz the foreign minister said to the Dutch ambassador, 'you go and settle this

thing.” Later on unfortunately he was criticized by some of the political parties for having succeeded. The West Irian settlement resulted in normal relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Dutch businesses returned.

Q: From a practical point of view, I am told Indonesian control of the area was not very strong either.

NEWLIN: That’s true.

Q: There were lots of places you could fly in?

NEWLIN: They spent no money at all. But a very nice thing happened to me as a result of all of this. Can you imagine a young foreign service officer getting something like this?

Q: I am going to read it in here. This is from

The Secretary of State

August 28, 1962.

Dear Mr. Newlin,

The successful conclusion of the West New Guinea negotiations owes a great deal to a small group of State Department officers being both directly involved. I know the long hours and the hard work you have devoted to this enterprise, and want to express my personal thanks to you for your outstanding service to your country over those past months.

Sincerely,

Dean Rusk

That is great. Not many secretaries do that. What was your impression of how Ellsworth Bunker operated?

NEWLIN: Ellsworth Bunker, if you were in Hollywood, and you wanted somebody to play the role of a Boston Brahmin exuding dignity and integrity, you would send for Ellsworth Bunker. His silver hair and delightful person. It turned out that he and his family were Dutch immigrants. He had worked in the Jack Frost sugar company and was a successful businessman. I think he married a very wealthy wife, and he had served as ambassador to India, I believe, as well. He was superb. He was firm when he needed to be firm, but he was always approachable, and I was very fond of Ellsworth.

Q: How did you find the negotiating teams of the Indonesians and the Dutch? To me it sounds like although they had lived together for 300 years, I can’t think of particularly a rebel group that came out not that long before in Indonesia I can’t think of sort of the stolid Dutch and the rather excitable Indonesians. I mean how did this work?

NEWLIN: Well I think one of the things that worked was the fact that Ellsworth was in charge of it. I was very impressed with the Indonesian ambassador Malik and the Dutch team was also first rate.

Q: Later he was foreign minister wasn’t he?

NEWLIN: I think he did go on to be foreign minister. He was a very modest person, soft spoken, very pleasant. Spoke perfect Dutch like many of the Indonesians. The Dutch team had two very senior ambassadors. After the day's negotiations, we had morning sessions, and then we would break for lunch and afternoon sessions. After dinner we would all gather in the living room of this beautiful plantation house and just talk. Then when the Dutch and the Indonesians wanted to compare notes and didn't want the Americans to know what they were talking about, they would speak Dutch.

Q: Did you ever have the equivalent to a representative from one of the deep valleys of New Guinea come out?

NEWLIN: No, they wouldn't have known what it was all about. If I could go fast forward a little bit, all this was now in the Kennedy Administration, and of course we had a new assistant secretary of state in Harlan Cleveland. Harlan was a brilliant creative person, very ambitious, and made it clear that he was going to carry out the program of the Kennedy Administration. We had our own dependent areas in the islands in the Pacific. We had put them after the war under the Security Council because we had a veto there. They were a UN trusteeship, but we administered them. A tribal chief from Samoa came to Washington and called on Cleveland. We hadn't done anything really to help develop the place. People fished and ate coconuts. That was their life and that was fine. Cleveland thought they should agitate for some infrastructure, schools, and so forth. So he kept trying to tell the chief that he had to get busy in a lobbying effort in Congress. The chief didn't understand so Harlan said, "The squeaking wheel gets the grease." Finally when it was explained to him, he said, "Well, we believe in people being modest and not too greedy." The chief didn't understand the squeaking wheel analogy.

The most exciting thing that happened while I was in UNP was the Cuban missile crisis. Some of us were called in on a Saturday afternoon. Sisco wanted to know where, we had a young man named White, where his files were. So we had to go and find his safe and files. We were then dismissed.. We surmised it is either Cuba or he was working on Honduras. Well it turned out of course it was Cuba. So when we finally got to the denouement of this big Security Council meeting with Adlai there, Cleveland was of course on top of all of the things. He said, "The OAS (Organization of American States) is meeting this afternoon." We had a resolution there condemning the installation of the missiles in Cuba, calling on the Soviets to remove them. Cleveland sent a member of our United National political affairs over to be at the OAS for the vote. We were all in Cleveland's office that evening glued to the television. The telephone rang and it was JFK. He said, "Harlan, the OAS just voted in our favor unanimously except for Cuba.. We have got to get this up to New York right away." So Cleveland said, "Mr. President, if you will look at your TV screen, you will see Joe Sisco handing a note to Adlai with the vote." Now I call that completed staff work. If there ever was completed staff work that was it. One of the big advantages I remember is I got to go up to New York for brief periods and then also I got to go up for one whole assembly. For some reason I had items that Adlai was interested in, and so to show you what a wonderful person he was.

JACK LYDMAN
Principal Officer
Surabaya (1958-1960)

Counselor for Economic Affairs
Jakarta (1960-1962)

Deputy Chief of Mission
Jakarta (1966-1969)

Ambassador Jack Lydman was born in New York in 1914. He received a bachelor's degree from Bard College in 1936 and joined the U.S. Army Intelligence Corps in 1940. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included positions in Indonesia, Australia, and Malaysia. Ambassador Lydman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 27, 1988.

Q: Going now to the time you went to Indonesia where you were to serve from 1958 to 1960 as the Consul in Surabaya.

LYDMAN: Yes.

Q: And then as the Economic Counselor in Jakarta from 1960 to '62. First, what was our consulate doing at the time? Surabaya is in Sumatra, is that right?

LYDMAN: No, no. Surabaya is in East Java.

Q: East Java.

LYDMAN: It was a rather key consulate at the time because one of the principal preoccupations of the American mission in Indonesia was tracking the strength of the Indonesian Communist Party. Surabaya happened to be the center of strength for the Indonesian Communist Party.

Q: That's the PKI?

LYDMAN: The PKI (Partai Kommunist Indonesia). The mayor and the city council of the city of Surabaya, which is the second largest city in Indonesia, was Communist. And it was felt important that the consulate keep its eye just as firmly as possible on what was going on in East Java and in Surabaya. It was a very active reporting post. The Consular corps was a kind of East-West package. The Russian Consul had managed to have himself raised to the position of Consul General so that he became dean of the corps. Then you had a Czech Consul, who was a mirror image of the Russian and you had a Japanese Consul, an Indian Consul, a British Consul, and myself. It was rather a fascinating time to watch the kind of pavane that went back and forth between President Sukarno, the PKI center in Jakarta and the PKI in Surabaya. While I was there, there were two important state visits, by Khrushchev, the first time a Russian premier had ever been to Indonesia, and Uncle Ho, Ho Chi Minh. Both of these were major occasions for the PKI to rally the faithful and put on display the strengths and appeals of Marxism.

The mayor of Surabaya was a Communist but also a Dutch-trained psychiatrist. Delightful little fellow. I liked him a great deal. He was married to a woman much taller than he was, big woman, a devout Roman Catholic in charge of Catholic welfare for the diocese. All very Indonesian.

Q: Let me ask -- this was a time when we hadn't learned, you might say, to live as easily as we have today with many of the Communist manifestations abroad, but were you under any instructions? I mean, how did you deal with it? Was it a problem?

LYDMAN: No. As a matter of fact, I pretty much wrote my own book. We flooded the embassy and the Department with reporting. Once in the while the Political Counselor would come up from Jakarta and say, my God, I haven't time to read anything except what you're sending from Surabaya. But nobody asked us to cut it down.

Q: What were we able to do there? As the Consul, what could you do other than report? I mean, were you able to establish American credentials?

LYDMAN: We concentrated on important non-Communist and anti-Communist groups, particularly the Army and Navy. The Navy had its biggest naval base in Surabaya. It had been somewhat contaminated by Marxism and it was a very important target for us.

Q: Khrushchev brought a nice cruiser there, didn't he, and gave to the Indonesians?

LYDMAN: Not at the time of his visit. But a lot of their principal craft came from the Russians, submarines, as well as other ships. The Army was an extraordinarily important target for us because we felt it was the principal barrier to a Communist takeover in Indonesia. We felt that right up to the time of the coup in 1965.

Q: When Suharto, leading the Army, took over.

LYDMAN: Yes.

Q: But was our role with the Army tainted by the fact that we were accused of helping with the, what was it the outer island rebellion, at the time? I mean, we were giving support to some of the rebels on Timor and Sumatra and Borneo and the Celebes.

LYDMAN: Oh, I think those were temporary embarrassments. I wouldn't put them in any more important context than that. And also you must remember that the question of Islam, which was at the basis of that rebellion, was very much an issue in the Army itself. Many of the Army generals and higher officers were in sympathy with the Dar Islam movement. So this wasn't just a we and they thing. It was a complex mix within the society. I don't think it really hurt us a great deal. I think it hurt us particularly with Sukarno who felt that that sort of gamesmanship was aimed directly at him. But the important element in those days was our Ambassador.

Q: Howard Jones?

LYDMAN: Howard Jones. He became controversial. I had respect for him because I felt he clearly saw what the role of the U.S. embassy had to be in those very delicate and difficult years. The problem for Howard was to make it difficult for Sukarno to break relations with the United States or to create a situation in which the United States would break relations with Indonesia.

Q: I would like to move on to this because eventually we want to keep moving, but you went to the embassy in 1960 --

LYDMAN: '60.

Q: As Economic Counselor? And you did work under eventually two quite different Ambassadors, Howard Jones and Marshall Green.

LYDMAN: Indeed.

Q: Could you describe Howard Jones' operating style and what his goals were when you were there, at that time.

LYDMAN: I've just given you some indication of what his principal goal was. His operating style was very much what one would call intimate association with as many of the top Indonesians as he possibly could maintain, particularly with the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the other top ministers. Howard would spend most of his waking hours figuring out how he could meet with, talk with, and deal with, these top people in government, not only during the week but frequently on weekends in the mountains where the Ambassador had a summer house. It was important to try to get up there for a few hours on a weekend because it meant a change in climate and the luxury of being able to sleep without air conditioning for a night. Howard Jones was getting on in years, as was his wife, and they needed that sort of break. So he would try if at all possible to get up there. Well, he'd get up there and then the first thing you would have would be a call from Howard to those of us who were in attendance on the Ambassador. We all had to be at hand. Sure enough I would get a call from him, saying, "Jack, I'd like you to come along with me. We're going to find Subandrio." (the Foreign Minister) There always seemed to be some problem that Howard thought necessary to get to the Foreign Minister or to the President. Well, you would find yourself riding around the country for hours with Howard Jones, chasing down the Indonesian government. But that was Howard Jones' style.

Q: All right. Let's say he caught the Foreign Minister. What would he do?

LYDMAN: He was a fantastic reporter. He had had a long career in the newspaper business at one time. He had run 23 newspapers in the Middle West. He would have these meetings and there wasn't a day that went by without a message from Howard to the Secretary, "I saw Sukarno this morning, etc..". It was what one could call a continuing soap opera on Indonesian-American affairs. But it was a fantastic job of reporting.

Q: On this, you mentioned several times drafting cables and all. And in the Foreign Service this is considered the sublime art, if you are a good drafter.

LYDMAN: Yes.

Q: What's the result of this? I mean, obviously you'd look at the top people in our Executive and Indonesia rarely raises its head. Except in an absolute crisis, Indonesia is something that we'd almost rather forget about, albeit it's an important, large country and all that. Do you think that Howard Jones' reporting was effective?

LYDMAN: I do. I don't agree with your initial premise. At that time Indonesia was considered immensely important. This was the Dulles period, you must remember, with the idea of forming some kind of a strategic complex for Southeast Asia. Everyone took this seriously. For example, we had an AID program for Indonesia that was large and extensive. We considered this country to be a vital anchor for the strategic defense of the South Pacific. There was no question that this had high priority in Washington during this time. Howard Jones knew this. What he constantly fought against was a tendency on the part of bureaucrats in Washington to write off Sukarno as a Southeast Asian romantic nut with personal peccadillos that most red-blooded Americans couldn't stand. I mean, his womanizing, prancing around, posturing, misuse of history. All of this just put shivers through most red-blooded bureaucrats in Washington. And Howard had to protect this weird Southeast Asian figure from being rubbed out by various impulses for derision. Now Howard I think did a good job of this. It was not just technique, it was because he felt it was vital to his principal effort to keep the American-Indonesian dialogue going as healthily as he possibly could. And that was the job as he saw it.

Q: You're saying that sometimes seen in contrast, to some impressions of Howard Jones is that he was a man who would do anything to stay on friendly terms. What you're saying was a policy consideration rather than being what would be considered too soft on Sukarno and our policy should have been firmer. You feel that a firmer policy probably would not have worked.

LYDMAN: I think it would have run the risk of being counterproductive. You know, there are shadings all the way along. If one would say, yes, perhaps a little bit more muscle from time to time might have been better. If you look at this by hindsight, sure you can say that. But you're talking about shadings. You're not really talking about mainstream of policy the way he was trying to implement it. On balance, I think he did absolutely right. I have the highest regard for him and the greatest respect. He was an immensely hard-working Ambassador. He gave unstintingly of himself. He had very little amour propre except what was necessary for his posture in that government and with that government. I'm not one of Howard's detractors at all.

Q: You were the Economic Counselor. What were your responsibilities?

LYDMAN: That was a very exciting period because it was the time when we were really launching an enormous AID program. This was the Kennedy years, you know. An economic task force group came out, sent out by Kennedy himself, to try to figure out what to do about Indonesia. And we were going to be the principal donor. I don't know how many AID officers we had. I think at one time we had 389. My job was to closely monitor this huge AID mission and, to keep the Ambassador informed, and to provide policy guidance to the AID mission.

The AID building was almost adjacent to the embassy. I spent a good deal of time in assessing how

the program was going, where it was focusing, whether it was working or not. And also tried to figure out how it was impacting on the communities in Indonesia which we were flooding places with AID people.

I got to be, I'm afraid, somewhat of a hair shirt, but I think it was probably my function to be the hair shirt.

Q: The Ambassador wanted you to be somewhat the devil's advocate?

LYDMAN: He did.

Q: -- reporter. How did he view the AID man, more as an advocate of just more AID?

LYDMAN: Not necessarily. He and the AID man got along very well together. The AID was Allen, who had been the former Chancellor of the University of California, very distinguished American, by training a urologist. He was not an economist, but he was a man who had run things very well. He had a back-up staff of more orthodox AID types, economists and bureaucrats who knew the AID business.

I got along very well with Allen. He was a very good bureaucrat. He knew how never to confront. He knew always how to bend and to compromise but usually he would come out getting much of his own way. I had great regard and respect for him in that way.

My problem with big AID missions was I felt we had over-bureaucratized the function. It became more of a vehicle for the employment of X numbers of American AID officers than it was a purposeful what I call program aimed at correcting problems or helping the development process. I became hard-nosed about AID during those years. There were only two years, mind you, that I was there. But I really came out with a sour taste about the whole process. I felt (a) we were not only wasting a lot of our own resources, (b) we were creating an almost intolerable political impact by the saturation of these countries and their economic processes by this rag-tailed group of Americans, most of whom I learned not to respect overly for their expertise.

Q: This of course is a question. Frankly I share your feeling towards this. But what were we doing? I know the Soviets were sort of coming in with the usual steel mill, stadium.

LYDMAN: Right. It was very competitive. We had lots of money in those days, we could generate this kind of program without too much of an impact on the American taxpayer. What we were attempting to do was to convince the Indonesians that what we were doing was helping their development process in contrast to the Russian program of simply putting a fancy stadium in Jakarta.

But when you burgeon with the numbers of people and numbers of programs that we were ending up with in my time there, '60 to '62, you begin to lose sight of the main purpose. And in fact you then began to generate negative effects.

Q: What type of negative effects were there?

LYDMAN: I thought they were negative because first of all you put the Indonesians into a posture that they could get anything they wanted if they just asked for it. That was one negative effect. Another was that the proliferation of the AID program -- we were doing things like setting up a domestic merchant marine academy. We had a thing going out in the lesser Sundas where we were building boats for long-line tuna fishing, not realizing that this was something that was simply not going to be done because Indonesians never would do this traditionally. They don't fish that way. Not only that, if you build these boats, who is going to maintain them? I mean, the first time you knock an engine out, where do you get the replacement? Many of our projects were frankly ill-conceived.

We had people going out trying to improve the growing of cotton. Cotton is a meaningless cipher in the agriculture of Indonesia. It wouldn't matter if they never grew a cotton boll because it's not a crop for them.

Q: We happened to have a cotton expert?

LYDMAN: We happened to have a cotton expert. And you know that's what happens. We were doing everything. We were upgrading how they made batiks. Can you imagine? Americans going over to teach the Indonesians how to upgrade their batiks! This got to be absurd.

Q: Were you able to have contact with Indonesians who were also telling you this? Or were they just sitting back and saying, send more money, the people you dealt with?

LYDMAN: At that time really discerning Indonesians were not much in evidence. University trained scientists were still in school, most in the United States. When I got back in '66 as Deputy to Marshall most had come back.

Q: This is Marshall Green?

LYDMAN: Marshall Green. You know, it was a wonderful opportunity because we had a new shake, Marshall and I, really I think together helped to map out a new AID strategy. The last thing we ever wanted to do was to commit the United States to a big bilateral AID program in Indonesia. How were we going to avoid that? We had conversations with Washington, people we knew, and with some of these new Indonesians who had come back.

Q: By the way, we're speaking about the period of -- ?

LYDMAN: '66 to '69.

Q: '66 to '69, Indonesia under Ambassador Marshall Green.

LYDMAN: That's right. We decided we were going to try to arrange an international assistance effort under the umbrella of the World Bank. Marshall and I both agreed nobody loves Santa Claus; we were not going to be Santa Claus in this business. We were not going to be primus inter pares only one among many and that was it.

Well, this thing worked and it has worked ever since. And it's not only worked there, but it's a model for the Philippines and I believe Pakistan, among others. And it got us off the hook because all we did then was to contribute to the multilateral aid effort where we had very few people, at least we hoped would be very few. After the coup in 1965 the embassy had been pared down to 25 or 30 people. Glorious. Absolutely glorious. So Marshall and I said we will not let them pass, we are not going to get a new Embassy/AID bureaucracy here of great numbers.

We succeeded first in keeping it down to, I don't know, 19 or 20 people. But you know, it's like a creeping disease, by the time I left in '69 I guess that mission was up to 150 or something like that.

Q: We'll come to Australia a little later, but why don't we continue with Indonesia for the time being. What was the situation in Indonesia when you came back in 1966?

LYDMAN: You mean the political situation?

Q: Political situation. When you came back as the Deputy Chief of Mission.

LYDMAN: Of course they had had the big crisis, that had happened before I came back. I arrived in October and the big crisis was in September 1965. What had happened was the attempt on the part of the Indonesian PKI which thought that it was in a position to seize power. The history of the period indicates that the Chinese government was certainly implicated in this effort, but how much of a participant they were is still I think somewhat hazy. Several members of the Indonesian government were involved, certainly several of the ministers. Good slices of the police, the Navy, the Marines were also involved. The Foreign Minister was involved. And of course Sukarno was involved. And the evidence is fairly strong that he certainly, if not in charge of the grand design at least went along with it.

The game was saved, as you know, in typical Javanese fashion by this relatively obscure general who just happened to be in a position to rally enough forces to put down the main thrust of the coup in Jakarta.

Q: We're talking about Suharto.

LYDMAN: Suharto. The coup could very well have succeeded. Now, what was at stake here? I don't know whether you know Bob Martens. Bob has written what I think is an absolutely fascinating analysis of the time -- his thesis is that the coup was the culmination of a long series of programmed moves on the part of Sukarno who was a dedicated Socialist from the very beginning.

Not everybody will agree with that thesis. As a matter of fact, I have some difficulty in buying it completely although I think it's valid and certainly ought to be considered. Prior to the coup, the military had been the principal anti-Communist element. The military wanted power; the Communists wanted power. the conflict had less to do with ideology than led the razzia against all elements that were in any degree tainted ideologically.

Q: Razzia being?

LYDMAN: This was a sweep of the Communist elements in the country. Nobody knows how many people were killed in those days, but it was enormous.

Q: One hears tremendous numbers bandied about, but at the same time in an interview with Marshall Green he says that really there wasn't much evidence that was available to us, except that we heard these stories.

LYDMAN: That's right. There wasn't enough evidence because we didn't have our people out in the places where the nightly massacres were taking place. What happened was that every night Army trucks would cover the countryside with hit lists of people to be picked up. And they would be picked up, in villages outside of villages, in the rural areas for the most part. Also this happened in cities. Then they were gathered together in slaughter points and they would be eliminated that same night. And this went on night after night.

For example on Bali many Balinese friends reported particularly brutal executions because of a rather heavy infestation of the PKI in Balinese villages.

Q: Let's move to being a DCM. How did Marshall Green use you as a DCM?

LYDMAN: From the perspective of a DCM, Marshall was an excellent Ambassador. He let the DCM really manage the embassy, and I did. I rode herd on all the elements including the AID mission, everything else. Marshall had excellent contacts with all the top people in the Indonesian government. He was also very receptive to suggestions from me and others as to who he should see and why. He was a great reporting officer himself, a great draftsman. Very good representationally. Awfully good with his diplomatic colleagues, with the Indians, the Brits, the Pakistani. One thing that Marshall appreciated was that you get an awful lot from your diplomatic colleagues, and don't ignore them. I admired that. Marshall did that much more successfully than Howard Jones, for example. Howard was much more of a loner in the diplomatic service. But Marshall was excellent. He really kept his network going there.

In the embassy, we had a daily staff meeting at 9:00 in the morning attended by every major element of the embassy, never less than 15 to 20 people. Marshall would head the table and I would read the agenda and run the meeting for him. He would indulge in the give and take, make suggestions, give orders, vent whatever happened to be on his mind.

Q: A question that I would like to ask. I speak as a former, basically Professional Consular Officer. How was your consular section used? Or was it used?

LYDMAN: Well, the usual consular functions. We had a pretty heavy load, although nothing in comparison with, let's say, Singapore or Hong Kong where you had an enormous Chinese immigration problem. I think we had, as I recall, a Consul and two Vice Consuls in Jakarta. And then local employees, not very many. It wasn't that active a section.

Q: You didn't have much in the way of Americans in trouble and things like that?

LYDMAN: Very few. And, I'll tell you, if we had Americans in trouble it was normally of a variety that other than consular people were handling it. For example, we had a well-known horn player who came on one of the USIA programs with his group. I can't remember his name now, I should but I'm not very much of a jazz sort of person. He gave two or three concerts in Jakarta very successfully. The Indonesians adored him. He came with his wife, by the way.

Then he left his wife and the group in Jakarta and went off to Surabaya, not to play but just went off to see. He apparently had hooked up with one of the very attractive ladies who was working in the palace with Sukarno as an assistant press officer. The two apparently had a lovely weekend in Surabaya. But he made the egregious blunder of taking photographs of the two of them in what one would call suggestive postures. He was being tagged by the local security people, they finally put the arm on him and confiscated his film. Well, when that was developed, of course, it came to the attention of Sukarno -- I mean, this was one of the girls from his harem. So this guy was clapped in jail. Boom. He could have been there for the rest of time. So Ambassador Jones, said, "Jack, you better handle this." So, you know, I got to see the horn player and they had him in protective custody, but definitely he was being contained. I had to bring in care packages. Then I had to negotiate with the Indonesian government and convince them that the best way to get rid of this annoyance was to get the guy the hell out of the country as fast as possible. Well, I'll tell you, the President just wasn't about to buy that. He was going to let this fellow rot in jail.

And you know this thing went on for -- the guy's wife left and the group left, for about three or four weeks. I'd have to report to the Ambassador, I'd say, "Mr. Ambassador, I don't really see this thing -- ". So Howard would say, "Well, we're doing our best". He said, "I'm getting all kinds of rockets from Washington about this." And I said, "Let me keep trying."

Finally one day I got over to the head of the American desk (Max Maramis who had been the press officer for Sukarno in the Bandung conference) and said, "Max, why don't you go and see Sukarno and say you've been thinking this one over and you've been talking and you really don't see any way out of it except to get rid of this guy forget about it. Well, you know, he did. Sukarno very reluctantly agreed. He said, "You tell Howard Jones, get this son of a bitch out of the country by 8:00 tomorrow morning." So Maramis got on the phone to me and I reported to the Ambassador. The Ambassador said, "Is there any plane going?" I said, "I don't think there's a plane." He said, "Get the Naval Attaché." And we got the Navy Attaché and his old DC-3 and, we carted the hornplayer over to Singapore at 8:00 in the morning.

WILLIAM N. HARBEN
Political Officer
Jakarta (1959-1960)

William N. Harben was born in New York in 1922. He graduated from Princeton University and joined the Foreign Service in 1950. His career included positions in Germany, Colombia, Rwanda, Indonesia, the Soviet Union, Mexico, Cambodia, and Washington, DC. This is an excerpt from his personal memoir.

HARBEN: In 1959 I was assigned to our embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia as a political officer. The previous year a rebellion had broken out in Sumatra and Sulawesi against the frivolous President Sukarno, whose dictatorial tendencies were not mitigated by his preoccupation with the seduction of young women. The U.S. had provided arms and encouragement to the rebels, who, however, quickly faded to a few weak bands. Our ambassador, Howard P. Jones a former A.I.D. administrator, decided that there was nothing for him to do, *faute de mieux*, but curry favor with Sukarno. In pursuing this task he all but groveled before the brown satyr.

Ambassador Hugh Cummings, then head of the Bureau of Intelligence & Research, to which I was attached in the Department, called me to his office before my departure and told me that Jones' optimism was mistaken, that Indonesia would soon go Communist, and the U.S. would intervene to prevent it. It sounded as if he expected me to back this assumption in my reporting. Jones, however, was determined that I paint a rosy picture of growing American (i.e. Jones) influence and a declining Communist Party.

My researches convinced me that the Communist Party was increasing its strength. Sukarno appeared to be protecting and encouraging them. An ever increasing number of red "Seksi Komite PKI" (Section Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia) signs were being put up in front of bamboo structures in the villages, and the other parties viewed the PKI with growing alarm.

Java is vastly overpopulated and dependent upon food imported from the other islands, where the Communists were weak, and from the U.S. Sumatra, the stronghold of the feeble rebels, was mostly pious Muslim or Christian, and Sulawesi Christian, hence both resistant to Communist appeals. Communist strength was concentrated in Central and East Java. West Java was strongly Muslim and harbored another smoldering rebellion, the hair-shirt Muslim Darul Islam.

I reasoned that while the Communists might seize power in Java, they would know that they would be quickly starved out. They had to establish a strong foothold in Sumatra, and this would take a couple of years at least. (Actually they did not feel strong enough for a coup d'etat until six years later, and that was crushed with great loss of life.)

Nevertheless, I strove to report the growing strength of the party, but was censored by the head of the Political Section, John Henderson, who was obedient to the ambassador's wishes. The views of the C.I.A. unit, which he could not censor, paralleled my own. Fearing crucifixion by Senate conservatives for rosy reports signed by me if events culminated in a Communist victory, I reported the truth "under the table" in personal letters to friends in the Department, mainly Henry L. Heymann, who had just left Jakarta for assignment to the Indonesia desk in INR. I also produced a voluminous biographic file on 3"x5" cards, on which the rise to influential positions of Communists and crypto-Communists was detailed. The Political Counselor never read these. Copies went to CIA. The Communists had created a crypto-Communist Party called "Partindo," which the ambassador professed to believe was merely leftish. My cards showed that its key officials had previously been officials and even treasurers of Communist front groups.

The tension between me and Henderson grew, and I was sure that he would give me a poor performance rating - which, coupled with that of my superior in Bonn, probably would have resulted in my dismissal. An inspection was due, however. Groups of inspectors made the rounds

of posts every two years and heard the complaints of junior officers in private and wrote reports on each of them. I was near bankruptcy, supporting a divorced wife and two children on a very small salary. Their fate also depended upon this crisis. I had little hope of prevailing against the embassy "establishment." The chief inspector, Donovan, entered my office one day, looked down the hall to assure himself that he would not be overheard, closed the door behind him, sat down and said, "Harben, I want you to level with me. In your opinion is the reporting from this embassy rosier than is warranted by the facts?"

I trusted no one at this point, and replied cautiously, "That is the opinion of some of the junior officers, sir."

"Is it your opinion?" he insisted.

I thought a moment. "I think the answer to your question is in my pocket. I am about to carry the pouch to the Consulate in Surabaya. The consul, Jack Lydman, just reported a speech of Sukarno in that city denouncing the U.S. in strong terms and threatening to confiscate our property here. His report went directly to Washington, bypassing the embassy. I have in my pocket a letter to him from the ambassador telling him henceforth to clear all his reports through the embassy. This letter reflects the general policy here."

Donovan thanked me. His report on me outweighed whatever criticism Henderson had written about me in his confidential performance report and I was promoted in due course. The Deputy Chief of Mission, James Bell, also liked my reports.

Early in my tour of duty I met a beautiful divorcee at the house of Jane and Serge Taube, Meleen O'Brien, who was a secretary in the A.I.D. mission. Soon we were traveling throughout Java together. When she was assigned to a conference in Djogjakarta, in Central Java, I visited that area more frequently, officially to study Communist activity there. It confirmed my view that a diplomat, or an intelligence officer, can learn more by getting around a lot and having a good time than the drone who sits in his office all day. We drove over almost every road in Java together, sleeping in hotels where cockroaches as large as mice had to be plucked from the inside of the mosquito net around the bed, where the staff pursued scampering rats trying to swat them with tennis rackets, where late arriving guests crawled into bed with us. Hotels sold bed space, not beds. I awoke once in Banjuwangi with a whole family slumbering beside me.

On our honeymoon we visited the remote peninsula of Udjing Kulon with two other young diplomats whose wives at the last minute could not come. We continued to Djogjakarta, where I joined a group of Americans and one Indonesian volcanologist climbing the extremely active Merapi volcano, 12,000 feet high. It was on the summit, amid the choking fumes of sulfur dioxide and steam, that I was stricken by an ailment which was to plague me intermittently for years thereafter. A sudden sharp pain in both knees forced me to sit! At 12,000 feet, on an active volcano, I could not walk! Later medical evidence attributed it to repeated parasitic infections, for which Java was notorious. One climber remained behind with me when the others descended. He cut some crutches from the trees after we had slid down the ash cone on our heels. Hours late, and crippled, we reached my bride below. I hobbled about on a cane for a few days and gradually the pain disappeared, only to strike suddenly and without warning at odd times for years later.

The romantic excursions with Meleen turned up interesting political intelligence. Darul Islam rebels lay in the tea bushes approaching Bogor, and we followed the army jeep patrol for safety. Several times we visited a deserted Dutch resort almost at the summit of the Tankubanprahu volcano outside Bandung. The staff was still there and lavished their services on the two American guests - strawberries with cream for breakfast, etc.

An unanswered question was whether the Communist Party maintained some kind of clandestine armed force, despite their near-annihilation in their uprising at Madiun in 1948. I suspected that it did - because of the truculence of its ideological positions. Their official organ in one issue declared "All disputes with imperialists must be solved by force wherever possible."

A band of "Darul Islam" rebels operated on the vast volcano and occasionally attacked the Dutch resort. One weekend, as Meleen and I were walking, I noticed a Communist Party "Section Committee" flag hanging in front of a bamboo structure. This surprised me. The Darul Islam, fanatic Muslims, had no love for the atheist Communists. Wouldn't the Communists run a risk thus advertising their presence? A peasant was working nearby. My Indonesian was good enough for simple conversation. I asked him if the guerrillas did not attack the Section Committee office. "No, never," replied the peasant. I informed my Indonesian police contact of my suspicions that the "Darul Islam" band was actually Communist.

There was an unconfirmed rumor of the theft of arms in Central Java. I went down there and had dinner with friends, the Weatherbees, and asked if they had heard of the theft of weapons. Don Weatherbee had not, but Mary Ellen, his wife, related that while driving with another woman in a chauffeur-driven car, they had been stopped by an army patrol, which spoke with the chauffeur. When they got going again, Mary Ellen asked the chauffeur what the soldiers had wanted. "They were looking for guns, Njonja." It is from such fragments, gathered in the course of constant travel and contacts, that a mosaic of the truth can be assembled.

The Communists were becoming increasingly powerful, and President Sukarno was cooperating with them. I shared the suspicion of some that he had an understanding with them whereby he would remain as chief of state if they succeeded in seizing power. They would leave him his harem, which was all he cared about. I had been receiving visitors of the moderate Muslim Party, usually in the evening. They told me that they feared their party would soon be banned and they wanted to build an efficient underground organization, like that of the Communists. Could I help?

I asked Washington for materials on the underground structure of the Communist Party. I was sent a long, thick, learned study of the Rand Corporation, quite useless, since they had neither the time nor the Greco-Latin English to wade through it. But from the USIS Library I obtained J. Edgar Hoover's book on the CPUSA, which was short and in simple English. It described how the CPUSA operated under close surveillance. It was just what my contacts needed. What they learned from it prepared them for the day, five years later, when the Communists launched their bid for power.

In my travels I noticed that some Communist Party "Section Committee" signs which I had seen previously, had disappeared. Since the party was growing I thought it unlikely that local units were

being dissolved. I told my Indonesian police contact of my discovery, and suggested that the party might be going partially underground, or at least making their local headquarters harder to locate in the event of a government (i.e. Army) action against them. I suggested that he get busy and locate all of these units before any more of them disappeared. I think this also contributed to the government's success later. I asked him once if I might see a list of Communists of any locality. He asked me to come to his house the next day and he would show me one. I had two motives: 1) I wanted to know how closely the authorities were watching the Communists, and 2) I wanted to see what kind of people comprised the rank and file. To my surprise I found several noblemen on the list of several hundred party members he showed me. "They're very simple down there in Central Java. They don't know anything about ideology," explained my contact. I add this incident to show that the Indonesian Government had no need of embassy help in identifying Communists. In 1991 a young American woman created a stir in Washington by claiming that the embassy [after I had left] had supplied names of Communists to be executed in the failed Communist coup of 1964. Obviously if the authorities had lists of hundreds of names for individual towns they had no need of help from the embassy.

The rule of Sukarno was economically a disaster. Foreign exchange income was squandered on such things as Sukarno's annual global fornication tour of the world in a chartered Pan Am plane with all his entourage, or on payments to Hollywood film companies of their profits on film showings - for which the film moguls expressed their gratitude by supplying "starlets" to the insatiable Sukarno during his Los Angeles sojourns.

Sukarno's physician asked me at a dinner, "Do you know where the President had the most beautiful girls of all?"

"No," I replied stiffly.

"China," he said, kissing his fingertips. "I have never seen such lovely women in my life."

Since he had broached the subject I felt emboldened to ask about a report that Sukarno, while on a visit to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, had made sudden sexual advances to a pretty Turkish secretary who happened to be sitting along the way. He had to be forcibly restrained by security guards. I asked the doctor if this rumor were true.

"Well, you know, for about an hour after the injection, he's uncontrollable." replied the doctor.

The embassy was very worried over the deteriorating economic situation and an inflation so severe that we could dine on Peking Duck in Glodok for 45 U.S. cents. At one point our servants refused to accept their \$3.00/month wages except in Dutch colonial currency, which had been specifically repudiated by the government. I decided to go to Central Java to learn more about the Communists and ended up learning something about inflation unknown to American economists to this day.

The head of the Political Section, like so many senior FSO's unschooled in the nuances of diplomatic protocol, insisted that I pay a call on the Sultan. While the presumption of a Second Secretary calling on the Brother of the Moon and The Nail of the Universe (two of his titles) was lost on the Political Counselor, it apparently alarmed Hamanku Buwono IX, Sultan of Djokdja,

who probably feared a highly compromising approach by the C.I.A., since he knew full well that the American Embassy wistfully viewed him as a successor to the dreadful Sukarno. He wisely decided to receive me with a crowd of witnesses to the fact that nothing but banalities were exchanged. Beneath the royal pendopo - a kind of baldachin - were gathered counts, barons, the hereditary Grand Vizier, the Pakualam of Pakualaman, and the Sultan, with whom I discussed the weather, the crops, the likelihood of another volcanic eruption, etc.

That out of the way I returned to my dark hotel (no lights, no electricity, no windows) to meet Professor Weatherbee and a British socialist, Donald Hindley, for a climb up the tallest peak of the West Progo Mountains. On the way we sweated out all the contents of our canteens and were mad with thirst when we arrived at a small village perched on a small terrace near the summit. The inhabitants had fled at our approach.

We looked about in amazement. It was as though we had found the Shangri-La of "Lost Horizon" or the Eden of the Old Testament - comfortable bamboo houses on stilts, a pond, cows, goats, chickens, ducks, palms, fruit trees and even a small rice field. We had drunk all our water on the way up. During the climb we had been joined by a peddler, who traded batiks and kerosene with the inhabitants in return for palm sugar.

The peddler climbed a palm and knocked down some coconuts. We cut them open and drank the milk. The inhabitants had begun to drift back and stood, examining us curiously. It was clear that they had never seen "orang-orang belandja" ("white" or "Dutch" men) in their lives. Their leader seemed to be a middle-aged matriarch. I felt we should pay for the coconuts and handed her a generous sum in rupiahs. She scrutinized the colored bills and then dropped them on the ground. The peddler leaped forward and scooped them up.

"These people are very ignorant, Tuan. They don't know about money and all that stuff. I can use it. I'm poor. They have all they need."

"Wait a minute," I said. "The money is for this woman!" I made him give it to me.

How were we to pay them? They obviously not only had no need of money, they did not know what it was! We finally decided to give them some empty soft drink bottles. With these they seemed quite satisfied. It was a pity I could not speak to them. They spoke only Javanese. I spoke only Indonesian, the lingua franca Malay.

I was able to report to the embassy that I had found people totally immune to the economic chaos wrought by Sukarno, and that there must be many more. It was a great lesson to me, too. These simple people had demonstrated to me that if one had a bit of land, a hoe, and an axe, one need never go hungry.

The Indonesians are a superstitious people. Gods, goddesses, demons, mermaids - all formed a part of their culture. The economic counselor, driving in Central Java with the minister of finance, laughed at a pink majolica statue of a blonde mermaid in a town square. "Didn't the Dutch know that the mermaids down here are brown?" he joked.

"Indeed they are," said the minister. "I used to see one sunning herself on the opposite bank of the river where my house is. She was quite brown - like us." Barger, the economic counselor, soon realized the man was serious. When embassy chauffeurs drove back to Jakarta from Boyor - a long, steep slope, - they would speed up at a spot where the road was particularly steep, frightening the passengers. The chauffeurs exclaimed that that spot was known to be haunted by evil spirits, and it was wise to hurry, lest one jump aboard and ride to Jakarta. When I entertained guests my servants, Parijem and Djatim, would remove all empty chairs. Spirits looking in the window and seeing empty chairs would think they were invited and come in!

I began to hear of superstitions affecting politics, and politics was my business. For example, an American was standing beside an Indonesian acquaintance listening to a speech by Sukarno. The American commented that he was surprised that Sukarno would appear in public so soon after an assassination attempt. The Indonesian replied that he was in no danger - he still bore the flame. "What flame?" asked the American.

"There - just above his left shoulder - Can't you see it?" said the Indonesian.

I invited my Indonesian police contact to lunch and asked him about the power of the "dukuns" (sorcerers). He said they could inflict great harm on people.

"For instance?" I asked

"Needles, Bill! Needles! Inside you!" he shuddered.

"What kind of needles?"

"Sewing needles!" He seemed quite distressed at the thought. "They put them on the fence in front of your house!"

"Well, how do they get from the fence into your stomach?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" He seemed so upset that I ceased questioning him.

Two things puzzled the embassy: 1) why was Sukarno still popular after marrying his latest wife, Hartini, in violation of Islamic law, and 2) why was the revered Sultan of Djokdja apparently so indifferent to succeeding Sukarno when the famous prophecies of Djoyoboyo, a 12th century Indonesian Nostradamus, seemed to indicate that a Javanese prince would rule and a golden age would begin.

I discovered that many Javanese believed that Hartini was the incarnation of Dewi Roro Kidul, the goddess of the South Sea, and would infuse Sukarno with divine powers. From a friend of the Sultan I learned that the Sultan had been visited in a dream by his father, who told him that he would be the last Sultan of Djokdja.

One day we received word from Prince Bintoro, brother of the Sultan and head of the American section in the Foreign Ministry, that an American gunrunner, Frank Starr, and an American

associate Wesley Broce, had been arrested entering the country and had with them a copy of a contract with the rebels to deliver to them ten million Straits dollars worth of arms. I was assigned to the case. The files revealed that Starr had been in Indonesia before and had swindled the government of a large amount of money by chartering to the government a ship he had rented from a British firm. He never paid the British, who seized the ship when it had to return to Hong Kong for repairs.

There was some doubt as to Starr's sanity, but no doubt at all about his young, athletic sidekick, who had escaped from a California asylum. Starr was also a homosexual, and Broce his catamite.

Unfortunately American consulates and embassies are required to seek the release of any arrested American, even the most criminal. After some delay, during which the Indonesians decided that he was more of a problem for the U.S. than for them, they agreed to release Starr to our custody provided that we guarantee that he would be imprisoned when he arrived in the U.S. Starr had picked up a lot of dangerous gossip in jail about alleged Army plots to overthrow Sukarno, and the Army did not want Starr to be talking to the press. I went with Vice-Consul John Heimann to get Starr's signature on repatriation loan papers. During the interview Starr suddenly pulled a knife and snarled that he was going to kill everyone in the room. There was a table between us which I thought I might throw up in his face if matters got out of hand, but John said sweetly, "There's no need to kill anybody, Mr. Starr. Do you have any property in California?" He sat with pen poised. Starr looked wild for a moment, then sagged into his seat, defeated. "I'll take that, if you don't mind," said Heimann, and Starr meekly surrendered the knife.

I thought I could persuade Washington to arrest him because he and Broce had attacked me when I visited them in prison, inflicting minor injuries. He also had a card identifying him as an agent of Naval Intelligence, surely a forgery. But I discovered that it is quite lawful to attack a federal official in the performance of his duty and to impersonate another. Much, much later Starr, in Washington, threatened to kill me in a letter to then Vice President Johnson. The F.B.I. said it could do nothing until he "acted." As a precaution I loaded my pistol and kept it handy.

Nothing could be done in Indonesia to release Starr, since he continued to write letters (on a typewriter lent to him by the director of the prison) threatening to "expose" prominent generals. He escaped once - they forgot to lock his cell - and came to the embassy, but was recaptured. He had exhausted the patience of the Indonesians, who finally shipped him off to a sort of "Devil's Island" off the south coast.

Just before I arrived in Indonesia the Central Intelligence Agency had been trying to help the PRRI-Permesta rebels. To strengthen the tiny rebel air force it had recruited a brave and daring flier, Arlen Lawrence Pope, who became a one-man air force, bombing Indonesian troop convoys with great success - until he was shot down. When he parachuted to safety, the tail of the aircraft broke his thigh. The muscles had contracted, pulling one segment of the bone up alongside the other. To set it the Indonesian army doctors had to assign a couple of men to pull on his foot while others pulled under his armpits to bring the fractured bones into position where they could be set in a cast. Without anesthetic, the pain was excruciating.

I was assigned to his case. He was soon to come to trial and I had to find a lawyer. No one wanted

to defend such a politically unpopular defendant, but at last one lawyer agreed. The trouble was that neither I nor the lawyer had any knowledge of the international laws involved. I dimly remembered that prisoners of war were entitled to good treatment until exchanged. The ambassador was trying to dissociate himself from Pope in the belief that if the embassy came too conspicuously to his defense it would give credence to the charge, levied by the Communists, that the U.S. was behind Pope's mission. Everyone knew this anyway. The result was, however, that my telegram to the Department of State requesting legal precedents was held up by the ambassador for a fatal two weeks, during which Pope made damaging admissions - i.e. that he had never signed any documents; he was not a regular member of their armed forces, and so on. This was the opposite of what he should have said, since only regular, uniformed members of an armed force in regular units are entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention.

The Department's failure to supply the information without being asked, as soon as the trial was announced, is testimony to the legendary incompetence of that organization.

Before the trial Pope was "imprisoned" at the summer resort of Kaliurang, high on the slope of Mt. Merapi. He was given every opportunity to escape, and his guards even took him hunting with them. But he shrewdly calculated that "someone" wanted him to escape - and provoke a manhunt all over Java. "How far would a big, blond, blue-eyed fellow get in that island?" I agreed and expressed the opinion that the Communists were behind it and would take credit for his certain capture.

Pope was sentenced to life imprisonment, but served actually about four years. He was a model prisoner from our point of view. I often thought that if the United States could always muster even a small number of men like him, it could win any war.

This case prompted an attempt at a bit of diplomatic detective work. The Communist press screamed that the butcher Pope had bombed the town of Ambon, on the island of Sulawesi (Celebes) on a Sunday morning, killing hundreds of churchgoers. The population was Christian and, more significantly, pro-rebel. But in questioning Pope I discovered that he had not arrived in Indonesia until a couple of weeks after the raid. Furthermore, he said the other rebel fliers hardly ever went out on missions, preferring to play cards in their barracks. Then who did bomb Ambon? Having been schooled in the devious schemes of the Russians I instantly suspected that the government air force itself had done the deed and blamed it on the rebels in order to turn the population against the rebels and in favor of Sukarno's government. Would the rebels have bombed their own people? Hardly likely. The head of the Indonesian Air Force was, moreover, very close to both the Russians, who had given him most of his airplanes, and to the Communists. I expressed my suspicions to the Political Counselor, pointing out that the Russians had shelled their own lines as a pretext to attack Finland and that the Germans had painted French markings on Luftwaffe planes and bombed Freiburg im Breisgau at the beginning of World War II. "Let me go to Ambon," I said. "I'll poke around and try to find some of the bomb splinters and send them back to C.I.A. for analysis to see where they were made."

The Political Counselor refused, probably fearing the government's reaction to an embassy officer going to a pro-rebel town. So the chance was lost.

I was an interested spectator of the struggle between the Indonesian Army and the Communist Party, and of the contrast between the blunt, unsubtle approach of the American ambassador and Political Counselor compared with the wily deviousness of the Javanese officials.

The Communist Party had invited foreign, mainly European Communist parties to send delegates to its national congress. Our embassy in effect demanded that the Foreign Ministry deny them entry visas, and great was the outrage of the embassy when Foreign Minister Subandrio blandly reneged on his promise to deny the visas, and unkindest cut of all, the American favorite, General Nasution, Chief of Staff, received the foreign Communists with great fanfare, with pictures on the front page of the Army newspaper. The Political Counselor arranged a meeting with the Machiavellian Colonel, who seemed to have political responsibilities.

"Why don't you lock up all these subversives!" demanded the Political Counselor. The Colonel explained in a suave whisper that that would be unwise. The Communists were trying to provoke a confrontation between the army and the President, which the Army felt would be to its detriment. It was therefore decided not only to admit the foreign Communists but to give their visit maximum publicity, so that all would know that the Communists were beholden to foreigners.

When Khrushchev arrived on a state visit the army lined the road over which Khrushchev was to travel to Bandung with a whole division of troops, giving the impression that Sukarno did not even control the countryside outside the capital. The nervous Khrushchev refused to go by car, and flew instead, leaving Sukarno to go by car. The Russian cancelled a speech to students in Central Java, causing much disappointment among them. "We dropped a couple of pistols and a grenade under the seats in the hall, so that they would be found by the Russian security officers," explained the Colonel in his sleepy murmur.

There were two Communist parties in Indonesia. By far the larger and more menacing was the Partai Komunis Indonesia [PKI], headed by D.N. Aidit, and the Murba Party, very small, but very influential. This group was denounced by the PKI as "Trotzkyite", but I sought out one of its leaders and in our pleasant conversations ascertained that they knew nothing of such European ideological nuances. Their main target was the rich Chinese minority, which mercilessly exploited the peasants. Their spokesman explained that they had nothing against the United States, and they were offended that the United States was constantly inveighing against "Communists" of whatever persuasion. The program of the Murba Party probably would have been approved by the conventions of either of the two major American political parties.

FRED A. COFFEY, JR.
Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Medan (1959-1964)

Fred A. Coffey, Jr. was born in El Paso, Texas in 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in 1952 and a master's degree from Louisiana State University in 1955. His Foreign Service career included positions in Brazil, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Thailand, Argentina, and Washington, DC. Mr. Coffey was

interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1990.

Q: Then you were moved on to Indonesia? And your first position there?

COFFEY: Well Lew, you were deputy area director at the time, if I recall, and came to Nicaragua.

Q: Yes, I remember.

COFFEY: And you asked me what assignment I would like, and I said I would like to try another area, Asia. You said you'd see what you could do. Well, you fulfilled that; I was assigned to Battambang, Cambodia, as films officer.

Only the USIS post there rejected me because they wanted a full-fledged, professional film producer, and I'd never gone beyond the Kodak stage. So then I was assigned to replace Fred Rein as branch PAO in Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia.

I arrived in January 1960. Fred met us at the airport, took us to a crudely built house on the edge of town, and I said, "I hope this is temporary." And he said, "Well, what do you mean?" I said, "Well, what kind of quarters do you have?" He said, "Well, that doesn't really have anything to do with it." He had a wonderful house with a big garden.

So I puzzled on that, went into the office that afternoon, and he said, "Well, come on in and bring your steno pad." I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "Yes, I want you to take notes. My other assistant always took notes." I said, "Fred, I don't think you understand. I came to replace you, and I'm not your assistant."

He went over to the files and pulled out a letter from personnel signed by Steven Sestanovich, saying that he had been extended to Medan for another two years. So I immediately called the PAO in Jakarta, Tom Flanagan, who said he'd had other problems with personnel assignments like this and with Sestanovich.

When he called to Washington Sestanovich had already left and had arranged for his own assignment as a branch PAO in Singapore, a very lush post. So we sorted out the confusion. Rein went on home leave at that point.

So I ended up -- we stayed in Medan until 1960 and were joined there by Jim Anderson, who was waiting to go to Jakarta as branch PAO.

Indonesia Had Recently Been Freed From the Dutch and was an immensely rich country in natural resources, but very poor economically. They had not managed their resources well and were not in a position to manage them well, with the lack of trained civil servants and the deterioration of the infrastructure.

Also, the communist party was growing in leaps and bounds. It was the third largest party in the Third World, after the Soviet Union and China. The leftist groups that were auxiliary to the communist party were huge -- in the labor movement, in the cultural movement, in the educational

movement -- so that even then Indonesia, with a population of roughly 125 million people, could call -- the communist party could call some 11 million people to the streets and completely disrupt the country if they wanted to.

President Sukarno, President for life, dominated Indonesian political life. He paid little attention to domestic needs and had huge ambitions to lead the Third World. His fiscal irresponsibility with government funds and government finances was criminal. His personal and political proclivities seemed to align him with the socialists and the leftists.

Actually, in the mid-'50s there had been a number of separatist movements, and covert U.S. assistance to these separatist movements -- if that was so -- was highly resented by Sukarno, who was trying to maintain the integrity of this huge island country: some 13,000 islands, some 300 languages, a great amount of diversity.

He succeeded in molding this archipelago into one nation, and the separatist movements only gave him great heartburn and lots of problems. Well, our ambassador at the time, Howard Jones, who actually had come in after the separatist movements, had more or less been defanged, wore a hair shirt during this period and up until the time he left. He was always apologetic to Sukarno and to the Indonesian government for what he assumed were wrongs against the Indonesians by the United States -- far beyond political necessity. Thereby he lost his effectiveness.

Q: Do you think the United States really was assisting a bit in disrupting the country by supporting undercover these separatist movements? And who was the President at that time, and under whose policy would that have been?

COFFEY: Well, the President of the United States was Dwight Eisenhower, but we have a number of agencies that deal in foreign policy, and I suspect one or two of our agencies dealing in foreign policy had supported, perhaps not openly, some elements of the separatist movements.

Q: Who was our ambassador during that period, before Howard Jones came in?

COFFEY: I believe it was John Allison. I'm not sure of the dates, and then Howard Jones came in in 1957 or 1958 to Indonesia.

Q: I don't know. Allison was in Japan, still, in 1956 when I left, and I think he was there for some time after that. I don't know whether there was somebody else between him and his successor or not.

COFFEY: Well, that could be, that could be so. When I got to Indonesia Howard Jones had already been in place for a couple of years.

Q: Then it couldn't have been Allison, because Allison was still in Japan as late as 1957.

COFFEY: Mm-hmm. Well --

Q: Anyway, it's not that significant.

COFFEY: Howard -- Howard Jones set the policy for the U.S. government at that time, which influenced our local operations.

And his dealings with Sukarno were of no great benefit to the United States, in that Sukarno would lambaste the United States frequently and publicly as being an enemy of Indonesia and meanwhile, in the same breath, praise the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China as being great friends of Indonesia.

We lived under this apologist policy during the four and a half years I was serving in Indonesia. When it became necessary to deal toughly with Sukarno, we sidestepped. Indonesia and the free world paid dearly in 1965 and 1966 for Sukarno's unlimited and unchecked policies.

A case in point -- and sort of jumping out of context -- was during the visit of Attorney General Robert Kennedy to Indonesia. His entourage was, at the time, in the Javanese city of Jogjakarta in central Java. I was branch PAO in Surabaya and worked Eastern Indonesia, from 1960 to 1964.

The communists had been hitting us with demonstrations and damaging raids quite regularly, once or twice a month. One night had been particularly vicious, when windows were broken in one of my colleague's house, doors were smashed, paint was thrown on the porch, a car or two was burned. I had my family under a bed in a back bedroom. Finally the police came to the rescue.

The night during the Kennedy visit saw the Communist goon squads sack USIS, in downtown Surabaya. We tried to get word to Bobby Kennedy through our branch PAO, Jim Anderson in Jogja, about this damage.

Meanwhile, Howard Jones, the ambassador, issued a public statement saying that those actions of the communists did not represent the true feelings of the Indonesian government. I take great exception to that, then and now. Those actions would not have taken place unless the Indonesian government, and probably including Sukarno, had given its permission for them to go ahead.

Q: I think while you were discussing this off tape that you said Bobby Kennedy never got down to Surabaya. Had he planned to go there before this ruckus occurred, or was his itinerary never conceived to include Surabaya?

COFFEY: No, it really didn't include Surabaya. For one reason, Surabaya was more or less the center of communism for that part of the country and a hot spot, and I think they wanted to see the cultural sites of Jogja and the great Borobudur and also meet the sultan of Jogja. So there really wasn't time in his itinerary for a visit to Surabaya.

Well, at the end of December 1960 we were transferred to Surabaya. Jane had just broken her ankle, so she left Medan on crutches, and we had a couple of kids under our arms and all of our luggage. We then had a great period in Surabaya for the next three and a half years, in terms of personal enjoyment, and friends made and feeling of accomplishment with our USIS program.

I had a deputy there, Barbara Harvey, who was absolutely superb as an officer. Not only did she

speak Indonesian well, but her ability to communicate in the soft cultural context of the Javanese environment enabled us to promote programs in a politically difficult setting.

Surabaya was a tumultuous place in terms of the communists and the economic deprivation of the area. As I mentioned earlier, we were having demonstrations against USIS right along.

One of the things the communists didn't like was our library; we had some 16,000 books in our library and some 500 to 700 visitors every day, ranging from students, government leaders, military, professional types, labor leaders, etc. It was a very effective operation and one of the few windows to the outside world available to these Indonesians, young and old, important and not so important.

We worked very hard with the military, made extremely good contacts with the military, with the marines, with the army, navy, air force, and with the police. And I might say those contacts served me very, very well when I went back to Jakarta many years later as PAO. Then many of them were national leaders, and we already had established a first-name relationship, to the advantage of USIS programming.

Q: Now the people that you're talking about, who were great users of your library, were of course the educated class, I suppose the elite, and they presumably were quite literate. What was the general literacy rate in Indonesia? I understand it was very low at that time; this must have been a smaller segment of the population.

COFFEY: Well, Lew, east Java in general -- and Indonesia in general at that time, had an illiteracy rate of above 75 percent. Of course, the people who did come to us, many of them were multiple language people. They had learned Dutch and of course Indonesian and Javanese, and many of them had studied English in their primary and secondary schools, which led on to another element of our program.

There was visible economic, political, and social deterioration. All of us could see that one of these days there was going to be an explosion of some kind.

Sukarno was closing the windows to the outside world through censorship, throwing opposition in jail, and practicing intimidation. Various things were prohibited -- the press was extremely inhibited -- I could only place articles through personal relationships, and then these editors would usually get their wrists slapped, whereas the Soviets would put in this harsh stuff against the United States and nobody would blink an eye, certainly not our ambassador.

We decided that we wanted to provide some windows, albeit modest, opened to the outside world. We also had few funds. Exploiting a great interest in learning English, we established some 200-plus English clubs throughout the major towns and villages of east Java, part of central Java, and in Sulawesi, and each club might have 15, 20 members in each town.

They would consist of the leadership of that town: the appointed government leader, the head of the local police, the head of the local military, the head of the local schools, and some of the professional people in the town who wanted to maintain contact with the United States and also to

learn English. They joined at considerable political risk, as the U.S. was considered the nasty imperialist.

We scrounged everything we could find in materials, even tapes, and made lots of visits to these English clubs. By the time the explosion did come in September of 1965, and Indonesia was isolated for a couple of years, these clubs were in place, even though USIS had been thrown out of the country. This left us with some residue of ongoing activity there, which we picked up in later years.

Q: What happened to all the books that were in the library when the shutting down occurred?

COFFEY: Well, the shutdown was after I left. The communists had made a big raid on USIS, threw many of the books into piles on the front porch and burned them. This infuriated the Agency, of course; books are not meant to be burned, although we may have had some experience in that in earlier years. And Carl Rowan, then director, ordered USIS Surabaya closed, which we did.

I might say that -- again on a personal basis -- there was some excitement, too. When I first got there and we started working with the military and the English clubs, the undercover police of the Surabaya police force came around and told me that the communists had marked me for extinction, and that I either had to leave or be prepared for a tough time, that they would try to provide me personal security, however.

I opted, of course, to stay, and I had guards with me, in front of the house, escorting me to work, staying around our building, for many months. The communists, of course, were not successful in getting rid of me at that point, but I had another little bit of a trial with Javanese mysticism.

We found that two of our mobile picture people were charging to show films. They'd go out to a sugar factory some place and charge people so many rupias to see the films, something which we didn't know about and which was prohibited. A man came in one day from a sugar factory to pay his bill, which exposed the whole problem.

Well, we had to fire two people, which led to firing of two others who had been stealing equipment. And about a week later one of the people who had been fired told me that they had done a terrible thing and I was in grave danger. They had gone to a dukun, a witch doctor, and had paid him so much money --

Q: How do you spell that?

COFFEY: -- d-u-k-u-n -- and paid him so much money to remove me from the scene and he was going to use his powers to do so, and that his powers included that I would either be dead or out of the country in 30 days.

Again I chose to weather out this little storm, and I was told later that had I been a believer I might have succumbed -- you know, of mental illness -- because that's the way it works. Of interest is that the man who told me about the dukun was a Catholic and a friend. I had helped to arrange his wedding.

One program which I think was very useful in USIS influence at that time was, as the rest of Java and Indonesia was becoming more leftist, a very remarkable colonel who commanded the military in South and Central Sulawesi and Sulawesi, (Celebes), asked us to supply him with a mobile unit with operator for a couple of months, to show U.S. films and distribute our material amongst his troops and townspeople in his area.

After checking with USIS Jakarta, we agreed, and this man transported our mobile unit operator with material to Sulawesi. Repercussions were very interesting. The colonel got his wrists slapped by the central government for doing this, and at the same time he was so impressed with our messenger, and wanted to maintain the anticommunist outlook of his area, that he asked us to build a branch office in Makassar.

He would pay for it, we would design it, and we would operate it. Jakarta agreed. An architect from the University of Kentucky happened to be in the country. He and I spent a week in Makassar, he drawing up the plans for a new building.

The building plans were approved by the colonel, Mohammed Jussef, and by USIS Jakarta, and then disappeared into the bowels of the Foreign Building Office, the FBO, for approval, never to emerge. So that project sort of died before it was born, due to government lethargy.

Q: This leads me to a couple of questions. If it was a colonel in the military who was doing this, and Sukarno was really in the other camp, and if not pro-communist at least a socialist, does this indicate that the military was out of sympathy, generally, with Sukarno? Or does this indicate that there was so much autonomy given to different military commanders in different locales that they could get by with this and largely get out from under the domination of the Sukarno intent?

COFFEY: The latter part of your question, Lew, is what holds -- the further away you were from Jakarta, the more autonomy you seemed to have.

But at the same time, this particular individual was more than just a colonel, he was royalty, and the Buginese prince of the area. Buginese (B-u-g-i-n-e-s-e) is the ethnic group in the southern Celebes. He had a great deal of power; later on, he had become the minister of defense when I returned to Jakarta in the '80s, and we carried on a good relationship.

Another interesting event where USIS was involved with history was the claim by Sukarno and most Indonesians that West Irian, called Irian Jaya, or West New Guinea, belonged to Indonesia. The Dutch had their flag there for a couple of hundred years, and as the Dutch pulled out, Indonesia claimed everything that the Dutch had had in the former Dutch East Indies.

And after a number of years of saying West New Guinea was Indonesian, Sukarno decided to take military action and a number of military fiascos took place. The marines had dropped in some 500 paratroopers into a panoply of jungle, where many of their parachutes were hung up in the trees and they died.

They lost a lot of people, and launched a couple of abortive coastal raids, which never really

amounted to much. Finally Sukarno declared that Indonesia would occupy West Borneo by the time the cock crowed on August 17, 1962, August 17th being the Indonesian Independence Day.

Well he set up the Mandala Command in Makassar, where Colonel Jusuf was the regional military leader; the head of the Mandala Command was a general called Suharto, who later became president.

And Suharto, and his lieutenants organizing the Mandala command, promoted the invasion of West New Guinea. The ships moved out of Surabaya -- that was the big naval base -- and regrouped in Makassar, and went east loaded with troops, loaded with water and war material for one way. The fleet was a polyglot of ships, some semi-modern warships, pre-World War II vintage, an old Russian frigate or two -- and all carrying Indonesian military.

Well, we made this known quickly to the powers that be, and apparently our U-2s confirmed that the fleet was out there and moving, and it's purpose was invasion.

As I understand it, this gave Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who was then negotiating with the Dutch under UN auspices, more power, more effectiveness. He persuaded the Dutch to agree that Indonesia would take over West New Guinea, so that in effect there was no real fighting. Indonesia did occupy West New Guinea by August 17, 1962.

And because of this concentration of military in and around East Java, I got to know many officers of all ranks. And as I said earlier, several of these friendships continued on in Jakarta fifteen years later.

Q: Well, when you said that we, or the embassy and the appropriate people, you mean USIS did, because of your position in Surabaya? You knew that they were on the way, or was it -- when you say "we," who were you talking about?

COFFEY: Well, I think it was a team effort in this case, because we had contact with many of the navy people and with many of the marines. I'm a former marine and had maintained contact with some of the Indonesian marines.

It was told to us in our personal relationships that this was about to take place, and it was pretty obvious anyway, just by driving around the port and seeing the warships out there, and then suddenly --

Q: Yes, but did you have a consulate in Surabaya or were you -- was the USIS --

COFFEY: Well, I should have turned that up earlier, Lew. Yes, we had a consulate staffed with some six Americans representing the State Department and other organizations.

It was very much a team operation in Surabaya because of the closeness of all the Americans professionally. I enjoyed a great personal and professional relationship with the people in the consulate.

Q: That's very fortunate, because even as late as the mid-'60s, not every place in the world were we on that kind of wavelength with the State Department representation.

COFFEY: Well, I know that before I arrived and after I arrived, good relationships with the consulate continued. Even today I talked with Barbara Harvey, formerly with USIS, who later became consul in Surabaya, returning a couple of years ago. And she had the same excellent relationship with the USIS people there.

That's been one of the main factors of our success in an area like East Java. We have maintained a continuity of our first rate program directed by high quality people. We've kept it well staffed with good people and it shows.

Q: Did that pretty well cover your -- that particular tour in Indonesia?

COFFEY: Well, I might tell you a little anecdote, there, showing the difficulty of communicating across cultural lines even within the same cultural framework.

One day as I was leaving for the office I happened to look at our private car, parked in the driveway, and the tail pipe was dragging the ground. I made a mental note to call and have something done.

When I got to the office I then called back to the house, talked with our Javanese houseboy in the Indonesian language, telling him the tailpipe of the car was dragging the dirt and that it should be wired up to the bumper strut. "Take the end of that tailpipe and wire it to the bumper so that the other end won't break out of the muffler." Otherwise, that car would be out of commission for six months as I had to order parts from the United States.

Well, I got back home at noon and looked underneath the car. It was still sitting in the driveway, and there was a big gap in the muffler. The tailpipe had fallen off causing a big hole in the muffler. I rushed into the house, pretty steamed up, to find out what had happened. Jane pushed a tonic water in my hand and said, "Cool off before you explode. Come on back here and let me show you something."

I went back to the living room and there was the telephone; it had been wired to the table. Then I called in the houseboy and said, "What's this?" And he said, "Oh, Tuan, this morning a man from the telephone company called me and told me that the telephone should be wired to the table." "Well," I said, "the problem was with the car, not the telephone."

And I forgot to say that after I talked to him in Indonesian from my office I asked my assistant in to the office and asked him to explain the same thing in Javanese. He did. Nevertheless, the telephone got wired to the table and the tailpipe fell out of the car.

Q: How did it get ripped out? Was Jane using the car during the day, or --

COFFEY: Well, apparently she had used it once, but the tailpipe, just dragging the dirt, had popped out of the muffler. And my message never got through, in Indonesian or Javanese, because

of the technical comprehension of this man -- what is a telephone, what is a tailpipe were -- two different things, but his culture hadn't had much experience with either.

Q: Well, "tail-aphone" -- taila -- taila-pipe and taila -- telephone -- not all that different.

COFFEY: Well, there wasn't for him. Anyhow, that's just sort of to point out communications obstacles when you're dealing in a different culture and a different language, or languages. The Indonesian language was the overall language, but the real language for most of these people was Javanese or even dialects of the Javanese.

Q: So where did you go then, from --

COFFEY: Transferred from Surabaya in July of 1964. I was sent back to the Agency and told I was to be a desk officer for Chile and Peru, because of my Latin American experience. But once back in the Agency I heard that Henry Loomis had made a demand to the director at the time, Edward R. Murrow, that he wanted language officers to run the language services at the Voice of America.

Henry was director of the Voice of America, and there were some 38 or 40 language services at the time. And the Indonesian language service was a strong one.

**JOHN A. LINEHAN, JR.
Indonesia Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1960-1962)**

Ambassador John A. Linehan, Jr. was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts in 1924. He entered the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in France, Canada, Australia, Liberia, Ghana, Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Sierra Leone. Ambassador Linehan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: Then what did you do from 1960 to 1962?

LINEHAN: I was junior desk officer for Indonesia.

Q: You were obviously drawing on your great experience in Indonesian affairs.

LINEHAN: Well, I had been assigning people to the Far East, so I guess that was the connection. This was a great experience. I really enjoyed that. I worked for a fellow who had been integrated into the Foreign Service, a very nice guy named Bob Lindquist, a Chinese language officer. He was just great to work for. I went on the desk, let's see, not too long before the [1960] U. S. elections in which John Kennedy was elected President. I guess I went on the desk in July, 1960.

I remember the change in the way of doing things from the Eisenhower administration. If you did a memo for President Eisenhower for whatever reason, as I recall, it had to be on one page. No

sooner did the Kennedy's get in than we would get requests to the effect of "Give me more. I want to know more about this sort of thing." It was a great experience.

I think it was in April, 1961, that President Sukarno, or "Bung Karno," as he was known in Indonesia, came to the U. S. to visit. We had asked in advance if any of the cabinet ministers who were accompanying him wanted to call on their counterparts in the States. No, we were told, there was no need for that. My boss went out to meet the plane, along with all of the other dignitaries. He called from the Mayflower Hotel, where Sukarno was staying, saying that now it turned out that the Indonesian Minister of Finance wanted to meet the Secretary of the Treasury, C. Douglas Dillon, and the Indonesian Attorney General would like to meet Bobby Kennedy, then Attorney General. "Fix it up," he said. I called Secretary Dillon's office. His secretary had been with him at the Embassy in Paris, so I knew her casually, at least. But Douglas Dillon simply didn't have time for an appointment. Then I called Bobby Kennedy's office. He had a very nice secretary. I explained about the situation. She answered, "Well, sure, I think I can arrange that. Why not?" So she just did it. When the visit was over, I was sitting at my desk, "brown bagging" it at lunch one noon, and my secretary came in and said, "Mr. Linehan, the Attorney General is calling." Bobby Kennedy said, "Well, I did meet with the Indonesian Attorney General, and he wants me to make a visit to Indonesia. Do you think that's a good idea?" He said, "I don't really want to go, but if it's a good idea, you ought to think about it." I went into a brief discussion of how we had some problems. I said, "It's probably a good idea." The next thing I knew, he made a trip around the world.

Q: A famous trip, particularly to Indonesia. What was the feeling that you were getting at the desk? I assume that Howard Jones was the Ambassador.

LINEHAN: Jones was indeed the Ambassador.

Q: Again, Howard Jones, in these oral histories I've been doing, is a controversial person. Could you tell me what you, as a new boy on the block, sitting on the Indonesian desk in 1960-1962 what sort of impressions you were getting about this, both within the Department and also from the field.

LINEHAN: Well, after reading the messages from the Embassy and finally meeting the man in person, I thought he was great. But I was taken with him, I guess. But there were a lot of people in the Department who did not think that he was great.

Q: He was a newspaperman who knew how to write.

LINEHAN: Yes, he did. He wrote very well. I really thought he was great. Not least of the considerations was that he wanted me to come out to Indonesia when I was available, when I finished my tour [in the Department]. He was definitely controversial.

Q: Well, were other people dealing with Indonesia saying, "Oh, my God, he's too close to Sukarno."

LINEHAN: And, "What's he done now?"

Q: Was that the sort of thing? Because there was a feeling that he would realize that Sukarno was playing with him, but Jones kept turning the other cheek.

LINEHAN: In part, sure. I think that part of my attitude was a reaction to the attitude of my colleagues on the Dutch desk. Because this was the period leading up to the West Irian crisis. They didn't think much of Howard Jones at all, and I got plenty of words from them about that. In fact, things came to a point where Ellsworth Bunker, as you may recall, was asked to come in on that matter. That was just before I left the Indonesian desk. But I did have a chance to meet him and was very impressed with him.

Q: What were some of the issues which you dealt with as the number two on the Indonesian desk?

LINEHAN: God, that's a long time ago. The West Irian crisis, of course, the question of what we sell to Indonesia in terms of armament and that sort of thing. We got involved a bit in that. We had a flyer who was in prison there, a fellow named Pope.

Q: This was part of a CIA effort earlier on to overthrow Sukarno, wasn't it? We had to live with this for some time. Well, then you left the [Indonesian] desk and went where?

RONALD D. PALMER
Economic Officer
Jakarta (1960-1962)

Ambassador Ronald D. Palmer was born in Pennsylvania in 1932. He received a bachelor's degree from Howard University in 1955 and a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1957. Ambassador Palmer joined the Foreign Service in 1957. His career included positions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Denmark, the Philippines, Togo, and an ambassadorship to Mauritius. Ambassador Palmer was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 15, 1992.

Q: You went to Indonesia in 1960, is that correct?

PALMER: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in Indonesia then as you saw it?

PALMER: When I got there in 1960 there was still an awful lot of after effects of the departure of the Dutch. The Dutch had already left having been kicked out of the country in 1957 by Sukarno. By 1960 it is my very strong feeling that the Dutch residents, effectively most whites, had left. There was still a lot of upset with regard to just the normal types of things that are necessary with regard to running a city, a household, etc. There had been Dutch bakeries, a lot of the businesses had been run by the Dutch and were now taken over by the Indonesians. Some of them were running better than others.

It was a city that was somewhat dilapidated at that time. There were two hotels...the Hotel Duta Indonesia which had been the Hotel Des Indes, but used the same linen, had become quite decrepit. There was also the Hotel Dharma Nirmala. Believe me having visitors come to town was no picnic for them. In fact, sometimes when we would pick up official visitors and take them to their hotels, we made it a habit of going with them to their rooms so that we could see them. Very frequently they would be assigned to rooms where the plumbing was broken, there would be water on the floor, etc. The staff who were meeting airplanes developed the general habit of taking people home with them rather than putting them in those kinds of quarters.

God help the person who flew into the country without a contact of some kind or without having made some kind of accommodation because sometimes those people ended up sleeping in the lobby of the Embassy.

Q: This was your first Foreign Service post. How did you look at the government and how did you view our policy towards dealing with the Indonesians?

PALMER: Candidly, there was a problem then which I think still persists. That is that if you are assigned full time to language training as I was, ten months of Indonesian language training, you don't have a lot of time, you don't get much of an opportunity to find out what is going on in the country. So it wasn't until relatively late in my exposure to language training that I got the straight scoop as it were from the people who were on the Desk. I had read, of course, such books and information as was available on Indonesia.

But you recall things were changing very rapidly and as a consequence there really wasn't a great deal to prepare one for the fact that when you got to Indonesia that Sukarno was in the process of forming a personal base. He had already made his speech on Nasakom -- nationalism, religion and communism -- a tripartite approach to government. He had made other important speeches. There was one that he called "Manifesto Politik" (Political Manifesto). He also made a speech, possibly after I got there, called "UNDEK." He was a great believer in acronyms. But these slogans became the building blocks of political life.

So, how did I feel about the situation? I came into Indonesia with an open mind. I had the great fortune of sharing an office with a man named George Kalaris who was assistant labor attaché. He was a very able man, we got on well. We talked a lot and he was very experienced. Through him I began to get an idea of the larger picture. But two things happened to me in coming into Indonesia. Again, I was dumped into a job that was bigger than my experience.

Q: You were what then?

PALMER: I was assigned to Jakarta as political officer, but the Embassy did some shifting around so I ended up going into the economic section. I replaced Robert Flanagan who went to the political section and left behind a job in the economic section that had been run by Donald Easum who went on to fame and fortune working on Africa, became Assistant Secretary, in fact.

Well, Donald Easum was a class-4 officer back in those days when I was a class-8 officer. He was

doing a range of things that went from science, atomic energy to general financial reporting to reporting on the Sino-Soviet Bloc, political/economic penetration of Indonesia. It was an enormous range of things. It took me two years to find out all the things I was supposed to be doing. And, as you know, Easum is a very energetic sort of guy.

So I came into the Embassy as the youngest and greenest language officer. Invitations started coming into the Embassy for the Ambassador to attend the functions in which Sukarno was mobilizing political opinion. Ambassador Howard Jones, who, as you know, was a man who had a very benign picture of Sukarno and what was happening in Indonesia, was also out very frequently at night. He couldn't be out all night and all day also. Sukarno was just super charged with energy. So the invitations would come in and float through the political section, the economic section and finally find their way down to the most junior guy.

As it turned out this was like Br'er Rabbit being thrown into the briar patch because at a very young age and certainly at a point in my life when I was inexperienced I started going out two or three times a week to these political rallies that Sukarno was holding. As a consequence I saw at close hand organizations such as GERWANI, which was the women's movement, one of the communist fronts; SOBSI, which was the labor confederation; LEKRA, which was the cultural federation; and organization called, I think, PETANI, which was the agricultural workers organization. I had a chance to meet some of the major figures. I suppose I did meet people like Subandrio and others through this kind of thing. In addition, of course, there were the more non-communist, or even anti-communist, public events. So I got the chance not only to meet Sukarno, but to meet virtually the entire Cabinet. I also got to meet General Nasution.

Q: He was Minister of Defense.

PALMER: At that time I believe he was Minister of Defense, although he may have been Chief of Staff. In any case, I always had a kind of easy relationship with military people. I had a chance to play a little tennis with him and some of his officers. I subsequently learned that the fellow who is now Minister of Defense and was the Chief of Staff in the Suharto government, whose name is General Benny Murdani, was a very young officer, and a ball boy at that time, remembers seeing me, although I don't remember him. Here again, I was just a kid but comfortably received in a circle in which there was Nasution, General Jani, who was one of those killed in 1965, and a wide range of the military leadership at that time.

Unquestionably it seemed to me that by and large the military was anti-communist. But it was not wise in those days to be overtly anti-communist simply because Sukarno's mystique was so broad and important and deep. The notion that he was on the right path for Indonesia was quite wide spread. The old sectarian politics, as Sukarno used to say, the 50 plus one politics, went against some very basic strains, values in the character and belief system of the Indonesians. Therefore the idea that there ought to be a way for religious forces, for nationalist forces and, indeed, for progressive, communist forces to get along in support of the nation was something that was very attractive to folks.

I spoke just now about political values. Two of the ideas that Sukarno expressed persist and are important values to this day in Indonesian political life. They are what are called *musjarawah*,

which means consultation. Everybody should be heard. This goes back to concepts of village town meetings.

After musjarawah comes mufakat decisions. Musjarawah is the concept under which ASEAN operates -- it is consensus in other words.

I have to say that while there were good people who believed that there ought to be a way that these forces could get together, there was never much doubt in my mind that the Communists not only had their own agenda but that their agenda was in the end a radically different agenda from Sukarno's. I feel this way today and I felt that way then.

Q: In the Embassy you had this Ambassador who was very controversial, Howard P. Jones. When you arrived there and while you were there, what was the feeling towards this man and his policy of staying very close to Sukarno all the time?

PALMER: There was disagreement. The disagreement by and large did not manifest itself publicly. This was before the days of the Dissent Channel, for example. But, without naming names, I can say that a considerable part of the political section didn't agree with Ambassador Jones. They felt that he was being lied to by Sukarno. They felt, as I just expressed it, that the Communists' goals were in fact a communist state. There was deep skepticism that Sukarno would be able to control this mechanism that he had created in which the Communists were structured in.

Well, let me not talk about them but talk about me. I felt that Sukarno was too inconstant. He was not the kind of disciplined person that was needed in order to cope with the Indonesian problems at that time. I want to underline the fact that the people that I met, and these would be rather more middle level people and who were or were not Communists, were very able people.

I have an historical conundrum to pose. There have been rebellions, Communist led rebellions in Indonesia, particularly Java, to the best of my recollection, 1926, 1947 and then 1965. Each time the Communist Party leadership has been cut off, people jailed and in some cases there have actually been pogroms in which a lot of people have been killed. But somehow, each time the party grows back. How is that? Why is that? One of the reasons it seems to me is that there are conditions that exist especially in central Java in regard to class structure and the agrarian situation, etc. that seem to reproduce themselves over time.

How is it that this clandestine party that security people are watching out for and trying to control is able to prosper? Well, there is a long history of, shall we say a clandestine party. I don't doubt that there is a left movement, I don't want to call it a communist movement, that has come into existence as a clandestine movement since 1965. And, as a consequence, I can't say that I am totally sympathetic, but I know what it is that the government is trying to guard against and consequently why they keep people in jail and why they go very actively against movements that they think are communist because they all know that this has happened and recurred several times in this century.

It seems to me that unless some of the existing conditions are changed, there is a possibility that you could see it happening again.

Back in the early 1960s there was the appeal of idealism and one mustn't forget that communism does appeal to idealism. There was appeal to the idea of sharing. Again one needs to remember 19th century philosophy and that Marx grows out of that period's optimistic progressivism. And also that Marxism, socialism and communism, for some people represent modernism...a way of making a break from what they think is old fashioned ways of approaching problems.

So, was there a feeling in the Embassy that the Ambassador was wrong? Decidedly. I would say that it split between the Ambassador and those higher officials who were after all his men, and those of us who were younger and didn't have the kind of operating responsibility that he had. I read his book, "The Impossible Dream" and Ambassador Jones believed very fervently that Sukarno's heart and mind were in the right place and he believed he could control these forces that he had somehow encouraged to be developed. God bless him. I think the evidence speaks for itself. To me 1965 really seems to indicate that Sukarno was prepared to throw in his influence with the left, the Communists, etc.

Q: Now, you had Howard Jones who was close to Sukarno, you had within the Embassy a feeling, and I know this was reflected in Washington too, that this was not American policy. Now, what type of Embassy did Jones run? Did he run a tight ship...you support me or get out? Or did he sort of allow a thousand flowers to bloom? How would you describe it?

PALMER: That is an interesting question. First of all, Howard Jones is one of the nicest men that you could possibly meet. A good man.

Q: This is what I have heard from everyone I have talked to.

PALMER: That's right. And he also had a very lovely wife. Good people. John Henderson was his DCM and he was a tough son-of-a-gun. If John liked you he could be very helpful, very supportive. I suppose if he didn't like you he could be a menace. Although he kept me in a fairly constant state of terror, we got along fairly well. I was a young man who nevertheless because of this crazy job with all these things in it, I had my share of exposure to the DCM, especially the work I was doing on the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Since the whole thing was controversial, I ended up often having to do the political writing myself and it would eventually get up to the DCM.

The thousand flowers. We were a very good Embassy. That political section included Burt Levin, who is now Ambassador to Burma, who reported on the Chinese and the youth movement, etc. I think his stuff was quite honest. So it got out that there were several possibilities. There was a benign possibility and a malign possibility, and you know, he was a very good writer and presented the cases very well. Robert Flanagan, who I mentioned before, was a very good reporter. All his work was on the external side, I think. Henry Heymann did the internal side, as I recall. He had a lot of experience there and did some wonderful reporting in terms of the situation.

So there is no question in my mind that these things got out. The chief of the political section was Roland Bushnell. There was another man there by the name of James O'Connor.

There was a range of opinion that went out of the Embassy.

In my view, I was in Washington sometime hence, and I don't think that it was all together a bad thing to have disparate views coming out of the Embassy, because I think when September 30, 1965 happened, I think that the people in Washington had a pretty good sense of what to do, which was basically not to do much, just keep your mouth shut, stay out of the way and let what I am convinced was a 100 percent Indonesian event take place.

Frankly, I don't think the United States had anything to do with that. It was a situation that was inherently unstable because there really was no way, especially for the religious elements in this situation, to get along with the Communists. The Communists and the nationalists had to be at loggerheads. And the army fundamentally was going to come down on the side of nationalism. So sooner or later something was going to happen.

So, back to your question. I thought I knew what was going on in Indonesia. I was close especially to the Canadians, and the Australians, the Germans and others and we talked. You hear me saying that I have a certain sympathy for what people were attempting, but that the reality simply did not permit it. Clifford Geertz has really got it right. He describes the class structure and the role of religion, Islam, in the countryside. You have two basic groups: those who are traditionally higher class persons who are landlords and who also tend to be much more religiously orthodox, and those who are of a less high class status who tend to be landless and less orthodox. He calls them prijai and abangan. This contradiction in the society remains to this day and over time you have this tension going back and forth.

I was duty officer in at least two demonstrations and on one occasion I was sent to the Ambassador's residence, this would now be 1962, when we got word that the Communists would strike either the school, the Ambassador residence or perhaps the commissary, all American facilities. As it happened the rascals came towards the residence and I was there walking up and down trying to look officious, etc. in front of the gate. A car pulled up and I was dumb enough to walk over and ostentatiously take out a big piece of paper and start writing down the license tag. Apparently it was enough at that time to cause them to go away.

It was after that that they got into the Ambassador's residence and burned some porch furniture and trash, trying to burn the place down. Life got very strange. You know there was this business about the school. We would get these reports to keep an eye on the school, that there would be a communist attack. That really upset me. I left in July or August of 1962. This was the time when things were really moving rapidly. The Asian games were coming up. It wasn't long after that that we had mobs presumably led by the communists sacking the British Embassy.

Q: Was that the time that a Brit bagpiped his way through?

PALMER: Well, he was marching up and down in front of their chancery, I believe, and people thought he was crazy. They apparently thought he was being provocative and reacted with great anger.

Q: Continuing interview of Ronald Palmer on June 22, 1990. Ron we had you leaving Indonesia. The situation had been rather difficult there. We talked about your involvement in trying to stop

them from doing nasty things to the flag, the Ambassador's residence, etc. You left Indonesia that time when?

PALMER: I think it was July or August of 1962.

JACOB WALKIN
Chief Consular Officer
Jakarta (1961-1963)

Political Officer
Surabaya (1964-1965)

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Mr. Walkin was educated at Cornell, Yale and the University of California. Entering the Foreign Service in 1952, he studied Serbo-Croatian at the Foreign Service Institute and was assigned to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Subsequent assignments took him to Hong Kong, Jakarta and Surabaya. Following an assignment at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Walkin retired and began a new career as professor at Auburn University. Mr. Walkin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Well, you did this until 1960 and then where did you go?

WALKIN: I had home leave and then I was sent to Jakarta.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

WALKIN: I was in Jakarta from March 1961 to December 1963 and at that time, I was moved from Jakarta to Surabaya.

Q: What was the situation like in Jakarta in 1961?

WALKIN: It was a fascinating situation for me. Here I had been, as I think I told you, for four years in INR, working on internal political conditions on the Soviet Union and reading communist papers everyday. I had a pretty clear idea, we all did of those of us who worked, or at least we thought we did. It was not done by CIA at that time. It was done by this group in INR that did the basic intelligence on what was happening in Communist China and well, that was one of the principle missions to assess the situation actually in Communist China, since our Diplomatic Mission was rather restricted and a good deal of work was done through the reading the Communist press and right there in Hong Kong and instead of making contact with the local Chinese but what I was getting at was the fact that our relations with the Chinese were limited on the mainland in that a good deal of the political work was being done there. Now, I had no direct connection with that.

Q: Now in Jakarta, in 1961, what job did you have when you came there?

WALKIN: I was chief of the Consular Section and I sat with the chiefs of other sections every morning with Ambassador Jones, for example.

Q: Yes, Howard Jones was the Ambassador, what was your impression of Howard Jones and how he operated?

WALKIN: I find that difficult to answer because my actual contacts with him were limited. What I am bound to remember is his particular attitude toward Sukarno and his readiness to continue relations Sukarno, regardless of what he did and I happened to be in Jakarta in, I guess it was the spring or summer of 1963, when Sukarno ordered the British Embassy sacked.

Q: Yes, it was sacked and burned.

WALKIN: Well it was rather disturbing to all of us. We didn't know whether we would be next or not. I remember that day quite vividly. Well we were not touched and I guess that I started to tell you that being assigned to Indonesia, Jakarta first and then Surabaya, I got an idea of the contrast between a totalitarian state, like the former Soviet Union and an autocratic state, like Indonesia, where all sorts of things happened that couldn't conceivably happen in a place like the Soviet Union. So my being for four years in Indonesia was a fairly enlightening experience for me, frightening at times because as I think you know Sukarno declared us a mortal enemy.

Q: Wasn't this the year of living dangerously?

WALKIN: I confirm that. We could never be sure whether there would be a mob pounding rocks at us at any time.

Q: How did you find the other officers at the embassy? Did you find a split between the other officers at the embassy and Ambassador Howard Jones?

WALKIN: I wouldn't put it that way. Everybody understood this problem though, that Jones was more tolerant of somebody like Sukarno that had basically declared political war on us in the summer of 1964, than we were prepared to accept. Typical is what happened after the sacking of the British Embassy. We were all, of course, enraged with Sukarno, but not Jones. And since we were enraged and this was not the policy that he wanted the Embassy to carry to Sukarno, he set up a cocktail party in which all of us met with Sukarno and shook his hand. I have a picture of me shaking his hand. It is a good thing that it shows the back of my head and not my face because I am sure my face would have been contorted while shaking Sukarno's hand. That problem was endemic during all of Jones' years there, until replaced by Marshall Greene.

Q: As chief of the consular section, what was your main work there?

WALKIN: I guess it was basically issuing visas. I have no exact recollection of doing anything else. We had a small consular section and I was the chief.

Q: I was wondering if you had any Americans in jail or something like that?

WALKIN: We had no particular problems that I can recall that I worked on.

Q: Well, this was not a time when Americans were going to Indonesia as tourists and all.

WALKIN: Well it was, until Sukarno declared, more or less war on us, and declared us one of the principal enemies of mankind, more or less in the manner of the Communist Chinese.

Q: When you went to Surabaya from what, 1963 to 1964?

WALKIN: 1965, I left in November of 1965.

Q: How many Americans were in Surabaya?

WALKIN: I'm not sure I can give you a figure.

Q: Probably just a few.

WALKIN: Yes, just a few. The visitors I can remember the most is the fact that I, as the Deputy to the Consul, had next to the government house, in which I myself lived, in a guest room. Americans from the region used to stop there and I would meet them and give them a guest room and also breakfast in the morning. That was my principle meetings with Americans. I did not see too many Americans.

Q: Did you have many dealings with the Indonesians while you were in Surabaya?

WALKIN: I knew quite a few of them, particularly since I spoke Indonesian. I had parties for them that was something I was supposed to do. I went to cocktail parties whenever I was invited, that was also something I was supposed to do. I had a very pleasant relationship with a group of Indonesians in the Foreign Office back in Jakarta, where I had been for more than two years. Incidentally, as Consul in Surabaya and as the only American there, apart from the CIA, who did political and economic reporting, I achieved a certain reputation.

Q: This was a period where we were looking very closely at what Sukarno was doing, whether he was going to turn the country over to the Communists or not. You must have been doing reporting on that.

WALKIN: I certainly was. I was the only one doing reporting on that. When two inspectors came out there, I guess they publicly commented on the fact that I was the only one doing reporting on that. But I also got compliments later, which I would have to repeat here that the political counselor in Jakarta at the time was Ed Masters, who later became ambassador. Marshall Green was at that time the Ambassador, and Frank, I forget his name, was Deputy Ambassador. Masters was the third in line there. When I retired from the Foreign Service and went to teach at Auburn, I went to Washington every year and one of my first years, when I went from Alabama to Washington in the summer, I met with Ed Masters, who was back in Washington at that time. Later, of course, he was appointed Ambassador. But during the course of our luncheon, he said this

to me, "No one before or since you were in Surabaya has reported on East Java the way you did." And this by the way, also led me, when I returned to the Department later, to take the dispatches that I had written, remove the classified information - I don't think any were classified more than confidential - and wrote an article which I called, "The Muslim Communist Confrontation in East Java, 1964-1965" which was eventually published with the approval of the Department and I got quite a compliment from the editorial board of the publication, *Orbis*, which is still a quarterly journal of international relations based in Philadelphia. They sent me a letter, something like this, when I sent them a copy of the article. The editorial board unanimously and enthusiastically accepts your article.

Q: Did you run across Bob Martins?

WALKIN: Oh, certainly. I met him here, too. He's been here. He sat for you.

Q: Yes, I interviewed Bob Martins, and also Dick Howland, I think he was there a little later.

WALKIN: I think a little later. I would know all the names of those who were there.

Q: Were you there the last day of September and the first day of October 1965?

WALKIN: I was. The article that was published was based on the fact that I was there.

Q: What happened in Surabaya when there was this coup?

WALKIN: I remember many publicly monitored stations and of course I was talking to anyone I could as well as reading the local press. I also watched the Communists and Muslims in the marches they did in the streets of Surabaya. I deliberately left my post to go out and watch them. Remember that I could speak Indonesian fairly well. I think the article that I wrote, which was called by the way "The Muslim Communist Confrontation in East Java, 1964-1965."

Q: Probably the Foreign Service Journal?

WALKIN: Pardon?

Q: The Foreign Service Journal?

WALKIN: No, it was published in Orbis in the fall of 1969. I think it will be read for a long time. I had this opportunity not just to see what both groups were doing and to see their street demonstrations, but to talk to many people.

Q: When Marshall Green came to Indonesia in early 1965 or in summer...

WALKIN: That's accurate, early 1965.

Q: Did that make a difference, do you feel?

WALKIN: Not to me, working in Surabaya, no. I had had very cordial relations with Howard Jones throughout and well I continued to have them with Marshall Green. When I gave them a copy of my article, after I had retired and after a couple of years returned to Washington, well, he was quite grateful. He was, I guess, himself writing about that period and he accepted my article with considerable graciousness for a man of his office.

Q: What was your orientation of the leaders in Surabaya? Were they on the Communist-Sukarno side or on the Nationalist side that joined up with Suharto?

WALKIN: They were on the Nationalist side. I don't really remember talking to too many pro-Communist people. I have no recollection of it now, but I probably did.

Q: When Suharto took over, was there any fighting in Surabaya?

WALKIN: Not in Surabaya but you probably have heard of the killings that took place of the Communists, and the accusations against Bob Martins that he instigated it. I really saw nothing of it from my position in the Consulate. I knew it was going on, of course, from reading the local press avidly, every day.

CHARLES C. CHRISTIAN
Auditor, USAID
Jakarta (1961-1966)

Charles C. Christian was born in Missouri in 1927. He received a bachelor's degree from Westminster College in 1950 and a master's degree from George Washington University in 1971. Mr. Christian joined USAID in 1961. His career included positions in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Laos, the Philippines, and the Ivory Coast. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1995.

Q: So you went out in 1961?

CHRISTIAN: I arrived in Jakarta in early March 1961. President Sukarno was in power then, a full fledged revolutionary. He was a charismatic leader that could spell-bind an audience for three or four hours, or however long he wanted to. He could walk into a room and you could feel the electricity.

Q: Did you meet him?

CHRISTIAN: I heard, in-person, some of his speeches. He addressed our American Men's Association, which I was treasurer of at that time. He would have a few people in the American community down to the palace for some of the traditional Indonesian music festivities until three or four in the morning, if you could hold up to it. At that time I was not as good at sneaking out of those things as I was later on. He was a great political leader, but he had no economic sensitivity, nor did he permit those in his administration who did to exercise it, and over the years he came to

the parting of the ways with the U.S.

Q: Did we have a substantial aid program at that time?

CHRISTIAN: It was probably one of the largest at that time. There were about 130 U.S. direct hire people and hundreds of foreign service nationals. Also, it seemed like dozens of U.S. contractors, including at least four university contractors -- two from the University of California, and two from the University of Kentucky. The USAID programs seemed to cover all aspects of economic development, from the agriculture programs to Jakarta by-pass highways. Based on the orientation of our Director from Iowa, we even tried to do corn as an alternative to rice. Obviously, that would never fly, particularly in Asia. In my Controller work I did not get the sense of program successes as much as maybe technical, or program division personnel would. That makes it somewhat difficult for me to remember the project winners and losers with clarity.

Q: What do you think the main theme was of what we were trying to do?

CHRISTIAN: There were many main themes, it seemed like from my standpoint. One of the interesting things there was the level of people we had in AID. The Mission Director was formally a chancellor of two major universities, Dr. Raymond Allen from the University of Washington and UCLA. He was there for the first year I was on board. I joined ICA (International Cooperation Administration), and the name changed during 1961 to AID with John F. Kennedy's Administration arriving on the scene. I thought, by the way, that the choice for name change was unfortunate. I thought ICA was preferable to AID, which can connote charity. They changed the name to AID, and Fowler Hamilton became Administrator sometime during these years. Hamilton put forward a program called Operation Tycoon, to bring new talented leaders from the private sector. Under this administrative program, USAID/Jakarta was assigned a new Director.

Q: What year was this?

CHRISTIAN: Henry Labouisse came a very short time under Kennedy. Kennedy moved him out, and brought in David Bell. Bell was there through 1965. Fowler Hamilton must have come later.

Hamilton was in office only a short time. At any rate Ed Fox arrive on the scene as Director of the USAID in Indonesia in 1962 or 1963. He was the owner of an agricultural business firm in Des Moines, Iowa. Ed and Bobbie are wonderful people, truly outstanding Americans from the midwest. He arrived at USAID/Indonesia along with a deputy director, Ed Querner. Querner was not of the temperament to stay with the government in an overseas capacity for an extended period of time. He did not have the patience to make it work in the developing world. He did have much positive to do with building the Jakarta by-pass road which went from the port, around Jakarta and inland. The road was built by the AID-financed contractor, Morrison-Knudsen. USAID/Jakarta had two deputy directors during this period, one for infrastructure and one an AID career type to oversee operations for general compliance with AID guidelines...maybe good in theory, but also produced the predictable donnybrooks!

Q: How long were you there?

CHRISTIAN: Five years. I arrived at post in the position of what in theory was an auditor, but in those days was called an "end-use officer". I had no idea what that term meant, but they were relying on my audit background, so I assumed it meant that I would perform the audit functions. That is what it turned into at least. We became titled as auditors in a short time and the label of "end-use officer" vanished. In that period the audit responsibility was with the controller.

Q: In the mission? So it was highly decentralized.

CHRISTIAN: I reported to the Mission Controller; the field audit responsibility rested with the Mission Controller, and the Mission Controller reported to the Mission Director, with, mostly only theoretically, a functional responsibility to the AID Controller in Washington. So it was not an independent audit, in the sense that it would provide for the internal control normally required by the private sector. It was internal within the field Mission, rather than audit independent of the Mission. I should point out that the Controller's office in Washington also had an audit staff that performed field audits at the Missions, thus that audit activity was independent of the Controller in the field.

Q: How did that work out?

CHRISTIAN: It had both negative and positive points in the field. From the standpoint of having the capability to do a lot of financial management, the Mission Controller had the resources to do it. Most Controllers used the auditors to do more than just audit. They did a lot of the analysis work and follow-up, things that took a lot of skill and time that your main budget and accounting people just did not have time to do. Auditors were called upon to do that sort of work as well as the auditing work. On the other hand the independence for "checks and balance" was missing.

Q: Was there any planning work in conjunction with the development of projects?

CHRISTIAN: For any work like that, the Controllers, in those years, usually had to call upon their audit staff, i.e., for project analysis, pipeline scrutiny, as well as to perform the audit work.

Q: You mentioned advantages and disadvantages, what were they?

CHRISTIAN: You were not getting the independent audit that perhaps a program needed. A Controller, or the Mission Director, could filter the audit reports, if he did not like what was being said. Or higher management could filter it if they did not like what was being published. They did it with some risk. The risk came "home to roost" for a Mission Director in Vietnam, who shelved the audits in the corner for an extended period without letting them be published, and he spent two or three days in testimony, being "grilled" by the Foreign Affairs committee of the Congress. This may have led to the spin-off of the audit function under a new AID element, first called the Auditor General and later the Inspector General.

Q: There wasn't any central follow-up on the audit process or checking on whether the audits were done or whether anyone had been acting on them? It was completely local?

CHRISTIAN: It was mostly decentralized at that point, and the responsibility was in the Mission.

Results were very uneven. In some places it was done well, fully and thoroughly followed up on. In other places it was given short change. It depended a lot upon the professional skills of the Controller and if he had capable and sufficient staff, and on his understanding of his responsibilities. That brings up another subject: The early 1960s saw the beginning of the professionalization of the controllers' operations. They started to hire professionally trained people, requiring education and experience that were as good as any place in the private sector.

Q: That hadn't been the case before?

CHRISTIAN: Definitely it had not. There were some exceptions to that statement, of course. Generally speaking, accounting had not been given much attention in the U.S. Government until the late 1950s or early 1960s. Before that you only needed someone to keep track of numbers, a good bookkeeper, as opposed to somebody who could do professional accounting and financial analysis work. There was quite a dramatic change: AID also started to hire more people with the credentials in other skill areas like the sciences and the technical skills.

Q: That began when? About the time you were hired?

CHRISTIAN: Well, with respect to controller activities, I was one of the earlier group. There were some people who were hired a few years before me, but there were still quite a few of the ones who had gotten on in the controller function earlier who were weeded out over the years or at least didn't get moved along to top positions.

Q: What were some of the main issues that you had to deal with?

CHRISTIAN: The two individuals that had a lot to do with professionalizing the controller's office about that time were Chuck Flinner, the AID controller, and his executive officer, Claud Alsop, who was more pro-controller activities than you wanted him to be at times. But Claud served us well indeed. In Indonesia there seemed to be an awful lot of problems with the Controller office before I arrived there. The previous Mission Controller was said to be an alcoholic, and his successor, the current Controller upon my arrival, only wanted out. The Controller who took the job about six months or a year after I got to Indonesia, was an outstanding person as far as his dedication to government accounting and internal control. He was very knowledgeable; he had a lot of experience with army audit, and he was a trainer of people. He trained a lot of controllers during his career with USAID. He was not too well received by some Mission Directors, which may reflect favorably upon him...he was a real pro in his field.

Q: What was his name?

CHRISTIAN: Morley Gren. He's retired now in El Paso, Texas. He did a lot to improve our overall Controller operations. We developed a good audit staff then, based on his audit background. I was an auditor at that time. I don't remember any specific, significant, or sensitive activities from that period, but I do know that Gren cleaned up our Controller act and we issued constructive audit reports.

Q: What's your perspective of the USAID programs?

CHRISTIAN: Our infrastructure programs seemed to achieve their stated objectives, although with reasonable delays considering the trying circumstances. We had a malaria program that was making progress. As I recall, there were two stages of malaria programs: "containment" and "eradication." It was a large program, because of all the islands and the rainwater of the tropics. The program achieved containment, or at least that is what the statistics showed, and began to make headway in the eradication area. However, that all went down the tubes, as well as the rest of the program, when Sukarno told us to "go to hell with your aid", which was sometime in 1964.

Q: *Why was that?*

CHRISTIAN: He was a political adventurer. He was challenging all of his neighbors in military skirmishes in Malaysia, West Irian and the Philippines. He joined the so-called "axis of five" that was China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and with Indonesia it was five. He decided that he couldn't push Uncle Sam around the way he wanted to, and get support from us for his ventures into the neighboring countries. He desperately wanted the Irian Barat territory that still was held by the Dutch. We wouldn't give him any military support to take that back. He also wanted to attack Malaysia and Singapore; the reason escapes me. At one point, Singapore was not a separate state from Malaysia. He was getting in the middle of all of those political things in the region, to divert his people's attention from their economic plight, the prevailing poverty. So he kept nationalism issues on a front burner to try to build patriotism and build support for those activities rather than economic development which is a lot harder to achieve.

In spite of Sukarno's belief that the more children, the merrier, our family planning program was installed there. It was pretty rough going against the Muslim trend, and against the attitude of Sukarno who had many amorous affairs with many wives with the predictable consequences. I'm sure the population program had greater success in other places than it did in Indonesia in those years. By 1964 Sukarno had enough of our stiff-arming him, and trying to keep him in line. He told us in print, and in person to the Ambassador, to "go to hell with your aid". We proceeded to go.

My five year tour at USAID/Indonesia was many faceted. I started out as an end-use officer. I was then an auditor, and then the deputy controller, then Controller, before becoming the AID Affairs Officer during the last year. The latter occurred because the Mission phased down from 130 U.S. direct hire, to myself and a secretary and two or three foreign nationals. We had all of this U.S.-owned property to dispose of, including real estate. In the final days, there is an interesting story about the disposition of the AID office building, a four storied building we had just recently constructed using PL 480 generated funds. We had used that building for about a year before our departure. See appendix A "Indonesia Remembered" for more on this topic.

Q: *You closed down the mission?*

CHRISTIAN: We held it in a suspense situation for about six months, and then after being there for five years, I was ready to move on, and I turned it over to Cal Cowles, former program officer at USAID/Indonesia. And AID started building its program back up again in a new political climate. The new President, Suharto, and his people, in the Indonesian way, gradually eased Sukarno out of power after an aborted coup by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The coup

was aided and abetted by Sukarno against his own government. He believed he could control the Indonesian Communist...fat chance as they were tied closely with the Chinese Communist Party. I have not covered, in detail, the abortive coup in September 1965 which eventually led to Sukarno's downfall and removal from office.

One "lessons learned" point: The importance of the events in Indonesia in terms of the east-west struggle should not be minimized. Vietnam and Indochina get all of the attention of the historians, and, of course, the damage to our society from our experiences relating to Vietnam was surely of great importance; but you wonder about the outcome if we would have let Vietnam solve their internal problems similar to our reactions following the abortive coup in Indonesia. Would the world, particularly the U.S., have been a better place today? I think McNamara has alluded to that saying in his recent book that Indonesia was proof that the "domino" theory may be discounted. All 20/20 hindsight. However, I feel that Indonesia, on the world scene and in the context of the East-West struggle, far more important in a future sense to the West than Indochina. Indochina, of course, is important, to our undoing in America, or at least our partial undoing. But just think about it...Indonesia is the fifth largest in population in the world, and the third richest in natural resources. The saving of Indonesia from the Communist sphere of influence was extremely important in world history.

Another interesting point is that USAID/Indonesia had one of the largest participant training programs in AID at that time. The USAID had trained as many as three thousand Indonesian, mid and upper level, who became Western oriented. That number may include the military trainees, many of the military leaders had been trained at Fort Reilly, or other U.S. bases, but a lot of the other leaders had been trained by USAID who came into office later in the next government.

Q: In the development area?

CHRISTIAN: In the finance ministry and other ministries. USAID had trained many participants, it was a big part of our program. The USAID had a large training office with four or five U.S. direct hire people, not to mention several outstanding Indonesian nationals.

Q: What were the effects of having to scale down the program?

CHRISTIAN: AID in Indonesia was for all intents and purposes discontinued. They had to start over a year later in a lot of the areas. In many cases it might have been a good thing to start over with a lot of those projects.

Q: Why was that? They weren't doing well?

CHRISTIAN: It was positive to get a clean start in an economic development atmosphere. I would hesitate to say that was the case for all of the prior activities; I am sure some of them had served a useful purpose. We completed the Jakarta by-pass highway; the residue of benefit of the education programs is difficult for me to evaluate. I guess, with the clean sweep of the government, with the new people who were receptive to the U.S. After this abortive coup, I believed things were going to work much better. And I think they have, from what I understand. Except, unfortunately, the present leader has overstayed the time when he was beneficial to the well being of the country and

the Indonesians.

Q: But what would you think were some of the difficulties and accomplishments of that period?

CHRISTIAN: As mentioned before, one of the things that comes to mind is that we had a Mission Director there who was a Iowa agriculturalist, and his first interest was corn. He tried pretty hard to move the agriculture programs in the direction of corn production. But that was going up against a culture, and a tradition, and a heritage that it just wouldn't fly. Rice was it, and the only thing, but he tried very hard to introduce another crop. He was a very good man. I like him as a person, and as a director, but I think he had a losing cause with corn. Lasting major successes...they were hard to come by in Indonesia at that point, because the government was being so obstreperous. The government officials did not have the backing of the top man, and what the top man wanted, the country did. He was the revolutionary, he was their George Washington. Sukarno caused much trouble for the Dutch, and led the Indonesian independence revolution, as our founding fathers did with the British. I guess the malaria containment was achieved at that point, which slipped backwards during the hiatus. That initially was an achievement. The participant training was, perhaps, the lasting real achievement. Indonesia was the pincer of the southern part of Asia and the failure of their coup may have kept that part of the world from going Communist, which relates in some measure to our role in training Indonesians, as discussed earlier.

Q: Through the participant program or through the program in general?

CHRISTIAN: Our program played a part, I think. The fact that the Communist led coup of 1965 was not successful, was due to some Indonesians with Western orientation, coming forward at the right time, coming forward to put down the coup. It resulted in the killing of some 300,000 Communists. Unfortunately, many innocent people of Chinese extraction were included in this blood bath.

Q: These people that helped put down the coup were trained in the US as part of the participant program?

CHRISTIAN: I am sure many of them were. Just the exposure to Americans and our culture may well have contributed to it a great deal, but we certainly cannot take total credit, maybe not even a large percentage. However, some measure of credit was due to our presence and our AID program. The fact that the Communists made the mistake of butchering seven revolutionary heroes, Indonesian generals, and the effective use by General Suharto of this fact by parading their coffins through downtown Jakarta for a miles long parade the following week or so played a good deal in turning public opinion against the Communist party.

Q: Did you get to know Indonesians? What kind of experience did you have with the people and the culture?

CHRISTIAN: They were very open, warm, friendly people. The Indonesian trait is to be very agreeable with their guests, which is generally common for many Asians; they seem to hate to disagree with you. They also have trouble saying no to you. That trait may be changing with economic development...Western style. They are still very hospitable and friendly. From that

standpoint, the personal relationships were very agreeable and all Americans had many Indonesian friends. It was very incongruous; their later actions to slaughter 300,000 of their own people did not show in any of the personal relationships with foreigners in the five years that we were there. It was in this period of Sukarno's and his cohorts' great hostility toward the U.S., that huge billboards appeared along the main avenues of town depicting Uncle Sam being hung by a rope or our president being ridiculed. It wasn't very career-enhancing for Indonesians to be friendly with us, but some were able to keep the communications open though they couldn't come to your home for receptions or other social occasions. They were suspect if they did.

Q: That meant there was a problem of your having any rapport with any individual groups or colleagues?

CHRISTIAN: That did not occur until 1964. But my relationship with a staff member of the Ministry of Finance was so solid, that even during that period of hostilities, his friendship and support carried over. He provided the USAID with our local currency requirements for operating expenses until I left Indonesia. How he managed that I have no idea, and I did not ask. I just brought him Dutch Master cigars, and he enjoyed the irony of that little token alluding to their former colonialist masters. He had a good sense of humor like most Indonesians. They were just charming people. My wife was completely accepted, and she had a glorious time there. Remember this was a Muslim country, although a very moderate one. She had no fear whatsoever, even during the hostility period. She felt no danger traveling through crowds by herself or with the driver. I guess there were those that wanted harm to come to us, but it sure didn't show through.

Q: Were there problems in the financial management area with the Indonesians in terms of proper accounting resources and things of that sort. Were there major difficulties on use of funds?

CHRISTIAN: This was a period when you did some of the work for them. That was why there were large staffs. You would keep good accounts of the local currency generated. You would keep more elaborate, more detailed project records than you would like; you would give them a draft letter of what they should send back, of what would be acceptable to keep your records complete. Discrepancies, delayed reporting and uncompleted work was abundant, but no huge scandals surfaced during my tenure.

Q: But would they follow through?

CHRISTIAN: You had to help them, and follow-up a lot yourself, but most counterparts tried if they understood and knew how. Generally, their heart was in the right place. You had some exceptions, and it was such a large program, that I'm sure some things fell through the cracks. You were playing on their turf, and in some respects, you had to play catch-up, and you couldn't find some of the records.

Q: Did you have any relationship with the Embassy? What was the ambassador's policy?

CHRISTIAN: That doesn't come to mind about Afghanistan. We had more contact in Indonesia. My office did not have to deal with the Embassy much at all, only our B & A officer with the Embassy fiscal officer. We had a full mission staff, and were across town from the Embassy. I very

seldom had to go over to the Embassy. Let me backtrack with respect to the Ambassador's policy. In Indonesia, I should say that we had Ambassador Marshall Green there at a very crucial time. In my mind, his biggest job at the time of the coup was to keep the State Department and the U.S.'s nose out of fixing the problem, to make sure that we did not side with any side as they were vying for power at a critical time. We stayed as far away from it as we could and watched. He more or less saved the day, and I think should get a lot a credit for that. This was in Indonesia. I was, at that stage, the USAID affairs officer, sitting in on all of the country team meetings, so I was privy to most of the stuff going on there. I am digressing a bit here, but one morning that we went down to the country team meeting at 7:30 or so, as I drove into the Embassy compound, I noticed that the soldiers lining up across the street were facing the Embassy rather than facing outward. When we got inside we found out why: The night before there had been the Communist coup with the Communist picking up the seven Indonesian revolutionary generals and dumping them in a well after butchering them in a way most derogatory to Muslims.

Q: What was the significance of the guards turning around?

CHRISTIAN: We were under guard rather than being protected. We were then being considered as the possible enemy. At that point the military did not know which Indonesian Military leaders to be loyal to.

Q: But they didn't do anything?

CHRISTIAN: No, they didn't do anything, not even when the rock throwers arrived to shell the Embassy. Suharto was so far down the chain of command then that none of our present people in Jakarta in the military attaché office really knew anything about him. They had generals like we have colonels, by the bushel. We had to communicate with Washington to find out who this guy was, and if they had any book on him. The present and previous military attaché did not know him. There was a lot of talk around the embassy that day. USAID had already moved into the temporary quarters next door after we returned our large, four story USAID building back to the Indonesians. All U.S. dependents were evacuated the week following the coup. During this evacuation of my wife and one year old daughter, our son was born in Singapore, two months pre-mature, probably the cause of his cerebral palsy.

Q: What did you do with all the records in a time like that when you close a place like that down?

CHRISTIAN: I don't recall specifically now. We kept some records for current use. For others, it was a process to see if we needed to return the records to the States, keep or discard. If there were important records without copies previously submitted, then we boxed them up and shipped them to AID/W. I know a lot of papers and records were discarded. This process evolved during the phase-down of U.S. personnel from over 100 to 2.

Q: When the new mission started up again did they have to begin from scratch?

CHRISTIAN: A lot of it was starting from scratch again. We were down to about four rooms. The USAID office was in the embassy compound, in the part that had been the old USIA offices. USIA had dismantled and gone home. The Peace Corps was also kicked out, including Alex Shakow,

later AID Assistant Administrator for Policy and Program Coordination for several years. I remember Alex Shakow appeared in my office in 1961 as a young exchange student at the University of Indonesia. He came over for friendship and "handouts". He was a student there, and then joined the Peace Corps and came back to Indonesia. He was a young man then looking for Americans to be associated with.

Joining the Foreign Service, the Christian family arrived in Indonesia on March 6, 1961 after shivering through a tremendous snow storm in New York City that brought the vibrant Manhattan to a virtual standstill. The temperature in Jakarta was in the high nineties with humidity at least as high. So on our first weekend in Indonesia when we received an invitation to accompany my boss and his wife to the retreat in the mountains (3000 feet) at the renowned Bill Palmer' cottage (former Dutch tea plantation), it was a welcome relief from the sauna baths while stuck in gridlock traffic in Jakarta. An added bonus was the usual Sunday brunch (dinner) of the famous Dutch Rijsttafel followed by a vast selection of delicious fruit, in abundant supply throughout Indonesia. This festive occasion was attended by ex-pats of all descriptions, nationalities, and ranks, ranging from Ambassadors, oil company executives, white Russians, secretaries, interns and artists.

But the main event occurred on Saturday evening. Bill Palmer, our host, was the U. S. film representative in Indonesia. Whether it was for one particular movie/film company, I cannot be certain after some 34 years, but he was one big celebrity with the Indonesians living in little bamboo huts amongst the rice paddies adorning the hillsides all of the way up the incline from the port of Jakarta to the top of Punjak, the mountain retreat for ex-pats. The ritual involved the delivery on Saturday afternoon by a small van, bearing the film company title, along the one road leading from Jakarta to Punjak with the film for the traditional Saturday night movie at the old tea plantation, i.e., if something did not go awry, which is about 80/20 in the developing world. But the little rice farmers and their families knew and the word went out, far and wide, if the little truck bearing the movie was on its way up the hill to Palmer's. As the sun began to set behind the Punjak, the crowd began to gather, slowly and almost mysteriously, appearing from behind banana trees, exotic flowering plants, and seemingly out of nowhere, but by the hundreds. The tukans with their sticky rice and other sweets to be savored by the vast audience were there for an evening of sheer pleasure while watching in utter silence, except when the hero kissed the lady, an action packed John Wayne or other shoot'em-up grade B western movie. A more mannerly, well behaved crowd you would not find anywhere. When the movie was over, they disappeared as quickly and as silently as they had arrived, with no evidence left behind, such as debris or trampled-on plants. That was our introduction to the charming, friendly, lovable Indonesians and their lush paradise.

During early 1965, after President Sukarno told the United States to "go to hell with your aid", the USAID Mission in Indonesia phased down rapidly from about 130 U.S. direct hire personnel and a supporting cast of hundreds more of contractors and Foreign Service nationals (Indonesians), to a caretaker profile of two U.S. employees and perhaps 5 or 6 Indonesian staff. Formal relationships at the Government to Government level, if existing, were difficult at best. While it was not career enhancing for Indonesians, either government employees or ordinary citizens, to socialize or extend themselves to Americans during this period, there did not seem to be a stigma for them to work for us in the office or as domestic help. However, one could assume that our employees were to report on the activities of the remaining Americans. (It is easy to speculate as to the pointlessness of that activity.)

Amidst this atmosphere I was responsible for disposing of AID's excess real property, furniture, equipment and supplies. Included in the real property was the relatively new four story AID office building on Djalan General Sudirman, one of the main arteries in the densely populated capital of Indonesia. The building was constructed using PL 480 local currency, funds generated from delivery of U.S. food commodities. The rupiahs were Indonesian-owned, but jointly controlled. The relevant bilateral agreement provided for U.S.G. use of the building, but it would revert to the Indonesian government (GOI) when no longer required for our use. It appeared that the appointed reversion time had come in the late Summer of 1965. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Frank Galbraith called the Protocol Office for an appointment to transfer officially this prime piece of real estate to the GOI. I was to join the DCM in the ceremony marking an end to an era, not to mention, a sad day in my five fabulous years in Indonesia commencing with John Kennedy's famous question asking what we could do for our country! The night before the meeting with the Foreign Office for this event, our house, in the midst of an American compound was burglarized. In a flattering testament to my excellent taste and high fashion sense, the burglar made off with every piece of outer garments in my possession, except for a well worn pair of casual slacks and an old shirt hanging near my bed. Although I felt inconvenienced by this incident, our country can be proud of the use of this vignette by our diplomat, Frank Galbraith, in upbraiding the Indonesian counterpart for the inconsiderate treatment by their countrymen of an American (present at the meeting in little more than skivies) whose only raison d'etre was to assist them in economic development. Frank's ire may also have had something to do with the fact that the Indonesian Foreign Office chose to have us meet with only a mid-level Protocol Officer.

The events of 1965 and the aftermath of the coup involved the slaying of seven (7) Indonesian Army Generals, revolutionary war heroes, in their sleep, by the Communist Party (PKI) and the following bloodbath of an estimated 300,000 PKI members, sympathizers and not a few innocents. This action was totally incongruous with the Indonesian character as we had come to know and appreciate over the previous four years of pleasant and peaceful encounters.

Viewing the movie, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, I believe it was called, was truly nostalgic for me in bringing to mind the dramatic events of 1965 in Indonesia. One of the leading characters in the movie was a small Indonesian young man, played by a woman. This character and the role s/he played could not have duplicated more a young Chinese-Indonesian, both in his appearance and in his activities, who worked in my office. Although, to my knowledge, in real life I do not believe he committed suicide as in the end of the movie. (He took his severance pay when AID closed-down operations and, my best guess would be, he went on to bigger and better things, reflecting his keen business sense.) We called him "Little Kie", "Big Kie" being the larger and chief accountant. While Little Kie was suppose to be one of our voucher examiners, he spent considerable time following up with Americans around the Embassy and AID offices pursuing the sale of volumes of photos that he shot at American receptions and parties the night before. He could be seen wheeling around town on his mo-ped in the American and other ex-pat neighborhoods. Of course, as diplomatic niceties were replaced by limited contacts and billboards expressing the official Indonesian disdain for our President along with demeaning characterizations of our red, white and blue Uncle Sam, nightlife was substantially moderated along with Little Kie's photography business. Perhaps Little Kie returned to his profitable business of dealing with the generous Americans after the Communist supported coup of September 30,

1965 was aborted and a Government more friendly to the USA rose to power the following year. The movie story ended before this reality occurred and in real life we, now blossomed to a family of four in fertile Indonesia, soon departed Indonesia for Afghanistan and other adventures worthy of merit.

SAMUEL F. HART
Economic Officer
Jakarta (1962-1964)

Ambassador Samuel F. Hart was born in Canton, Mississippi in 1933. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included positions in Uruguay, Indonesia, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Chile, Israel, and an ambassadorship to Ecuador. Ambassador Hart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Oh, yes. You then went out to Jakarta in 1962. The language training was about how long?

HART: It was ten months at the time. Ten months of language and area training. The head of the area training for Southeast Asia at that time was this wonderful old man, a former missionary and the son of missionary parents, who was married to Margaret Landon, the woman who wrote *Anna and the King of Siam*. I took ten months of Indonesian. My wife took intensive Indonesian training for about three or four months, so that she had some capacity. I think they have now reduced Indonesian to five or six months. I don't know whether that speaks well for today's students, or what.

Q: You served in Indonesia from '62 to '64. What was the situation in Indonesia when you got there?

HART: It was bad. Of course, Sukarno at that time was one of the major leaders in the nonaligned movement. Indonesia had been in a terrible economic decline over a period of years, primarily due to the mismanagement of Sukarno and the people around him. Indonesia at that time was about as poor as all but a half-dozen countries in the world, Bangladesh and that part of the Indian subcontinent being poorer; Haiti, perhaps, being poorer; and you might find a couple of African countries that were poorer. And the prospects were just abysmal for economic development. What wherewithal Sukarno could muster went into show projects, went into military armament. He was up to his ears in hock to the Soviet Union for military hardware, including a cruiser.

Q: It just rusted, didn't it?

HART: Yeah, whatever. It was not the *Aurora*, but it was of similar vintage.

Q: The Aurora being from the Russian Revolution.

HART: Yeah, it was in St. Petersburg, wasn't it?

Anyway, Indonesia to me was through the looking glass. If at that time you wanted to find a country where the values, behavior patterns, politics, and institutions were antithetical to those that a middle-class American held, Indonesia was a good place to look. I mean, they were totally different.

One of the things that intrigued me about the Foreign Service, I said, "Look, I'm going to join the Foreign Service, and I'm going to learn languages, and I'm going to study cultures, and I'm going to study political systems, economic systems, people. And in the end, I'm going to be able to turn a switch in my head (right here on the side, right where the electrode protrudes) and I'm going to be able to think like an Indonesian (or whatever) one moment, and then I can turn the switch back and I can write to Washington and think like an American while still being able to think like an Indonesian. Won't I be clever? Won't I be enlightening to all these people who don't have this wonderful facility?"

And I learned in Indonesia that I certainly couldn't do that. And I'm not sure anybody can.

Q: I think you're right.

HART: I'm not sure anybody can, because I think you're either on one side of the line or the other, and once you cross the line (they used to call it "going native"), you lose your credibility.

Now the Indonesian political situation was a mess, because you had so-called Guided Democracy, which was a form of totalitarian rule in keeping with the traditions of Java. I mean, they had never had democratic rule in Java. And the parliament and the presidency and the vice presidency and the cabinet system and all this were merely little overlays, papier-mâché facades for age-old, traditional, essentially autocratic rule that the Javanese, which make up the vast bulk of the population and certainly the politically important population of Indonesia, that's what they did. So Sukarno was kind of a god-king.

The U.S. relationships with Indonesia were troubled. We were just beginning to get really deeply involved in Vietnam. Sukarno was closely allied with the Soviets and was mending his fences with the Chinese Communists, fences that had gotten broken down at one time or another because the overseas Chinese men controlled the economy, and Sukarno had bashed them, on more than one occasion. He was trying to transfer that economic control over to the Indonesians and get it out of the hands of the Chinese. The Indonesian Communist Party was the largest Communist Party outside the Soviet Union at that time, even larger than the Communist Party in China, I think -- not because there were more Communists, but because I think they had the doors open wider.

And Indonesian culture is such a strange culture for a Westerner. It is, as I said, through the looking glass. I think the basic difference, where we start, is that we are raised with the idea that the individual is the central focus of society. Their starting point is that the larger society is the central point, and the individual has very little role to play, as an individual, in that makeup. And you can understand why, if you come from a country where there's a lot of land and a few people, such as the American tradition, rugged individualism makes some sense. When you're sitting on an island the size of Connecticut that's about to sink under the weight, even then, of nearly a hundred million people, with a net birthrate increase every year of about four percent, then society's going to

organize itself differently, and values are going to reflect the fact that not everybody can lie down at once on the Island of Java. Somebody's got to be standing up; there's not enough room for everybody to lie down -- metaphorically speaking. It's a hotbed country.

When I got there, I was one of the two or three language officers in the embassy. And I was delighted to be in the Economic Section; that's where I wanted to be.

Living was not easy for an embassy family, because it was an unhealthful place and the housing was not very good. It was hard just to maintain a standard of living of the type that you thought that you deserved as an American, even with the help of the commissary and the services of embassy people. My wife, I think, maybe liked it better than I did.

And the reason that I never really liked serving in Indonesia was because I thought that American policy in Indonesia was totally wrong. And I felt that the American ambassador to Indonesia at that time, a gentleman by the name of Howard Palfrey Jones, was as wrongheaded and as misguided as any man I'd ever met on the Earth.

Q: This was a reputation which apparently he had, even while he was there, with many people.

HART: This man was cuckoo. He was not certifiable, but he was cuckoo.

Q: Could you talk about him, sort of his background and how you saw him, and anything that you were picking up about him before you came out (because he was there a long time and he was very, very influential), and maybe where his power lay.

HART: No problem. Now you'll have to start out realizing that I was an FSO Seven when I arrived in Indonesia, and got promoted to Six right after I arrived, so I was still a pretty junior person. I got promoted to Five the following year (again, probably through administrative error), so that kind of got me into the middle grades. So my perspective was not from the catbird seat; my perspective was very much from below. But I'll tell you what I know and what I think about Howard Jones, subject to other people's opinion.

The major influence in Howard Jones's life that shaped his views was a Christian Scientist. As such, his approach to Indonesia was (and I've heard him say this), "If you see something wrong in Indonesia, it's really not because Sukarno is a bad person or because they're behaving badly, it's because you're not looking at it right."

This is an example of what I'm talking about. Whenever Sukarno was going to make a speech, he summoned all the ambassadors, and they would have to sit in front and listen. Although Howard Jones spent something like eight years in Indonesia, he never learned the simplest Indonesian sentences. He knew a few Indonesian words, but he could not speak Indonesian nor understand it. He would sit in public meetings where Sukarno's main theme would be lambasting the United States as an imperialist country that was doing all kinds of bad things to the nonaligned and to the poor and what have you, while maybe praising the Soviet Union, maybe praising other members of the nonaligned group. Howard Jones would refuse to take an interpreter along with him, and at the end of this skinning of the United States, he would sit there and applaud. He didn't even know what

he'd heard.

Now maybe we had somebody listening to the speech on the radio, and when Howard Jones would get back to the embassy, they would tell him what Sukarno had said in the speech, and draft a cable saying, "Today Sukarno said that the United States is the devil incarnate and is responsible for everything that's ever gone bad in the world back to Adam and Eve."

Howard Jones would hold that cable up. He would then arrange to have breakfast with Sukarno at the palace the next morning. And he would come back and he would write a cable saying, "As I was sitting on the veranda having breakfast this morning with the president, he told me, 'Don't pay any attention to that stuff in that speech yesterday. That was all window dressing for this, that, and the other thing.' He doesn't believe a word of it, and we shouldn't believe a word of it. And for heavens' sake, of course he wants us to continue the hundred million dollars a year in U.S. aid that we're giving him. And of course he's really our friend and will work behind the scenes for mutually agreed goals."

And so that would be sent in a "NODIS." cable to Washington and would be read by Averell Harriman, who at that time was the assistant secretary of state for the Far East.

The report of the speech might be read by the desk officer, or maybe by the country director, since they had just put in the country-director program at that time, although they were not as powerful as they later on became.

So Howard knew how, through "NODIS" and "EXDIS." cables, to get to the people who mattered, and to tell them, "Sukarno is not our problem. Our problem is the Communists. Sukarno is a very skillful man at manipulating and controlling the Communists, and all this anti-American stuff out there that's going on is just a smoke screen that he uses while he's doing that. He's really a very good friend of ours. And he's really a very good person for the people of Indonesia to have as their leader. However, Washington, there's only one person on this green Earth who can deal with him the way that it needs to be, and that is I, in all modesty, Howard Palfrey Jones. Therefore, U.S. policy in Indonesia is the right policy, to appease and maintain and support Sukarno. And I'm the guy for the job."

This stuff went in mainly "EXDIS", "NODIS.", into the highest levels of the Department and the White House, while the embassy was churning out tons of stuff saying, "Sukarno is the worst news that ever came down the road, for Indonesia and for U.S. policy and for this neighborhood, Southeast Asia. This guy is bad and he's dangerous."

Q: Even I, although I was sitting most of this time in Yugoslavia, was getting the rumblings within the Foreign Service network about Howard Jones and his problems. But there are two things that I don't quite understand. You can send these cables in, but obviously, people within the system are talking to the upper people. Where was Howard Jones getting his support? I mean, the cables aren't necessarily the be all and end all.

HART: Well, you see, since these were "EXDIS" and "NODIS" cables, only a very few people in the embassy ever saw them, so they didn't really know what was going on back in Washington. In

Washington, not that many people saw these things, at the working level. Restrictions on the distribution were a good deal tighter on "EXDIS" and "NODIS" than they were later on. Furthermore, and I think this is the key to it, Stu, Howard Jones was telling Washington what it wanted to hear at a time when Vietnam was becoming *the* central issue for U.S. foreign policy in Asia. You know and I know that, institutionally, the State Department is incapable of dealing with more than one crisis in an area at a time. Howard Jones was saying, "We don't have a problem in Indonesia. Not really. I'm taking care of that, if you just leave me alone. So you, Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman and Walt Rostow and everybody else back there, can concentrate on Vietnam, if that's what you're inclined to do." And that sold.

Now what was Howard Jones's background? He was by training a journalist, a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism. Spent some years as a journalist. Eventually got over into AID. Spent some years on Taiwan, working for AID. And then, through political influence, got appointed into the Foreign Service. And either his first or second job, I can't remember which, was as ambassador to Indonesia.

Q: Did you get any feel for how he survived the transition from the Eisenhower administration to the Kennedy administration?

HART: I can't remember the exact date of his arrival in Indonesia, but he must have arrived there in the Eisenhower administration.

Q: Yes, he went out in '58 and left in '64.

HART: Since he was a career Foreign Service officer, that issue didn't arise, and he was able to convince the Kennedy crowd that he really had a handle on things. Now he got in very close with the Kennedy family. During my time in Indonesia, Bobby Kennedy and Sarge Shriver both came out to Indonesia. Both were totally bastards. Totally bastards.

Q: Would you talk about that, because it's played up, you know, Bobby Kennedy coming out and all. I've always had great reservations about the gentleman. With Sargent Shriver, how did that go?

HART: Well, I did not work directly on the visit, so what I'm telling you is what conventional wisdom was in the embassy, by those who did work on the visit. I was off in the Economic Section; I didn't do political things.

Bobby Kennedy came out there essentially to tell Sukarno to behave. And in the end, when it really got down to hard cheese, he flinched, he blinked, because he would not tell Sukarno that if he attacked Malaysia, the United States would back Malaysia. He would not tell him that. And maybe it would have happened as in the Saddam Hussein case that we discussed off record earlier, maybe Sukarno would have instituted confrontations, with low-level warfare, against Malaysia anyway. But certainly, to the extent that we had U.S. influence to prevent it, we didn't use it. Bobby Kennedy flinched. And I think he flinched in part because of Vietnam. That was the preoccupation of everybody in the administration: Vietnam. It was not a good show. We did not come out of that looking like an honorable country.

Q: Well, the folk wisdom was that Bobby Kennedy went out and talked to students and made a great success of this thing. But this was not how the embassy saw it?

HART: That's not the way I remember it.

Q: You're rolling your eyes.

HART: Well, I never felt that ambassadors and people who went out and claimed to have established wonderful relationships with the common people were necessarily advancing the foreign-policy interests of the United States. It may be great photo-op. stuff, it may look real good back on the hustings in the United States, but if you go out and talk to the average Indonesian student, who was imbued with a sense of power and authority flowing from above, on almost a religious basis, down toward the bottom, you're really not engaging in constructive political dialogue. First of all, the person that you're talking with is powerless, or was, in that society. Second, the man to talk to, the man to talk tough to, the man to talk straightforward to, only had one address, and that was: the presidential palace.

I don't want this to sound like I'm a total elitist, because I think that a lot of the work I've done over the years was maintaining contacts with the outs in certain situations. And I don't want to sound like I think that the only place that you do business as a diplomat is with those who happen to be in power at the time.

Q: But there are societies where...

HART: There are societies where having the attorney general of the United States wade out into a rice paddy and tell a rice farmer, who's terrified of everything going on around him, what a wonderful fellow he is doesn't advance the foreign policy of the United States. There was John Kenneth Galbraith, who was so full of shit, who went off to India with this same mindset: he was going to get down with the people. So what does he do? He gets these photo ops. He wades out in rice paddies, comes down with hepatitis, and damn near dies, and can't even operate for the next year because he's got hepatitis.

As I say, that runs the danger of sounding elitist, but that's not what I mean. I believe there comes a time and there comes a level in the embassy where these things need to be done. But not by the attorney general of the United States on a two-day visit, which is what we had with Bobby Kennedy, or a three-day visit; whatever it was, it was a disaster.

Sarge Shriver was a disaster. He came out and bribed the Indonesian government to accept the Peace Corps. Bad news. You should never bribe anybody to accept the Peace Corps. They should come to you and ask for it. Any AID projects that you have to push, over the objections of the recipient government, are almost surely doomed to fail. Only those projects where you get the full support and the desire by the government to make them work have any kind of chance. We may know better, but we can't make it work better if we're in their backyard. You've got to have a viable, willing partner in any of these activities where you're operating in somebody else's backyard.

Bobby Kennedy and the Kennedy family I don't think ever understood the basic difference between domestic politics in the United States and foreign affairs. And this is understandable, because we know what we know. They really looked at the world, at least in the early days of the Kennedy administration, as an extension of U.S. domestic politics. And foreign policy was just another kind of domestic politics, carried on in another place. Probably there was some learning that went on over time, but I think what I said is an accurate description of the early days.

Howard Jones was great. You see, these visitors would come, and he would grab them, and he was a big talker and a terrific raconteur, and he was an effective guy in convincing people that he had some answers. And so they left him forever and ever and ever. It's almost ironic that he left the post very shortly before the coup occurred. He left in '65, and the coup happened within a couple of months or so.

Q: When Marshall Green had just arrived.

HART: That's right, Marshall Green had just arrived. It's almost ironic that that happened.

Now all of this was building in Indonesia. The pressure inside the cooker was going up, and everybody could read the numbers on the pressure gauge. You didn't know whether the gauge was exactly accurate, but you knew that something was going to happen in Indonesia. And if you look at Indonesian history, on almost a predictable level, you have repressions and explosions, repressions and explosions. And the explosions take different forms; they're not always the same kind. But the explosion of '65 combined all the blood and worst traits -- it was a Krakatau-type explosion. With a nation, the main part of which is Java, that's as tightly controlled, as tightly constrained as Indonesia is, these pressures build up.

Resentments come from every point on the compass. Maybe in a village, for example there may be somebody that has done your sister wrong. It may be that somebody else has stolen a chicken from you. It may that you have a little land border dispute with somebody else. It may be politics. It may be any number of things.

But within Indonesian society these things are by and large repressed and sublimated in the interest of harmony within the group...until something happens. Something says all bets are off, and the night of the big knife occurs.

And it usually occurs, in Indonesia, if you go back in this century, in periods of 10 to 15 years. Now in the Suharto era, you haven't had these things. I don't know what that indicates, but you haven't. But if you go back in Dutch colonial history in Indonesia, et cetera, et cetera, you'll see these outbursts. Sometimes they'll be directed, say, against the overseas Chinese. Sometimes they'll be directed against a religious group. Sometimes they'll be directed against a political group.

But in '65, when the PKI, the Communist Party of Indonesia, decided that it was strong enough and it had Sukarno well enough in hand to try to grab for power, they came within a whisker of succeeding. Within a whisker. And if the people who had gone to kill General Nasution, chief of staff of the armed forces in Indonesia at that time, had succeeded, there's a real possibility that

there would have been a Communist takeover in Indonesia.

But they didn't succeed; Nasution jumped out a back window. His wife and daughter, I believe, were massacred in the house. He jumped out a back window and made his way to a military outpost, where he rallied the anti-Communist generals who had survived the coup. Some 13 or more generals were killed, as I recall. [EB says 6.] And of course, the main man, because he controlled the garrisoned troops in the Jakarta area, was Suharto. He was a major general and the main man, as I recall. And Nasution relied on Suharto for the troop strength to do what had to be done to defeat the PKI.

When you had that attempt and it failed, you had a bloodbath in Indonesia which nobody's ever been able to really accurately measure. All you know is that it was enormous.

But most of them weren't even political scores. Most of the people killed in that aftermath almost certainly were killed for other than political reasons. All the scores that had been repressed, all the grievances that had been sublimated in this tightly wound society for the previous 15 or 20 years, and there were plenty, got squared up.

Q: Well, I was just thinking, the one Indonesian word, I guess, that's entered our language is amok, to run amok. That's Indonesian, isn't it? [Webster's says Malay.]

HART: Well, there are a few others, but amok is one. It's an Indonesian-Malay word, and what it really is describing...I'm starting to sound like I'm a dealer in sociological jargon and everything, and I'm really expounding here about things I have no credentials on at all. But I've thought about this and tried to be a student of human behavior, so that I have a better understanding. If you repress things enough, when there finally is a release from the constraints that are repressing those things, you don't get measured behavior, you get violent behavior. And that's the reason, in repressive societies, that you have this syndrome, this occurrence, of running amok.

Q: Well, going back now to the time you were there. You left before this thing blew up.

HART: I was there from '62-'64.

Q: But now how was it working in an embassy where, from what I gather, those officers who were involved in political/economic affairs really felt very strongly one way, and they thought that their ambassador, in the nice way, was a boob; in the second way, was...

HART: Was a danger.

Q: Was a danger.

HART: That's right, a menace.

Q: What did you do? Did you sit around and write letters back to Washington?

HART: It was miserable. What you did was try to find clever little ways...it was like writing

literature in the late days of the Czarist regime. You tried to find subtle little ways to get people's attention back in Washington, saying, "The ambassador is a dumb asshole. Don't pay any attention to him. Listen to what we have to say." Now visitors from Washington would come out there and they would hear these things, but nobody wanted to take on Howard Jones. I mean, the Foreign Service is not renowned for its reputation as being composed of heroic bureaucrats. Most people go along and get along. And how many times have you heard, "Well, the ambassador knows a lot of things that we don't know. He's wired in ways and he has insights that we don't have. He's the only ambassador we have." Just like, "He's the only president we have." The deference to authority, the deference to rank, is an excuse that some people use. Other people don't really give a big, happy fuck. There are all kinds of reasons. But there usually is a core of half a dozen or more people who feel strongly about these things and try to rattle the cages. There were some like that in Indonesia, in the embassy.

I had a lot of contacts in the press there. My main beat in the Economic Section was keeping track of Soviet-bloc aid to Indonesia. I used to travel all over the islands, looking at cement plants that didn't produce cement, and steel plants that didn't produce steel, and all these other awful botchings the Soviets had. The Chinese and everybody had bad projects. We had bad projects.

In World War II, Churchill said, "If you will give us the tools, we will finish the job." In Indonesia, in the aid business, they said, "If you will give us the job, we will finish the tools." And you'd see these bulldozers and earth movers and everything out in the middle of stalled projects.

Anyway, my beat was Soviet aid projects. And American press people were interested in what the Soviets were doing in Indonesia, so a lot of them used to come and talk to me. It got so bad, say, in early '64, that finally this guy came to me and said, "What is all this rumbling I hear about differences between the American ambassador and people on the staff? Tell me all about Howard Jones."

And I said, "You want to know about Howard Jones, you can find out about Howard Jones. He's a public figure; you don't need me to tell you about him. But if you want to know about views of the Indonesian role in world affairs and different viewpoints, I'll describe what the two opposing viewpoints are. One viewpoint is that Sukarno is good for Indonesia, he's good for the world, and that U.S. policy should support him. The other view is that just the reverse is true. Some people in the embassy hold one view, and some people in the embassy hold the other."

And he said, "Well, which do you hold?"

And I said, "That's not relevant. If you want to find out what's really going on here, you don't have to ask me. There's a guy over in the British Embassy, go ask him."

Anyway, the guy got his story. He was a UPI reporter. He wired the story in to the New York office, and it was replayed on the UPI file into the Far East. And it was a story saying, "Howard Jones is a disaster. That dumb yo-yo says this and that and the other thing." And there were lots of particulars. They were in the public domain in Jakarta. And certain embassy officers broke into sweats. And because of the international date line, it got there before it was released to the States.

When it hit, Howard Jones picked up the phone, called a Columbia School of Journalism classmate of his, who was the head of UPI, and killed the story before it released in the United States and Europe. Because of the time difference, the story was delayed, and UPI withdrew the story.

Then the hunt went on in the embassy for who fed this guy part of the information that the story was based on. Suspicion centered on a guy in the Political Section by the name of Frank Bennett. I remember Frank Bennett sweating bullets for days, and Howard Jones either called him up on the carpet or had the DCM call him up on the carpet, and quizzed him about whom he'd had contact with and all this stuff. It was a full-scale investigation about who had done-in the ambassador. I think Frank bore some scars from that. He really wasn't the one. He really wasn't the one. I never wrote the story for the guy who came to see me, but I pointed him in the right direction.

But I think, looking at the broader perspective, Stu, it was that experience (maybe it started earlier than that) which led me to the way I decided to deal with the press.

I never knowingly ever lied about anything having to do with my job. I would certainly never lie to the public about anything. I never knowingly lied to the press about anything. I decided to be as open as I could, given security constraints, and maybe sometime even going on the other side of the line, on what was really happening, with the idea that if it won't bear public scrutiny, over the long run it won't work, because sooner or later almost everything has to be able to bear public scrutiny.

So, over the years, I was always a big risk taker with the press, and really was lucky in that I never got badly burned by it. Never did get badly burned by it.

And the way I frequently would do it was when I would disagree with policy, I would merely say, "U.S. policy is the following..." and spell out what it was and why it was; "A contrary view is the following..." and what it was and why it was, then let the listener decide which makes more sense. And I always felt that was not a disloyal act. I thought it was an act which was within the ethics I could live with as a Foreign Service officer in a disciplined service. It's a fine line to walk. Some people would not be comfortable with it. But that was how I dealt with it.

Q: Well, I take it this was not a happy ship.

HART: It was a terrible ship, and I couldn't wait to get out of there. God, I was going crazy. And when my transfer came through to Malaysia, my boss, who was an elderly gentleman I think on his last tour in the Foreign Service, head of the Economic Section, in my last efficiency report, which was a favorable report, said: "I think that Hart's assignment to Kuala Lumpur is a good one because his body will now be where his sympathies have been for two years."

ROBERT G. RICH, JR.
Administrative Officer
Medan (1962-1963)

**Political Officer
Jakarta (1963-1966)**

**Principal Officer
Medan (1966-1967)**

Ambassador Robert G. Rich, Jr. was born in Florida in 1930. He attended the University of Florida and Cornell University. Ambassador Rich entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and during his career has served in Korea, Indonesia, Trinidad, the Philippines and was ambassador to Belize in addition to various assignments in the State Department. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1994.

Q: After those exciting years, Bob, I see that you were moved to another area which is also in the news. You went to Indonesia I believe in 1962, specifically to the consulate in Medan. What was your job there and what sort of supervision were you receiving from the embassy?

RICH: Tom, when I first went to Indonesia, to Medan in North Sumatra, this was coming to an area where I spoke the language, having studied it intensively at Cornell. Furthermore, I was sent there for the first six months on a language assignment with authority to hire a tutor. I thus immersed myself into the society and traveled about to become completely fluent in the Indonesian language.

This was a period when Sumatra was still feeling some of the vibrations from separatist movements in the post-war years. It had not been fully assimilated yet into the Indonesian nation as run from Jakarta. North Sumatra was also the only area where the new Indonesian language was spoken as a native language. Elsewhere, it had been a market language between cultures. It was adopted by Sukarno as a symbol of the independence movement in the 1920s and had become the national language and after independence taught in all of the schools, but it was not the language of any major dominant group in Indonesia. I have always thought this was a very smart move and one which the Indians bobbled, because India picked the language of one of the major groups, Hindi, as the national language, thus making all non-Hindi speakers at odds with the choice. The comparable choice in Indonesia would have been to pick Javanese or Sundanese as the national language. But the Indonesian language, which was a variant of Malay spoken along the Straits of Malacca in northern Sumatra, had become the language of the independence movement and the language of Indonesia.

North Sumatra was important to us economically as well as politically at the time. There were major American investments in the rubber industry. There were beginning to be significant oil investments further north in Sumatra. There were also major Indonesian military commands in the north, with the top headquarters in Medan.

I found the most significant thing in my slightly less than two years spent in Medan before moving down to Jakarta was really the observation of the process of a society closing in towards totalitarianism. The communists had the upper hand in Indonesia in those years. There was a determined move towards subverting all institutions of society to a communist perspective. This

meant politicizing everything. It got to the point where you felt if you went to a flower arranging club you were going to hear the same political speeches and the same jargon that you would hear from the Communist Party's own rallies. It was frightening, because you saw increasingly a society in which people were afraid to speak out, in which the individual became atomized and was no longer able to talk with any frankness to anyone but oldest and dearest friends known since childhood. In every context which was the least bit public, the same jargon was mouthed, the same political rhetoric was espoused. It was as if everybody had to run the same direction as fast as he could because he would be trampled if he didn't

These were the years when one by one the somewhat autonomous institutions of society were subverted. By the time I moved down to Jakarta to be a political officer in the embassy, we were beginning to see that only the army had been able to withstand the leftist politicization juggernaut. All the secular institutions had been neutralized or subverted. It didn't matter whether you were a teacher or businessman, everybody had to say the same thing. This all intensified dramatically then when Sukarno also launched his "*konfrontasi*" (confrontation) against Malaysia, effectively declaring war.

These were years full of rhetoric, full of high sounding phraseology and a great deal of speech making with a great deal of anti-foreign rhetoric. The Dutch had already been thrown out by the time I got to Indonesia. The British were then thrown out in conjunction with Sukarno's "confrontation" against the formation of Malaysia to the north.

I should point out that when I was in Medan at this time I was not the consul in charge, I was the number two in the consulate. I did economic reporting, cultivated contacts with the military, and made field trips throughout much of Sumatra. I made the first official trip in a long time to the northernmost province, Atjeh (previously Aceh, now spelled Aceh), which had once tried in the nineteenth century to become an American protectorate, and actually found myself on the west coast of Sumatra when I heard on a radio that the British Embassy in Jakarta had been burned and the British Consulate in Medan attacked. I was "acting Principal Officer" of the Consulate at the time. I knew I had to get back swiftly to Medan, but the only way to do that was straight across swamp and mountains on a road built by the Japanese during World War II and scarcely maintained thereafter. I was alone, the Branch PAO who was with me having broken off the trip in Atjeh before I continued down the west coast. I had a 4-wheel drive jeep with a winch, and to retrace my steps would have taken a week, so across the islands I went. In the swamp I had to winch the jeep out of mud. I bartered my last canned goods for villagers to pick up the jeep and put it on a ferry across a river, and had to use the winch to haul downed trees off the track over the mountains, but I got back in less than two days. The only other such wild episode was at another time in the Batak highlands when I was suddenly accosted by an ancient gentleman with a rifle that looked as old as he was poked into my belly. He thought I was Dutch and was about to shoot me. Furthermore, he did not speak any Indonesian, only the local Batak dialect. Fortunately one of the younger men with him understood enough Indonesian to persuade this fiery elder that I was not Dutch and therefore could be spared. After less than two years in Medan, however, I was shifted to Jakarta to the political section of the embassy.

The emasculation and neutralization of the institutions of society had gone quite far by this stage. The air force and navy had been subverted. All the secular institutions had either been neutralized

or subverted in the sense that they were led by communist sympathizers or were unable to express separate opinions. The army under General Nasution, however, had maintained its independence and had done this despite increasing efforts to bring it to heel politically. This effort intensified greatly with the Sukarno-initiated confrontation against Malaysia and the British, and the state of war that then existed. There were repeated demands for the army to train “volunteers” to crush Malaysia, and, of course, the volunteers to be trained were to be supplied by the Communist Party which had the mass organizations to mobilize this kind of participation. The army leadership saw through this and realized what the game was. When they could finally resist the pressures no longer in the war atmosphere, they agreed to train units but marched them around with wooden rifles and wouldn’t give them weapons.

Frustrated in that ploy, the next ploy of the Party and Sukarno was to urge each unit to take on “political advisors.” These were essentially to be political commissars, again supplied by the Communist Party (PKI). The army also resisted this. Army chief of staff General Nasution had had some training in the United States and was seen as pro-West in the sense that one often used that phrase in those days. Nevertheless, the effort to bring the army to heel did not end. This must have been when the plot was born to decapitate the army, creating a shock effect to destroy the top army leadership and then assume, probably correctly, that the rest of the army would fall in line. This afterwards became known as the GESTAPU, which is an acronym for Korean words meaning the September 23 Movement. In Indonesian parlance GESTAPU had a conscious similarity to the Nazi Gestapo idea. In any case, in the middle of the night cadres assassinated five top generals of the army and surreptitiously buried the bodies on an air base outside of Jakarta. In this crisis, two key people got away. General Nasution escaped by jumping out of a window, although his young daughter and an aide were killed. He went into hiding. The second key survivor was General Suharto, who has been the leader of Indonesia almost ever since. It is uncertain today whether he was a target or not. He wasn’t considered one of the top three or four generals. In any case he was spared, to the later unhappiness of the plotters.

In the two or three chaotic days that followed, the bodies were not immediately discovered. It was not clear what had happened. Sukarno’s first move was to appoint a new chief of staff of the army who was a known communist. All of the decrees of the president and all of the steps that were taken at that level clearly appeared to be consistent with my ex post facto interpretation that this was a clearly defined effort to decapitate the army and bring it to heel. However, certainly sooner than they would have expected, the bodies were discovered on a remote part of the big air base near Jakarta. This produced a major shock across Indonesian society when it was realized what had really happened in the middle of the night. All that was first known was that there had been some shooting around various homes and people had been taken off in cars and were missing. The shock effect created a remarkable phenomenon. Here were people who for several years had not spoken out to hardly anyone about how they felt, but in this moment of national shock, people spoke out. They realized in those first hours and days after they spoke out that they were not alone. Until this moment everybody had been so alone politically. Whether you were a teacher, a lawyer, a bureaucrat, a military officer, or a businessman, you were essentially alone and therefore were powerless because there were no longer institutions or organizations through which your concerns or dismays could be felt, and you couldn’t express counter views publicly without injuring your livelihood or your family. But in speaking out there was a sudden realization that the people who counted in society-probably the great majority-were in great dismay at the rapid politicization of

society to the far left. It was in that moment that I think the Communist Party's end was written, although it played out over a period of several weeks in a great deal of violence. At the village level, throughout Java in particular, the villagers felt extremely pressed by the communist ideology because the Communists had pressed on so much of their sense of identity in their culture that there was a violent backlash from which we get the English word, amok. Javanese society is very controlled, very highly stylized in its interpersonal relationships. There is a high value on cordiality and interpersonal relationships, even among enemies. And, yet, when the pressure gets so great that the kettle does pop, it is very violent.

Q: Bob, while all this was going on in Indonesia, it was obviously being watched with great anxiety in Washington. What was the U.S. policy at this time? We had supported Sukarno, and here was a revolt apparently against him, although I suppose there were some anti-Chinese and anti-American factors in there too. Could you tell us a little about the U.S. policy at that time?

RICH: Thank you Tom. It is well you asked that because we perhaps should step back a moment from what was a political process and look at what was happening with the United States. The U.S. Ambassador in Indonesia for many years had been Howard Jones. By the time he left he had been ambassador for seven years, which is quite a while. Over this period he had built a very close and valued relationship with Sukarno personally which he felt was very important. His access to Sukarno made it possible always to get to him with American concerns. However, as the society raced toward the left, and anti-Western rhetoric was whipped up by the crush Malaysia and anti-British campaign, there began to be a disconnect in Washington between what Washington was seeing happening and what it felt was being reported from its ambassador in Jakarta; not so much as to what was reported in terms of fact, but what was reported as to what the government's policies were. Howard Jones would go talk to Sukarno on any issue of importance, which was very appropriate, but he would report the conversations as Sukarno would probably have wanted them reported. He would report what Sukarno said almost as if it were gospel and would rarely, if ever, imply that there was any difference between what the president was telling us and the objective reality on the ground. He would often imply that we should trust the president in each instance. The significant divergence, however, between what Sukarno was telling us and the reality as reported in other embassy reporting and by intelligence agencies, media, missionaries and others, led to a lack of confidence in Washington that our message was being adequately, forcefully placed to Sukarno.

This was a period also known within the Embassy as the "second secretaries revolt." The bulk of political and economic reporting in those days was done by the first and second secretaries, the "journeymen" of the professional service. Unfortunately, in later years rapid early advancement and reduction of positions overseas have hollowed out this vital segment of our embassy staffs. I moved to Jakarta from Medan to find the pot boiling as professional staffs chafed under what were viewed as Ambassador Jones' unrealistic acceptance of Sukarno's assertions despite all evidence to the contrary. Somehow I again ended up writing many of Jones' "first-person" cables, although he did not take me along on as many of his meetings as had Marshall Green, but debriefed me upon return and said write it up. I tried to bring some cautionary language into those reports and believe I helped reduce somewhat the tension between the Political Section and the "front office," but I could go only so far in expressing caveats in messages which Jones would send in the first person. The problem persisted. If I may diverge a bit, I would note that Howard Jones was a devout

Christian Scientist. One of the tenets of that church is that acting as if something is true will help it become so. The Ambassador seemed to feel that if he kept emphasizing the positive that things would change for the better. Unfortunately, they did not.

So the White House sent out Bobby Kennedy, and Ellsworth Bunker was sent on a separate mission essentially to evaluate the embassy operations. Out of this came the change of ambassadors, and Marshall

Green came to Indonesia as ambassador. Marshall was not on the scene very long when the Gestapu movement, or this September 23th Movement, occurred.

After Howard Jones' retirement he set out to write a book which in his first drafts was a very self-serving effort to justify his own approaches. I had been able to work very positively with Howard Jones, although I was certainly aware of the way he seemed to stretch credibility regarding Sukarno. When I was back in Washington on the Indonesian Desk and he showed me some of his early drafts I frankly told him, "This is not going to fly. You are just not going to look credible. The history is out there." So he rethought it. I am sure he talked to many others besides me, but I will say the book he eventually wrote, which is *Indonesia, The Impossible Dream*, is a very important and creditable book and quite a different book from the one he started to write.

Back to Indonesia. Even when I was in Medan there was this anti-foreign and leftist haranguing which was having an overflow against American interests, although we were never the direct target of Sukarno and his regime. To some extent he held the communists a little bit in check against us and tried to direct them more towards the British and others. But we did have Americans on the plantations who were arrested over trivia and put in jail for weeks at a time, and we couldn't get them out-problems of this sort. In Jakarta we had increasingly violent demonstrations in front of the embassy, although they never did any serious damage to American property.

When the break came with the discovery of the assassination of the generals and the visceral outpouring of Indonesian society that turned the whole thing around, the army and the people turned on the communists. At the village level there was much killing. Most of it by the villagers, and on Java local wrath was taken out against the Chinese as well. But most of the killing took place where law and order had broken down entirely. There was no significant death toll in Jakarta, where the army managed to maintain control and discipline.

One thing that many, many Indonesians, particularly army officers, said to me in that period was that one thing that made it possible for them to turn on their own communists on the eve of the PKI taking power was their sense that they were protected from Chinese intervention by American involvement in Vietnam. This is an aspect of our involvement in Vietnam that is little known. At that time American military power was real throughout the sea lanes between China and Indonesia because of our major military involvement in Vietnam by 1965. The Communist Chinese regime had been very, very close to the Indonesian Communist Party. The Indonesian Communist Party was a self-grown party that had a history of its own. It was not a puppet of anyone. It had, nonetheless, developed strong relationships with the Chinese, and Mao Zedong and Zhou En-lai had made it clear that they would protect them. While I don't think that the prospect of Chinese military intervention at a distance was a realistic one in 1965, in the minds of Indonesians it was a real threat, and in their psychology the thing that made it safe for them to turn on their domestic

enemies was the presence of American military power between them and Beijing.

Initially, even in this turmoil, there was no intention by the army to unseat Sukarno. Sukarno was a truly popular figure. He had been the father of his country. He had been a great nation builder in a society of many cultures and dialects and languages. But at this late period for some reason he had latched on to an alliance with the communists as a way to secure his place in history, mistakenly so. Suharto emerged as the general who rallied the army after its decapitation and essentially rejected the newly appointed communist puppet chief of staff whom Sukarno had named and pushed him aside and led the military to restore order. Sukarno hung on for some time as the nominal leader, but he became increasingly marginalized and increasingly trivialized as his pronouncements continued to try to restore the *status quo ante* in the face of a situation which was not going to turn back the clock. As he continued to make pronouncements in that vein, he very rapidly began to lose public credibility as well as credibility with the elite. As he lost credibility, he eventually reached the point where he was virtually put under house arrest. This was a gradual process, not a sudden one, and not necessarily one that had been intended.

I believe it was about this time that I went back to Medan as the principal officer. The consul that was there was a Vietnamese speaker and had been grabbed for a special project in Vietnam, and Marshall Green asked me if I would go back up and take charge of the post as principal officer. That period in Medan was significant essentially for dealing with the military in the north, which was a very important military command, and observing the rebuilding of the nation after the end of the communist movement.

I recall one interesting vignette of the times. Only a year or two earlier, the Soviet Union had established a Consul General in Medan, principally I am convinced in order to keep watch on and outrank the Chinese Consulate there. After the destruction of the communists and marginalization of Sukarno, authorities in North Sumatra wanted to have a ceremony and place a monument on one of the plantations in memory of one of the early martyrs, an army lieutenant, who had been killed by a Communist union before the September 23, 1965 events. The Soviet Consul General, as dean of the corps, found himself with the task of making a speech on this occasion on behalf of the Consular Corps. The Consul General was a retired World War II army general, with several young KGB types on his staff. The Consul General came over to discuss his draft speech, successive versions of which he consulted on with me and the British Consul, in order to try to set a proper tone. It must have been a supremely embarrassing day for him as the senior communist representative to stand up and eulogize the fallen victim of Indonesian communism. All I can say is that he did it like a man!

From there I went back to Washington to be Indonesian Desk officer, continuing what became seven continuous years of involvement with Indonesian problems. Marshall Green was still ambassador in Indonesia, so I had a very good working relationship with a strong ambassador there and a newly non-communist government trying to rebuild the society and the economy. It was a period for me primarily devoted to dealing with economic and military aid issues.

Q: I believe the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was still alive in the late sixties, early seventies, Bob. Did SEATO have any repercussions in Indonesia, hostile or friendly ones? Was it this time or later that Indonesia joined in the ASEAN organization?

RICH: Tom, my sense of time is often inaccurate. I can tell you what happened but often not when. But my memory of it is that SEATO was not a factor in this. Sukarno was not a supporter of SEATO, not in favor of it, but it was not a major issue, nor did SEATO act in any way. The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) effort was very much inspired by Indonesia, certainly through Adam Malik, who was Foreign Minister after the end of the communist rise, and Sukarno's Foreign Minister when Sukarno was still nominally the president. But this, of course, occurred after the confrontation against Malaysia had ended and ties had been established between Indonesia and the new state of Malaysia.

ROBERT J. MARTENS
Political Officer
Jakarta (1963-1966)

Robert J. Martens grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. He entered the U.S. Army in 1943 at the age of 17 and served in Europe. Following World War II, graduated from the University of Southern California in 1949. Mr. Martens joined the Foreign Service in January 1951. His career included positions in Italy, the Soviet Union, Indonesia, Burma, Austria, Romania, Sweden, and Washington, DC. Mr. Martens was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: Bob, we finished off with you in the Soviet exchange program, and you ended up going to Indonesia, which was sort of completely out of your previous area. How did that appointment come about? You served there from 1963 to 1966.

MARTENS: First of all, the job itself was oriented towards the communist side of things, and to some extent Soviet and even Chinese affairs. In other words, major communist power reporting. It was what we called peripheral reporting in those days. There were always a large number of junior and middle grade officers in Moscow but not very many senior positions in those days. So you had this huge body of Soviet and communist party expertise building up over the years, but with few places in Moscow for a second tour. And the result was that a great many officers with that kind of background were sent out to these so-called peripheral assignments. We had three or four in Latin America, for example. Anyway, I went to Indonesia and I was very happy to go to a different geographic area. I'd never been to the Far East, and was looking forward to it. In fact, the job I was assigned to was junior to my rank because I got promoted that summer after the assignment had been made, and I decided not to fight that but to go ahead with it because I really wanted to go out there and do that job which involved reporting on what was then the largest communist party in the world after the Soviet and Chinese parties. Anyway, I arrived in Jakarta in September, 1963 on a date that is known fondly among the people that were there at the time as Ash Wednesday. It was the day the British embassy was burned and sacked, and my wife and I -- it was her introduction to the Foreign Service -- arrived in all that confusion. Even the house next door had been burned -- it happened to be a British house -- so it was quite an introduction to the city.

Q: Could you describe what the situation was in Indonesia when you got there in September 1963?

MARTENS: Sukarno had given a great deal of trouble to the West already, but had come to a much more complete individual power position only two or three years earlier. In the early days there had been basically a parliamentary democracy, so his power had previously been far from complete. And now he was in the process of entrenching that power, and carrying, in my opinion, Indonesia further and further in a pro-communist direction. This was not recognized in the embassy when I arrived, nor did I recognize it. I didn't go out with this preconceived notion, but I began running onto things that made me convinced in a fairly short time-- several months -- that Sukarno was totally in league with the communists and was carrying the country in that direction. I ended up writing a long report in airgram form in May of 1964, which would have been eight or nine months after I arrived, in which I made the then startling statement that Sukarno was a communist. I could not get that report out without writing a covering sheet, which I also wrote -- I was given the opportunity to do that -- saying, this was only one man's opinion. But eventually the whole embassy came to this view after a time -- that's a long story.

Q: Let's talk about this a bit. Was there a problem -- I mean you send a communist expert on the Soviet Union out, and I imagine people said, you send one of these guys out there and they're going to see communists. That's what you're trained to do. Was this a problem both internally in yourself, and within the embassy?

MARTENS: I think the embassy was predisposed not to think of Sukarno along those lines, although everybody knew he was, as our DCM at the time said, "bad news".

Q: The DCM was?

MARTENS: ...was Frank Galbraith. Sukarno had the reputation of being an ardent nationalist, which he was, and there was a tendency in those days for people to think that these things were mutually exclusive. I think that was a fault of American intellectual thought in the early 1950s where, if you remember those days, nationalism was called "the great bulwark against communism". This was a misconception as these two concepts of nationalism and communism are much more intertwined. To me Marxism was a convenient way to express a kind of paranoid type of nationalism, and paradoxically because of that, every place where a communist party came to power on its own, it ultimately went off in a very unorthodox direction from the Soviets because nobody becomes paranoid for the sake of someone else's ego. I've written about this in a book which has not yet been published but is available to anyone interested in the 1965-66 developments in Indonesia. Whether they happen to agree with some of these opinions or not; there's a great deal of factual material in my book which has never been exposed to public view.

In any case, to go back to your original question, Sukarno had latched on to the British granting of independence to Malaya, and doing so in a form in which the old Malaya was to be combined with several other British colonies in the area along the northern coast of Borneo, and with Singapore, and forming this group of British dependencies into a new independent state to be called Malaysia. Sukarno took issue with this, and declared it a neo-colonialist scheme, and there were some intimations that Indonesia also had designs on the northern Borneo territories for itself. One could regard the development of this tremendous hypernationalism that evolved in the Malaysia campaign which began in the summer of 1963 to pure nationalism and nothing else. It was

nationalism to some degree, but it was much more than that because, in my view at least, this campaign provided the excuse to carry the country internally in a much more extremist, and left-wing direction. For this kind of interview I can't get into all that. It's all in my book, however. In any case, there was a strong and visible trend of Sukarno working in tandem with the communist party from then on. The communist party was becoming more and more powerful and had already become by far the largest element in the country. And this was done not from a grassroots approach so much, there was some of that, but it was primarily a revolution taking place from above rather than below in which Sukarno and the communist party leadership at the top -- the communist party working with Sukarno's support -- tried to project a feeling of inevitability that the Communist Revolution was marching to an imminent total victory. Meanwhile, all opposition to the communists was being suppressed by Sukarno, under his guise of being the "Great Leader of the Revolution" and the "President for Life" and so on. This continued right up to the famous September 30 affair, the failed communist "coup" that led to the overthrow of communism in Indonesia.

Q: That was 1965.

MARTENS: September 30-October 1, 1965 was the so-called communist coup. I said, so-called because the coup was really a failed purge by Sukarno and the communists who already dominated the civilian side of the government. And a period of total anarchy took place over the following six or seven months before the whole thing came to a...

Q: We want to come back to that. I wonder if you could describe, particularly the ambassador, the embassy, the relations, how he operated, how the embassy felt about him? This was very controversial time.

MARTENS: The ambassador's name was Howard Jones. Howard Jones was sent to Indonesia originally as the A.I.D. director way back, quite a few years before this, had gone back to the Department and had been the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern economic matters, and then was sent back as ambassador. He had already been there as ambassador a long time. I think his total period as ambassador, if I remember correctly, was something like seven years. So he was well established. He had the reputation, which he tended to promote himself, of being very friendly with Sukarno, and one of the few people who had influence on Sukarno. Sukarno catered to this, and in my opinion, and that of most other people, tended to lead Ambassador Jones down the garden path making him feel that he had more influence than he did. This became particularly obvious in the last year or so of Jones' tour as ambassador.

Q: He left when?

MARTENS: He left I think around May of '65, about three or four months before the so-called coup. By that time we were being thrown out, our buildings were being sacked, and various other things were happening. By that time Jones had been made to look ridiculous by Sukarno's actions, and by Sukarno even pointing his finger at him and shouting at him to take away his "so-called aid", and a number of other things. There was a distinct put-down by Sukarno.

When I arrived, there was a good deal of antipathy towards Jones in the embassy, particularly after

the burning of the British embassy; a feeling that he was out of touch. Some of this was rather personal. I felt then, and I've felt since, a good deal of respect for Jones personally. He always treated me well even though I became the sort of opposite pole in the Embassy's thinking about what was taking place in Indonesia. Jones recognized that and said in his book, in which he refers to me as someone who came up with a different view, and he does it in a very polite way. After stating my dissident view of Sukarno in one chapter, Jones in the following chapter which described the coup- -by this time he was back in Hawaii -- he combined the two chapters in a way that implied that Martens was right. I interpret it that way because of the way the following chapter unfolds. Jones always took me with him on meetings with Soviets, or figures that were openly pro-communist in the Sukarno government. I remember interpreting for him in Russian, between him and the head of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces; a man who had come with Mikoyan. Mikoyan was there on a visit. I sat between the two of them while Jones was...

Q: Mikoyan, was he Minister of Finance?

MARTENS: No, he was a prominent member of the Politburo, and was more than just a minister. He was a major Soviet figure. He was regarded as having particular expertise, and occasionally was a Minister in this field, on the light industry side. He was very close to Khrushchev. Khrushchev was still in power at that time. He fell from power during my stay in Indonesia.

Anyway, the situation kept getting worse and worse. I think by the summer of the year after I arrived, that is in 1964, things got so bad with the famous "Year of Living Dangerously" speech. Despite the movie of the same name, that was not the speech of the year in which the coup took place but rather of the previous year, 1964. But that speech indicated a very strong leftward lurch by Sukarno, followed by a period in which there was a moderate counterattack led by Adam Malik. Malik was originally a Marxist, by the way -- but he had come back from a tour as ambassador to Moscow disillusioned with communism. And the same was true of the Indonesian ambassador to China, a man named Sukarni. They were both members of the Murba political party which was an offshoot of the communist party. They turned the Murba party into a kind of anti-communist force, and while still a member of the government, although getting gradually demoted, Malik tried to stop this lurch toward the left while Sukarno was abroad getting medical treatment, under the guise of a "Movement to support Sukarnoism". In other words Malik was trying to define Sukarnoism in a way that was not pro- communist. Sukarno came back from that trip and in effect denounced those people that he said were misinterpreting Sukarnoism. Malik was then removed from his position as Minister of Trade and so on, and everyone associated with him was removed from office or demoted.

The following spring of 1965, in a speech to the quasi- parliamentary body, called the MPRS, Sukarno announced that Indonesia was "now leaving the National Democratic stage, and entering the socialist stage". This was a straight PKI communist party jargon for ending the period in which the communists were still allied with certain other groups in the National Front, and would now go for total power for themselves. Sukarno himself announced this, and most people in the embassy didn't understand it, nor were prepared to understand this kind of esoteric jargon. From that point on I felt there was going to be an attempt made by Sukarno to make the country openly and irrevocably communist in the very near future. And in fact that's what happened. Sukarno himself

was behind the so-called communist coup. It was not a coup against Sukarno, it was basically a purge, or an attempted purge by Sukarno, to remove the last elements that stood in the way of a total communist takeover of the country. This is extremely important not only in terms of Indonesia, which was important enough, because as you may recall the Indonesia communist party at that time was the third largest in the world after the Soviet and Chinese, therefore the largest communist party not already in power. If Indonesia had gone totally communist at this time...the effect on all of East Asia and the world would have been enormous because Indonesia is far larger than IndoChina in either population or area terms. In fact it is as large, more or less, as all of southeast Asia put together including the Philippines, Thailand, all the IndoChina states, (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), Malaysia, Singapore and Burma -- combined. And furthermore, it is at a strategic location where the Indian and Pacific Oceans are joined. So the effect on these fairly weak states in Southeast Asia would have been enormous. In other words, the domino theory had a lot of sense to it.

The domino theory, incidentally, is an American term for what was basically an Asian communist view. This was the heart of the Sino-Soviet dispute. You don't have to agree with it to understand that the Chinese in the Sino-Soviet dispute had, as one of two major points of contention, the idea that the world communist revolution was very close to coming to total victory in the Third World generally, and particularly in Southeast Asia. The Soviets were saying the opposite, that the Chinese and other Asian communists were overestimating their strength at this historical stage. The Chinese were saying, no, no, we have the imperialists on the run and must press the revolution to a conclusion. And the other Asian communists, particularly the Indonesian communists, felt the same way.

The other major point in the dispute was related to this, and that was the Asian communist view that the center of world revolution was now in East Asia, not in Europe. In other words, the Soviets would take a back seat. One reason the Chinese felt this was the revolutionary surge going on within IndoChina, particularly Vietnam, where communist advances led to the American intervention in that summer of 1965. But a more important consideration, in my opinion, and one that has been greatly overlooked in the United States, was that the Chinese were perfectly aware of Sukarno's pro-communist proclivities, and of the fact that Indonesia intended to go communist in that year. And in fact, what you had in the late summer of 1965, was the cresting of the communist wave, particularly in its radical East Asian version. People have forgotten this but in September 1965, only two or three weeks before the so-called communist coup in Indonesia, Lin Piao made his famous speech that "the world village is surrounding the world city" -- meaning...

Q: Lin Piao being...

MARTENS: ...one of the Chinese leaders. In other words he was saying that the allegedly peasant-led communist revolution of Asia was about to overwhelm the industrialized world, in which the Chinese and the Indonesians would defeat the "Old Established Forces" which included not only the United States and the western imperialists, but the revisionist Soviets. They were all being thrown into one pot for some purposes at least.

Another factor in this period was that Sukarno left the UN in January 1965, in the midst of this last revolutionary phase. When he did so, he did it in the context of forming a new organization that

was to be called CONEFO or Conference of the New Emerging Forces. He had already talked about "New Emerging Forces" versus "Old Established Forces" in a propaganda sense before, but for the first time there was going to be a big international conference of New Emerging Forces, and facilities were to be built in Jakarta for this purpose. The Chinese financed this, and began sending over great quantities of material to build this up. In other words, it was both a Chinese and an Indonesian Sukarnoist view that this kind of rival UN would be formed, based on the East Asian communists and their allies. There were to be other groups in it -- a kind of international version of the national front tactic. At a lower plane than the communist core you could have all the Third World nations; sort of an attempt would be made to suck them into this. New emerging forces would also include as fellow travelers, other progressive forces -- what the communists would define as progressive forces -- in the industrialized West, and so on. The heart of the thing would be the Asian communist grouping, or what they began calling the "Pyongyang, Beijing, Hanoi, Phnom Penn, Jakarta Axis". All these countries were communist, or about to become communist, except possibly for Sihanouk's Cambodia. But the Cambodians were felt to be under the thumb of North Vietnam enough that they could be included in the "axis".

Anyway, this is what was coming into view. Now when the so-called coup, this attempted purge, failed in 1965 -- September 30/October 1 -- it was very clear that the Chinese had advance notice of it, because they made noises, when it was first reported, of great glee, and they did so before full information had been announced in Jakarta. They were saying things that they obviously knew in advance what nobody could have known unless they were in on it. This doesn't mean the Chinese organized the coup, the latter was an Indonesian Sukarno organized affair. But the Chinese were aware of it, and were in sympathy, and saw it as portending a major shift of the balance of power toward Asian communism.

When the communist coup failed, however, in my view, and this is the second theme of my book -- the first theme being the real nature of the Indonesian events of 1965, the fact that the country was going communist under Sukarno's leadership. The second theme in the book is that the failure led the Chinese, and the Asian communists generally, to lose this tremendous revolutionary optimism that they had up to this point, and to retreat into themselves. This, in my opinion, led to the Cultural Revolution in China, or, more precisely, led to the Cultural Revolution developing in the way it did. There were some earlier allusions to the Cultural Revolution before this in the summer of 1965, but it was one of those very common campaigns in communist countries, the so-called rectification campaigns, in which people were told to pull up their ideological socks as it were. But this was far different than what happened after the failure of Indonesia for only then was there a massive reign of terror and purges of people at the very top levels of the Chinese Communist Party.

Immediately after the failure of the September 30 affair in Indonesia, in the late fall-early winter of 1965, a series of purges against members of the Chinese leadership took place. I would attribute this to Mao Zedong, who had been pushed into a kind of chairman of the board position by Liu Shao-chi and others earlier, and who saw a chance to recoup his former full power. This doesn't mean that Mao was against the Liu Shao-chi foreign policy, but Mao had been less directly associated with it. So a series of purges took place beginning with Peng Chen, and going on to Liu Shao-chi himself shortly after this. Even Zhou En-lai was under some threat for a while. Most of the people that were purged were people who had been very closely associated with the Indonesian connection. So, as I see it, the Chinese, saw that Indonesia, instead of becoming a bulwark of the

Chinese policy abroad, was instead becoming a liability and indeed going over to the opposite side. Indonesia was not going communist after all but becoming basically anti-communist because they were in the process by this time of killing the communists in large numbers. So what I see is that, while the rhetoric of radical Chinese foreign policy verbiage continued, there was actually a Chinese retreat within themselves, and in fact you got -- I followed these affairs from the Soviet angle soon after this -- you had a shift of the Sino-Soviet dispute from a conflict over how imminent communist success in the world revolution might be, and who should be leading the world ideological movement, into a more direct border conflict between China and the Soviet Union. This was occurring during the period of 1967-68 and I followed this from my position in the State Department dealing with Sino-Soviet affairs. During this period there was a huge buildup of armed forces on both sides, in Mongolia and along the Siberian borders between China and the Soviet Union.

The United States was thus no longer seen as the great enemy that was keeping the Chinese and the Asian communists generally from achieving their ambitions because of the Indonesian debacle. On the contrary, the U.S. could now be regarded as a card to play against the Soviets in this more direct Sino-Soviet border conflict. In other words, the very nature of the Sino-Soviet dispute had changed even though the dispute went on. The dispute went on in some ways at a more exacerbated level. The Chinese were putting out noises behind the scenes to the Thai and others to beware of the Vietnamese and to beware of Soviet influence generally in East Asia. In other words, they began to look upon their own situation as one of a defensive nature rather than an offensive nature. This change had considerable effect on Vietnam itself because while, in my opinion, the domino theory had basically been valid up through 1965-66 as a shorthand description of Chinese policy, thereafter it became of less importance because the Chinese had withdrawn from its earlier optimistic position. In other words, the rationale for our being in Vietnam, and you can argue that there continued to be other reasons, was no longer for the purpose of stemming an overall communist drive in Asia. This was receding because of the failure in Indonesia and the Chinese reaction to that failure. That's my interpretation of recent East Asian history, and the beginning of the change in the Cold War.

Q: I want to bring us back to a completely different view, rather than this very interesting view. Going back to the embassy. You get an ambassador who has an avowed policy of being nice to Sukarno, and accepting the blows and arrows of Sukarno's outrageous behavior towards the United States. Before you went out did you get a feeling from Asian affairs that, okay, we've got an ambassador out there who is pursuing this policy and we're behind him; or professionally was saying, he's there but we think he's a kook. What impression did you get before you went out about the ambassador?

MARTENS: I had no impression at all before going out. I went out with a completely neutral view. I also didn't get any comment from the desk on this subject. When I got out there it was very apparent immediately that a good part of the embassy was opposed to Howard Jones' interpretation of events. I will go on to say I'm not in total disagreement with Jones on all points. I think that Jones was wrong in his analysis but I agreed with him that we had to stay in the game. There were some embassy officers who felt we ought to leave Indonesia, close the embassy, and break relations. I never felt that. I am a believer in trying to stay in the game to the extent possible. This meant a certain accommodation with Sukarno from the standpoint of keeping channels open, just

like we did in Eastern Europe with the Soviet Union. I think that Jones had some reason to be hopeful in earlier days that things would pan out better. The West Irian dispute had come to a conclusion favorable to Indonesia because of U.S. intervention to a great degree, and getting the Dutch to accommodate themselves to ending their last colonial possession in the East Indies.

There was a wing of the Sukarno government under a Prime Minister named Djuanda that wanted to see much more attention paid to economic development. It became clear in this later period I'm talking about that Sukarno was not in favor of Djuanda's policy but he had accommodated himself to it to some degree to appear to be balancing forces since his tactics were to gradually lead the country by stages toward a more pro-communist approach but with occasional back-pedaling. So I think in the very beginning of my tour there was still a certain rationale for Jones to see things as "possibly turning out" in favor of a moderate non-communist course. There was also the fact that we had been told by General Nasution, the Defense Minister -- and nominal head of the armed forces -- that the army remained basically opposed to the communists. So there were those hopes. I think the problem was that as one got into the later period and Nasution had lost real power by being kicked upstairs to Defense Minister, but with control shifted to other generals, with Djuanda's policy having failed, and then with Djuanda having died around the end of 1963, Sukarno identified himself more and more with the pro-communist forces. At that point it should have become clear that one's analysis of events had to change, but this didn't mean that one would get out of the game, but while staying, we would have to keep our eyes open. But I don't think from the way Jones talked that that was the case. It was in this later period that there began to be differences in the Department over our policy. There were some elements in Washington that still generally agreed with Jones, particularly on the NSC staff. Within the East Asian Bureau -- and I don't speak on this except at second hand -- I think it's clear that the Country Director, a fellow named David Cuthell, began to take a view very similar to mine on what was going on in Indonesia. He was not a Soviet or communist expert and I don't know the precise nature of his views or analysis. I never talked to him, never met him during this period. I had known him slightly at an earlier stage of my life when he was working on Turkish affairs, or something, but I didn't know him in this context. He had left the East Asia Bureau by the time I got back. Anyway, I subsequently talked to Marshall Green a great deal about Dave Cuthell's important contribution...

Q: Marshall Green was at that time?

MARTENS: Marshall Green was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asian Bureau, and since Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary, was so preoccupied with the Vietnam question, Marshall had pretty much supervision over Indonesia and many other matters. This is all, incidentally, in Marshall's book which came out just a few months ago. So Marshall Green also began to see things pretty much as Cuthell did. Green obviously relied on Cuthell a great deal because Cuthell had much more time to devote to this one subject. Marshall Green had a great many subjects to cover and was predominantly a Japan expert and a China expert. So views were beginning to change in Washington. Perhaps as a result of this, our policy began to visibly alter after Sukarno publicly shouted at Jones, "to hell with your aid". This was in January 1965. Sukarno took the country out of the UN at about this time and Jones sort of dismissed its importance in a cable to the Department. The Political Section succeeded in convincing Jones to soften some of the more ridiculous things he was saying in his original draft of that cable but it was still overly apologetic for Sukarno's behavior.

In the period that followed -- early 1965 -- the Peace Corps had to be withdrawn. Our library in Jogjakarta was sacked by a communist-led mob. Our library in Jakarta, the capital itself, was then sacked as well by a similar mob. A.I.D. was withdrawn around April or May of 1965. The embassy was reduced to a much smaller group. USIA was withdrawn except for one or two officers who remained in the embassy proper without appearing to be a USIA officer. They continued there as information officers. This was much like the situation we had in Moscow at the height of the Cold War where we did not have a designated USIA office although we had a USIA officer. All this was going on and Ellsworth Bunker then came out -- I forget whether it was March or April -- and he then apparently came to the conclusion that things in Indonesia were rather hopeless. Bunker talked to me for about an hour, presumably to assess the views of a leading dissident voice about where the country was going.

Jones then left in May, and Frank Galbraith, the DCM, became Chargé for the next two or three months. He came in with a very pessimistic cable right after Jones left. I had gone to Galbraith, incidentally, right after the Sukarno speech that had declared that Indonesia was now entering the socialist stage. I told him my view that this meant...that Indonesia was going to go completely and openly communist within the next two or three months. Anyway, Marshall Green arrived in July as the new ambassador, and obviously with a far different view. I'm not saying that Marshall Green accepted all my views, I don't know whether he did or not. I remember when he arrived that as he came down the aisle at the airport or embassy -- I forget which -- he said something along the lines of, "I have read your stuff, and I agree with you". I don't know if he remembered that afterward or not. Anyway, he did have a much more skeptical approach towards Sukarno. It didn't mean that he didn't try to maintain contact, he did try to maintain contact with the Foreign Minister, Subandrio, which was necessary too. But within a month or two after he arrived, we had the communist effort to seize total power, the September 30 affair. And I should add that these final months leading up to the coup were ones in which the relative moderates in the other parties were being purged at Sukarno's urging. The other political parties, other than the communists, had already been or were being taken over from within by communists or were totally neutralized. Sukarno was also pounding the army leadership to accept what was intended to be a political commissar system with the communists being the commissars. Sukarno was also pushing the concept of what he called a Fifth Armed Force, which was basically the arming of the PKI. The army was balking at these measures which were intended by Sukarno to be the last steps required to carry the country into the communist camp by peaceful means. When the army balked, Sukarno decided to turn to a violent entry into the socialist stage. This was foreshadowed by a speech he gave on July 25th which I remember very clearly. I sat underneath Sukarno while he gave it. His bodyguard was Colonel Untung who was later the nominal leader of the so-called coup. In that speech, Sukarno praised the earlier communist uprising of 1926-1927, by identifying himself with the PKI of the 1920s, which went underground after the failure of that revolt. In effect, Sukarno was saying that he had been a member of the 1926 PKI. None of this had been known to the outside world. Sukarno then began to browbeat the army to get in line with the revolution, or else. He shook his finger at General Yani, the head of the army in this period and publicly threatened him along these lines. So the so-called coup, starting with the assassination of Yani and his leading generals, which was carried out largely by Sukarno's personal bodyguards -- the so-called Tjakrabirawa Regiment -- was aimed at getting rid of the top army leadership which was seen as the only remaining impediment to permit "entry into the socialist stage". Unfortunately for them, the coup failed. That's another long story. I

don't think we need to get into it, but I understand what happened and how the coup failed. It's in my book if anyone who reads this interview should be interested in what really happened.

Q: At the embassy, was there any role that the CIA played at all at that point? I mean from your connection that you can...this is an unclassified interview, of course. How did you relate to them, because I would have thought in many ways you would have been the prime person to have some liaison with them.

MARTENS: Well, I knew all those people and it was a very close knit group -- the entire mission -- all elements at that embassy, particularly as the situation got worse and worse. In certain closed societies you tend to have better relationships with people, I think, than you do in some of the more open societies, so we knew all those people. They did a certain amount of reporting. It was the kind of reporting that the agency does. In other words, non-analytical reports from sources, it was reporting on what the people they had on their payroll were saying, some of it was very good, some of it was off-base because a lot of the Indonesians were so terrorized by the flow of events that they came up with rosier views than were warranted, or that they really believed themselves. They kept hoping that Sukarno was going to save them from the communists, that kind of thing. Whether CIA was doing anything operational, I don't know. I don't think they were doing anything substantial, frankly.

The CIA, from all I've read or heard, had been involved in the earlier late 1950s conflict between the Outer Islands and Jakarta. You may recall that an American pilot, whose name I can't remember at the moment, was shot down in Indonesia, and he apparently had a CIA connection. This was followed by the Jones period, when there was a considerable shift of U.S. policy. Jones had been sent out as someone very sympathetic to Indonesia and Sukarno and with a mandate to make sure that nothing like this went on. And the agency, from all I was told by them and by others, was authorized to oppose the communists, narrowly defined, but to do nothing against Sukarno or any elements of the government. If you took the view, as I did, that Sukarno was the real leader of the PKI in essence, this was a totally unworkable kind of thing. So I don't think that they -- they certainly were not doing anything against Sukarno -- and were not doing anything else in a major way other than reporting. I don't think, in any event, that one could find any basis whatsoever for any belief that the U.S. was involved in trying to change things in Indonesia. We wanted things to change. Obviously our sympathies were not with the communists, were not with Sukarno as he became identified with the communists, but that was all it was. We didn't see any role to be played. And in fact, one could argue whether that was right or wrong, but that was basically our policy. We stayed out of it. Ambassador Green in his book describes how the policy under him was similar to that of a surf boarder riding the waves, keeping out of trouble basically. The changes that took place were changes that took place because of internal factors. The fact was that the Indonesian people by this time were absolutely fed up with the Sukarnoist and PKI system; very much like what happened in more recent times in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There are a lot of parallels. I might say that I'd had previous experience in Moscow, and at the height of the Cold War in the '50s I found the terror in Indonesia in 1963 through 1965 greater than that in the Soviet Union. People were actually scared to death. I remember a young man who had been teaching me Indonesian on Sundays. The last time I saw him he went out the front gate and came running back to my porch saying that he had seen some people laying for him out there who were trying to kill him. I took him out the back way, and walked him up to a bus stop some distance in

the opposite direction so I could protect him as far as I could. But there was obviously no way that I could protect him on a longer-term basis. I never saw this young man again even though I had offered to help put him through college the next year. I had done so because the rupiah cost at our exchange rates were such that it wouldn't cost me very much -- perhaps \$100. After the changes that occurred in a non- communist direction, you would have thought that this young man would have showed up again. He did not. I'm convinced that he was killed by the communists shortly after he left my house although I have no direct proof. And I had some very similar experiences with a professor at the University of Indonesia that I used to see during my first year in Jakarta. Later he was intimidated by the communists at an academic symposium and his life was threatened if he continued to advocate non-communist views. He became so fearful thereafter that he wouldn't see me anymore. I ran into him by accident on neutral ground later. This was at a Third World country embassy probably in August 1965 just before the September 30 coup when things were really looking very bleak for the non-communists -- and we happened to be standing next to each other on a balcony, and I said -- I won't mention the man's name -- "So and so, you can see how things are going as well as I." The man, an ethnic Chinese, started crying and this was a very brave man in the earlier period. He said, "I know how it's going, and if the communists take over, and it looks like its 95% certain they will, I will be destroyed even though I have tried to take on a neutral image. But that's not going to work, both me and my family will be exposed to persecution. And if by some miracle that doesn't happen, and the non- communists come out on top, it might very well be in the context of an anti-Chinese pogrom, and I would get it that way too." But it didn't happen. The man survived. There was some anti-Chinese feeling in places but it was not on the scale that was anticipated, and most of the Chinese came out all right.

Q: Marshall Green, both in his book and the interview we've done, has described the coup, counter coup, of the military reaction to the coup. But what about in the immediate aftermath? When did you leave Indonesia?

MARTENS: I left in August, 1966.

Q: So almost ten months that you were there in this period. One of the things you can describe how it happened, but there's a story that somehow you had been clipping and keeping names, and keeping a list as part of your regular work, who was doing this. Could you explain what happened, and the accusation about our supplying death lists, and all this sort of thing.

MARTENS: That's nonsense. What happened was, as in every closed society, people that have had the kind of experience I've had with Soviet affairs, analysis sometimes called Kremlinology, you try to read the tea leaves and you try to understand the organization of the communist party, not through contacts, which you cannot very much have, but through reading the communist press very carefully. One of the things you do is to try to form a structure of the party by carding the names of positions. Not so much the names, as to try to get the positions organized and understand how everything fits together. So I'd been doing that for the previous two years when this so-called coup, actually an attempted purge, took place. I had assembled all this unclassified data on the communist party structure based on the communist press itself and to a far lesser extent on other communist publications. Regarding the latter, I used to go to the three communist bookstores that I knew of in Jakarta from time to time and bought some of their pamphlets which I reviewed later. Anyhow, I developed this into a sort of structure of the party. About a month after the coup, a man

came to my house -- maybe this was two or three weeks afterward -- who was a chief aide to Adam Malik, a man I have spoken of earlier. Malik, you will recall, had been one of the few leaders who had stood up to the communists and he now became very close to the army. He was almost a Foreign Minister in waiting, and he later became Foreign Minister under Suharto, and still later Vice President. This fellow said, "I have been told by friends in the diplomatic corps, not from Americans, that you know more about the Indonesian communist party than anybody else. So could you help me?" I said, "Sure." So I talked to him and we hit it off quite well. He became a very good friend as well as a contact; and we talked about what was going on, as you do with lots of other people. You don't go to foreign countries to sit in the embassy doing nothing but twiddling your thumbs. So I talked with this fellow at some length, and over time I discovered that he, at least, didn't have, and perhaps the army didn't have, a very organized collection of data on the communist party. Everybody knew the big names. If they could put it all together they probably all knew things individually far more than I did, but I had a kind of structure. For example, the new Central Committee of the Communist Party that had been announced maybe a year or two earlier, had been in the Communist Party newspaper at that time but whether anybody had that available was problematical because fear and terror had been so great that anybody within the Indonesian system that collected information on the PKI would have been considered an enemy of Sukarno, and the state, etc. So I gave some of this basic newspaper material to him, and he took it to Malik, and Malik apparently gave it to the army. What effect it had, if any, I don't know. It was certainly not a death list. It was a means for the non-communists that were basically fighting for their lives -- remember the outcome of a life or death struggle between the communists and non-communists was still in doubt -- to know the organization of the other side. To accuse me, or the embassy, of trying to murder masses of people even down to the village level, as was the accusation of that article, is about as sensible as trying to say that anybody that kept data on the Nazi Party in the late 1930s, so that Americans might be able to distinguish between Martin Bormann and Heinrich Himmler and all those people, and to discuss that with non-communist Germans, was guilty of some heinous crime. It doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

A lot of the problem is that a number of different issues were put together in a way that doesn't make any sense in that article. The writer simply did not understand the subject or was bent on developing an extreme left- wing theory hostile to the U.S. Government.

Q: Will you explain where the article appeared?

MARTENS: It appeared in a good part of the American press. A young lady who came to me originally as a student, had been introduced to me by a State Department officer still on active duty. She was said to be interested in what had happened in Indonesia in that period. I talked to her at length a number of times on the entire history of the period, none of it on her eventual thesis. It was on the overall course of events. She seemed to be very willing to learn, very appreciative of all this. Somewhere in that early period while she was still in a student status of some sort that I mentioned in passing the point she used in her article. This was to illustrate the extent of terror in that society under Sukarno. I had mentioned that, in my opinion, this contact of Malik, and perhaps the army, the non-communist Indonesians in general had been so intimidated in the earlier period that they had been afraid to develop a very good data base on the structure of the PKI -- who was a member of the Central Committee, which Party officials headed which Sections of the Party structure and so on. I had given them this material which, as I say, was taken straight out of the

communist press, it was all open material. So I had mentioned this point to her as an illustration of the degree of tenor leading up to the Communist coup attempt.

She later became a journalist, and then came back some years later and talked to me again. She still appeared to be interested in the broader picture but she did begin to mention from time to time this particular subject which I had forgotten had been a part of our earlier conversation. It had been a one sentence aside but she now kept trying to raise it. She did so in the context of backing off whenever I wanted to return to the main subject of what had happened in Indonesia. She tried to give the appearance that she was pursuing this more general subject, but then she would occasionally slide in with a question on the side, and I'd say, "No, that isn't right Kathleen. You have it wrong." Then she'd go off on some other tangent, but she tended to come back to this. Anyway, she used that as the starting point for this very negative article.

Anyway, I had collected that material in a routine way. The Indonesian in question was one of two or three very good sources throughout this period for me. In fact I was doing a significant part of the embassy reporting because I'd been around longer than most of the Political Section by that time and I understood what was happening. So I had some very good contacts in that period which were very helpful.

Q: Speaking of this, let's go before the coup and after the coup. Could you explain how you as a political officer dealing with this thing operated -- contacts, and this type of thing?

MARTENS: Contacts were extremely difficult before the coup, very much like Eastern Europe. Not quite that bad because there were people who were still brave enough to see Americans occasionally. Also, you had a fairly small elite which was usually the case in Third World countries. Everybody seemed to know each other within the elites of a particular country. So you could sometimes know relatives of political figures who were not quite as political as one example. There were various possibilities for some personal contact but it was very difficult. The great part of my reporting on the Indonesian Communist Party, its various affiliates, and some of the other left-wing movements -- 99% of that -- was based on reading the tea leaves of the communist press, and analyzing what was happening in the public arena. I did seek contacts and attend events whenever I could. As I said before, I went to the communist bookstores about once a month or so. I took advantage of any luck. I remember one time when the Embassy received by mistake an invitation from the Communist Party Central Committee to a PKI event. This was obviously a circular invitation intended for communist countries only but some little PKI clerk had made a mistake. In fact, a colleague in the embassy and myself were the only two foreigners that showed up. The PKI leadership initially assumed we were Soviets but we didn't say at any time that we were Soviets or Eastern Europeans, or anything else. We just appeared with the invitations. I was sitting directly behind D.N. Aidit, the head of the PKI, in the second row and he was in the front row. A member of the Central Committee, a little bit to the left of us in our row, spoke to my colleague whose Indonesian was very good. My colleague had had about seven or eight years of association with Indonesia at that point. After they had talked for a while, this Central Committee member asked, "Where are you from?", expecting to hear Tomsk or Omsk or something, and my colleague said, "I'm from the American embassy." Once we were asked, we had no intention of concealing our identify. The Indonesian's jaw dropped, he stammered a little, and then he got up and went to the rear of the room. When he reached the rear of the room he spoke to somebody -- we

turned around and saw him do this -- and then the third party wandered around but eventually reached the front row where he whispered into Aidit's ear. Aidit didn't know what to do either, so he spoke to the number two and number three in the PKI leadership, who were Lukman and Nyoto. All three then turned around and looked at us, then they turned around and they still didn't seem to know exactly how to handle this unexpected situation. They finally talked some more, and then they finally went off to another part of the room. They didn't throw us out, and we listened to the speech, which was a very anti-American speech incidentally, and then we left. Anyway, we were fairly aggressive at times in pursuing a better understanding, a better knowledge of the country, but not really underhandedly, we had an excuse to do it on this occasion. Otherwise it was very difficult and the embassy was very isolated by the intense anti-American atmosphere promoted by both the Sukarno Government and the PKI.

Before the September 30 affair, I had developed one very good contact. This was a man who had stood up to the pro-communist course in the Foreign Ministry. He was probably also the only real Soviet and Eastern European expert in the Foreign Ministry. I remember about a month before the coup I said to this man (I'm not going to mention his name), "You know how things are going and so do I. For God's sake try to save yourself, cut off all contact with me, don't talk to any foreigners." And he said, "Bob, as long as I live I'm going to be a free man. I'm going to associate with whom I want to, and talk with whom I want to, and if you don't come to see me, I'll come to see you. So you might as well come to see me." And he did continue that contact. After the September 30 affair, he, I think, was a fairly prominent player behind the scenes. He was the brother-in-law of one of the key generals. I learned from another source that there was going to be an attempt to assassinate him. I remember this particular night. It was absolutely black, no light in the sky, no starlight, no moonlight. After I heard this information, I tried to go to his house which was about eight or ten blocks away along dirt streets. I knew the way well enough that I could haltingly find my way at say 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. When I got to his house to warn him, I saw his wife. She was appreciative of the fact that I had come but she said her husband had already received a similar warning earlier in the day and had gone to stay with her brother, the general. So this was indicative of our relationship. This man remained a very good contact who became knowledgeable of developments and thinking, at the very top levels of the emerging anti-communist leadership. He also became a close advisor to Malik as well, so I accordingly had two good contacts, and friends, who were close associates of Malik. And there were other contacts as well, so I began to develop a pretty good group of contacts -- frankly, more than anybody else in the embassy had by a substantial degree in that early period of divided power when Sukarno remained after the coup, and Suharto was reluctant to replace him.

Q: You left there in August of '66. At that time how did you see Indonesia? Where did you think it was going?

MARTENS: Well, Suharto had come to full power, at least in reality if not totally in theory, on March 11, 1966. The government had been formed with Suharto as Prime Minister, Adam Malik as Foreign Minister and the Sultan of Djokjakarta as a third key figure. They were considered a triumvirate although Suharto was obviously first among equals. Sukarno was still nominally president, but was not allowed to do anything. It was now clear that this important country was going to go in a non-communist direction. Indonesia had rejected the communists completely. The relationship with the United States was still remote -- they weren't unfriendly with the United

States, but there was practically no official contact in the transitional period. The embassy under Marshall Green's guidance had rightfully avoided any kind of overt contact in order not to play into the hands of the communists. Suharto and Malik and the others also kept their distance for that reason because they didn't want to support the Sukarno line that his enemies were lackeys of the imperialists. But the Suharto group was obviously going to move in a much more friendly direction. One of their early decisions was to take the initial steps to patch up Indonesia's quarrel with Malaysia. They had begun the process of forming ASEAN, which was to be a non-aligned grouping that basically included the four countries aligned with the West, that is Thailand and the Philippines through SEATO and Malaysia and Singapore through the British Commonwealth, with Indonesia.

Q: ASEAN, stands for?

MARTENS: Association of Southeast Asia Nations. So a number of steps were being taken to move into a kind of Western direction although without losing its non-aligned status. Indonesia has remained that way ever since. I'm not surprised at that either, and I think that retaining its non-aligned status has been a healthy thing.

ALEXANDER SHAKOW
Director, Peace Corps
(1963-1967)

Alexander Shakow was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1937. He attended Swarthmore College before serving in the Peace Corps. He joined USAID, where he served in countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on July 6, 1998.

Q: We will come back to that, but at the London School was there a particular philosophy or view about economic development that they were teaching?

SHAKOW: No. One knew of Laski, and so on, but Laski was gone by the time that I got there. And so it was not ideologically rooted at all and basically for me it was an exposure to people like David Knox, and others, who were very professional and very open. These were some quite conservative professors there, as well as others. The image one has of LSE was drawn from the Fabians and Laski and so on, but I didn't get that sense at all by 1958. Some of the most important professors, I think, were in fact quite conservative. When I went to Indonesia it was the first trip living broad other than in London; it was very much a tabula rasa, and I had no prefixed ideas as to what was going on. So my dissertation is really a history of the AID program and of the comparisons with the other aid (Russian, etc.) and what was effective and what was not, based on judgments of both the Indonesians and others. One thing always struck me about the participant training program, which, as I said before, was the most important AID activity. When I asked Indonesian bosses of these trainees, "Are you going to make sure they get into a job at a higher level to take full advantage of these programs and all that they've learned?", the bosses would often say they certainly couldn't give them a promotion or a separate job, as they'd already had the

special benefit of being given an opportunity to go abroad. Unlike today, the exposure of Indonesia to the outside world was minimal, and the amount of information they were able to obtain in Indonesia was limited. The Sukarno regime tended to be quite hostile to America and many other parts of the world, except for those Sukarno called his network — North Vietnam, China, Russia. But when these AID trainees went abroad, at the very least they came away with a vision that was so much more expanded. There was the excitement of seeing a world that was very different. I think that was probably the most memorable impact of the AID program.

Q: My impression is that the numbers were quite large.

SHAKOW: I don't remember the numbers offhand, but thousands were sent abroad for training between the early 1950s through 1965, when the program closed down.

Q: In all fields?

SHAKOW: In all fields. University programs had been set up, particularly in medicine at the University of California; in agriculture with the University of Kentucky; and engineering, I think that was also the University of Kentucky, at Bandung Institute of Technology. These were key links to American universities. In addition, some people were just sent through regular programs and places in short-term courses elsewhere. We also were doing much more, especially as at that time Indonesia was just beginning to get exposed to these things. The famous Berkeley "Mafia," on the economic side, were actually prepared by the Ford Foundation.

Q: I had the impression that the Indonesians who went overseas returned home more than those from other countries. Was that true? Why is that?

SHAKOW: That's absolutely right. AID often had big problems with many nationalities wanting to stay in the United States; most Indonesians went home. Life in Indonesia is just, in a sense, easier for people who are not wealthy. Indonesia is a beautiful, wonderful, fertile country; if you throw seeds out your back door within a couple of days you have a big papaya tree growing. There is something wonderful about that, plus a fairly strong family system. So, culturally, I think it was important for people to go home. I don't know that anybody can ever tell you exactly why that was, but it is certainly true that you did not get large numbers staying. Even here in the World Bank now there are relatively few Indonesians. Partly that is because many of them, when they went abroad, returned home rather than staying. They didn't get exposed to the same kind of pressures.

Q: Well, was your thesis published? What happened?

SHAKOW: I left Indonesia at the end of 1961, having written a first draft and even a second draft, of the dissertation. I knew that if I stayed on in Indonesia, and there were plenty of opportunities to do so, if I wanted to, that I would never finish the dissertation. I knew too many people in that situation. So I finished the dissertation there, took it back with me to Washington, did some additional work here on the AID program and then went to London. In the summer of 1962, I finished it up and received my Ph.D.

I returned from Indonesia in 1962 at about the time that Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps Director agreed with President Sukarno to open the Peace Corps program there. This was seen in Indonesia as a favor from President Sukarno to President Kennedy. It was in response to the favor Sukarno thought Kennedy had provided by helping convince the Dutch to give up New Guinea, or what is now West Irian, to Indonesia, the one last remaining portion of the Old Dutch East Indies. When that arrangement was settled by the Dutch and Indonesians, under pressure from President Kennedy, the Peace Corps was invited to come to Indonesia. So I came back and was the first staff member hired for the Peace Corps Indonesia program.

I spoke Indonesian. I knew the people who were the Indonesian counterparts for that program in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So it was a natural for me, and I was very excited to get that job. After several months in Washington, I went out early in 1963, to prepare the ground for the Peace Corps volunteers due in April. And in 1963 or 1964, to answer your specific question about the dissertation, the Japanese were just beginning to make more serious efforts to work with Indonesia. They had enhanced their own staffing and their embassy to look at development issues. One of the officials of the Japanese embassy, whom I met, knew about my dissertation. He asked whether they could publish it. So the Japanese published it for their own purposes, their own staff. They took it, retyped the whole thing and published it in a limited number of copies in English, and translated it as well into Japanese. So, in that form its available on microfiche. I always thought I would revise the text and get on with publishing it myself. Well, as you can imagine, starting work for the Peace Corps and then going from Peace Corps to AID five years later, there was no chance to do that. So it still sits there as a project for my retirement.

Q: Is there a summary that we could use as an annex to this thing?

SHAKOW: I'll try to find one you can use.

Q: Good. You went out there with the Peace Corps in what position?

SHAKOW: I was Associate Peace Corps Director and opened the office in Indonesia. That was a very exciting, interesting time. The then Director of the AID Office for Indonesia, David Burgess, was selected as the first Peace Corps Director for Indonesia. He came out a little bit later than I did. But after about six months, because his wife became ill, he had to go home and so I then was Acting Director for quite awhile. Then Shriver sent out another Director, a man who had been a Peace Corps Director in Latin America; he was there for about a week or two. He thought this program didn't adequately resemble the program he led in Bolivia, and so he sent a message to Shriver to the effect that "I really think this program ought to change, and it ought to reflect these following characteristics — and if you don't agree with me, I'm not the right person for this job." Well, it turns out they didn't agree in Washington that those changes should be made. By then they decided it was a little bit difficult to keep sending out new Directors, so they made me Director of the Indonesian Peace Corps program. So for two years, essentially April 1963 to mid-1965, when we closed the program because of the difficult political environment, most of that time I was either Acting Director or Director. That was probably the best job I ever had.

Q: What were the characteristics of the program during that time? What were you doing?

SHAKOW: Because this was the time when President Sukarno was engaged in confrontation with Malaysia, a real struggle against what he considered to be the colonial efforts of the British and others to impose their will on Southeast Asia, it was a very sensitive time politically. We had been asked to send in, initially, 200 university professors but the decision was made it would be too sensitive to put social scientists into the universities. So, instead, we chose what we thought was going to be the most apolitical of subjects — sports coaches and physical education teachers. We had 49 physical education teachers and coaches, and one teacher of English. In fact, none were actually apolitical. Soon after the first group, President Sukarno pulled Indonesia out of the Olympics and started his own Games of the New Emerging Forces, the so called GANEFO Games for the countries behind the Iron Curtain and elsewhere. Peace Corps coaches and teachers prepared the Indonesians for Games that were really a competitor to the Olympic games.

The 50th volunteer taught English at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our main link to the Government of Indonesia. The Ministry staff needed to speak better English. I was always pleased that the U.S. Congress never discovered this, as it would look rather strange that we were helping the Indonesians to improve the quality of English used by Indonesia in their frequent criticisms of United States policy in Indonesia.

The volunteers did a wonderful job. They were spread out all over the country. This provided me with a good excuse to go traveling from one end of the country to the other, from Aceh at the north tip of Sumatra, all the way over to Timor in the East and up to Manado, just south of the Philippines. The one place I really wanted to get to and never reached was New Guinea — now West Irian. But we had volunteers in something like 22 of the 26 provinces. So there was a lot of opportunity to see the country.

Q: Were they well received?

SHAKOW: Extraordinarily well received. Not a single PCV went home early which, given the political circumstances, was very interesting — and probably still a Peace Corps record. On one occasion, I went out to “deliver” a volunteer to Capping in West Timor, and arrived to a very cool reception. Normally, a lot of people welcomed arriving Peace Corps volunteers. To make a long story short, it turned out that this part of Indonesia, which is very Christian and quite anticommunist, Chapons and Shakow were part of the group of Czech or other Eastern European coaches that were then coming in large numbers to all parts of Indonesia. The Timorese were upset that the Sports Ministry would send these people from Communist countries to their island. When they found out about an hour later that we were Americans, everything changed and the whole place opened up; I ended up speaking to the local Parliament in Indonesian as well as to major rallies in the sports stadium and elsewhere. So it turned out to be a wonderful reception.

We finally had to pull all Volunteers out in the middle of 1965. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who [was later] Ambassador to Vietnam, was sent as a special emissary by President Johnson to Indonesia to see if the deteriorating relationship could be repaired. One decision made was to pull the volunteers out, since they were usually the only Americans in some of these isolated areas and hard to be protect. U.S. consulates in Medan in North Sumatra in Surabaya on Java, the United States Information Agency libraries — these had all been burned down or closed up by the protests. While our volunteers were protected by the Army and by President Sukarno, but it was a

bit much to have Peace Corps volunteers teaching basketball to kids with bayonet-bearing soldiers standing by. So, we pulled them all out very gradually. There was no trouble and every one of those volunteers left with a warm feeling for Indonesian people.

One PCV, whom I thought would last the shortest period of time, as he came to Indonesia as a sort of California beach bum, was assigned to Semarang, in Central Java. He not only did a terrific job working there with the community, but he fell in love with the beautiful Eurasian daughter of the Communist party chief of Central Java! The youth groups from the Communist party tried to run him out of town, in part as they were so upset he was stealing away the beautiful daughter of their own leader. Signs all over town said 'Crush the Peace Corps,' 'Get Rid of the Peace Corps', 'Go Home Peace Corps', even one that said in Indonesian 'Beware of Bob's Smile'. But he stayed, turned out to be a terrific PCV, and then after marrying this woman, went on to a distinguished career in AID, working in Laos, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines and Indonesia. His name is Bob Dakan, and about ready to retire. One of their children, in fact, went into the Peace Corps herself. It's a great story. Sargent Shriver always loved that story - Peace Corps triumphs over the Communist youth groups in Indonesia!

Q: How would you characterize the impact of the Peace Corps on the Indonesia?

SHAKOW: It was not in terms of economic development, and the issues with which we have long been concerned; this program of teachers of physical education and sports did not have that kind of impact. There were only 50 PCVs in a country with a population of 120 million at that time. But I think the impact left by these PCV Americans on the people they worked with in those communities was high. They really were often the only Americans anywhere within hundreds or even thousands of miles.

I am still in touch with one former volunteer who is now a Vice President of a fishing company in Seattle. He worked in Ambon — an island in the eastern part of Indonesia. He still goes back there several times a year and is close to the people there. He has arranged food shipments for the Ambonese and helped publish books on Ambon's unique flora and fauna. So there is a lot of impact in terms of human interest. I wouldn't say it had lasting impact in other ways, but it was a very significant influence on these 50 Americans, and clearly on at least the people who came into contact with them. It had a terrific impact on me.

I found that experience to be, as I say, perhaps the best job I've ever had because it involved very direct, very close proximity with government officials, with people in the communities, with our own volunteers. I was also a member of the country team at the Embassy. When the political officers in the Embassy were not able to travel, I was still going all over the country.

Q: Did you feel the need or the pressure to keep at arm's length from the Embassy?

SHAKOW: Yes and no. We were not a part of either the Embassy or AID in a formal sense and we had our own offices in a separate location. But we also kept in closed touch. Everybody knew I was part of the embassy team, though, of course, I did not spend time with the CIA station chief on that kind of thing. It really was for me a fascinating opportunity and I think having the Peace Corps there was also very good for U.S. interests. And as we were in the field there were not many

overlaps with AID and at that time AID was slowing down considerably because of the political pressures.

AID families were terrific in taking in volunteers in when they were visiting Jakarta. The PCVs were living with Indonesian families all over the country, and when they would come to Jakarta or Medan or elsewhere, they of course loved the idea of a shower and an American meal. The Americans were just wonderful. Maybe it was because we were such a small group, but we didn't have the kind of antagonism that occurred in some other places where the Peace Corps was very supercilious about AID and the Embassy. There was never any upset on the part of AID and Embassy staff toward the Peace Corps. We had a very close relationship, but one in which each of us respected the others' integrity and independence.

Q: What was your sense of the AID program at that time? Or have you already described it?

SHAKOW: Well, fortunately by the time I got back there I had had a lot of exposure to AID people and their programs. But by the time of 1963 and '64, and particularly '65, it was a volatile political situation and very difficult as Americans were being attacked all the time. It was much harder for Indonesians to associate with Americans and in the government ministries they didn't quite know how to deal with AID officials. So it was much more difficult, and in 1965, the trend was towards closing out the AID mission.

Q: Was that a Washington decision?

SHAKOW: Oh, I think everybody concluded that it was just impossible to continue to work there at that time.

Q: The Government was not being cooperative at all?

SHAKOW: It really wasn't. There may have been opportunities here and there. But considering that this had been a major U.S. AID program for many years it was just a tragedy that it had to close down. But politically it was very difficult.

After Sukarno and the coup attempt in 1965, gradually Suharto came in to take over from Sukarno, and there was the beginning of a whole new approach. One of the reasons AID and State insisted upon moving away from having a large number of staff and a small technical assistance program was that it was just too difficult to manage, and with so many people there you put U.S. interests at considerable risk. There was a big shift to a different kind of program in 1967.

Q: Well, we may touch on that again. But you left there when?

SHAKOW: I left in the middle of 1965. The volunteers were moved out to Thailand, a few to other places. I came back to Washington and joined the staff of the Peace Corps, in my last year there, was Acting Head of Volunteer training. Towards the end of 1967, I would have been with Peace Corps for five years. This was about the time we all thought was appropriate, five years in and then out. It also was the time I decided to get married and buy a home, and so it seemed that changing a job about that time made sense, too. So at the end of 1967, I agreed to come to work at AID. I left

the Peace Corps just at the very end of December, 1967.

PAUL D. MCCUSKER
Counselor for Economic Affairs
Jakarta (1963-1969)

Paul D. McCusker was born in New York in 1921. He attended Holy Cross College and Cornell Law School and was a Fulbright fellow. Mr. McCusker joined the Foreign Service in 1950. His career included positions in Italy, Germany, and Indonesia. Mr. McCusker was interviewed by Charles Kennedy in 1991.

MCCUSKER: The function of commercial attach, which I went out for, however, was melded into counselor for economic affairs after about a year that I had been there. The then counselor for economic affairs left Jakarta, and so I was given the job of counselor for economic affairs, and commercial attach kind of disappeared because there really wasn't much going on. We weren't out there selling things. We American officials never have been really out there selling things very hard, leading to one of our major problems now, the trade deficit. I was there from '64 to '69. When I got there the ambassador was Howard Jones, a marvelous man.

Q: I've heard him described as saint-like.

MCCUSKER: Yes, well he was. He was a practicing Christian Scientist, as was his wife. I don't know whether his Christian Science philosophy, religion, what have you, but both he and his wife were what I would call optimists. He was an optimist with respect to Indonesian politics, and he could not believe that this guy Sukarno was leading the Indonesians down the path to communism. He knew, of course, the strength...it was the largest communist party outside of China. It wasn't yet in power but the way things were going when I got there in '64 it was very clear that unless there was a radical change it would become a communist government. They were talking at that time, already in '64, about a third force -- the workers, the peasants, and then a paramilitary force representing both workers and peasants, a dangerous innovation in the communist march to power. Anyhow, there was a clear split between the Ambassador and the political section about what was going to happen. This has been documented elsewhere, so I won't go into it.

Q: Just to give a little feel, you arrived obviously no expert on the area, coming from Hamburg, and all of a sudden you're in this. Was it the embassy versus the ambassador in a way? I'm not talking about enemies in a confrontational sense. Were there neutrals on this? What was the atmosphere in the embassy?

MCCUSKER: It took me a while to find out that there was any difference in the view, until I got to know the political people. I had a fairly large section of my own. When I first arrived, of course, somebody else was the counselor for economic affairs. Well, my function was commercial attach, I had to be in touch not only with local businessmen, but with American business people in the area. And, of course, we had major petroleum interests in Indonesia. I mean in fact as it turned out these were terribly important politically -- Caltex and Stanvac, which was the only remaining

vestige of the old Mobil-Esso combination which had been broken up all over the world by the virtue of a Supreme Court decision. But in Indonesia there remained, 50% Mobil and 50% Esso, a company called Stanvac. But apart from the oil companies, and an occasional American businessman, there wasn't much commercial work. We were writing economic reports in great depth about the state of the economy, which was miserable, because, of course, Sukarno had no concept of what he was doing to the country by the enormous spending on prestige projects. Now, of course, there was always the income from the oil, but that income from the oil rarely got into the control...in fact, never did get into the control of the Central Bank until after Sukarno was out of power. It's a very long and complex story, of course, but it was a vital period in Indonesian history.

Anyhow, the spirit within the embassy: considerable feeling that, backed by the Department, Jones was too weak with the Indonesians. I mean we had all kinds of problems, and Jones felt, I think quite incorrectly, that he had an inside track with Sukarno. First of all, Jones was the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, a fact of which he was quite proud and played heavily on to keep him in this job as ambassador to Indonesia. He had been there for seven years, like my predecessor as commercial attach who had also been there seven years. He'd gone out there as head of AID -- or whatever they were calling the aid program then -- and then became the ambassador. He would go and see Sukarno early in the morning at the palace, unaccompanied, and come back to a staff meeting and report how rosy things were looking -- he had a long talk with Sukarno, and so forth. It colored his reporting back, I believe, in the sense that he felt Sukarno was not going to do anything drastic to the United States, and that the country was not going to go communist. I'll never forget one day, when Jones told me and another colleague, just the three of us at lunch, that Subandrio, who as far as I'm concerned was an out and out communist, then the Foreign Minister, couldn't be a real Communist because he had a son studying in the U.S.

Q: He was Foreign Minister.

MCCUSKER: That's correct, Dr. Subandrio was the Foreign Minister. He could not possibly turn the country into a communist country because he had a son studying in the United States. I mean, that was sort of Jones' ace in the hole, that it couldn't happen. Well, it almost did. And, of course, it did not happen, but not for any reason that Jones had come up with because he left by the time of the abortive communist-led coup.

Q: Before he left, obviously Jones was out of sync with, you might say, our policy.

MCCUSKER: No, he was backed heavily by Harriman.

Q: I was going to say, where was his power coming from?

MCCUSKER: Oh, his power was Averell Harriman, and, of course, they had known each other since the time when Harriman was governor of the State of New York -- and Jones had some kind of a public finance position in the government of the State of New York. He would rely heavily on Harriman to back him up, which Harriman did for a long time, urging patience with the Indonesians despite all the insults we were getting by that time. I tell you, the only time I ever saw Howard Jones angry was the day that the students -- so-called students, but most of them were perennial students and provocateurs for the communist party -- who came, as they often did, to

demonstrate at the residence. Mrs. Jones was there at the time, invited them to come up on the veranda of the residence to have a coca cola -- coca cola was served. And the students got into a discussion with the ambassador and Mrs. Jones, and one of the students -- I use the word "students" loosely -- called Mrs. Jones a liar. Jones had all kinds of forgiving spirit, but he could not forgive anybody who would call his wife a liar. And he came back to the embassy that afternoon, and he was just furious. I think maybe that was the beginning of his willingness to leave, because he was already getting signals that maybe his time was up, and he had been trying desperately to hold on.

Q: Did you have any feeling where you were in the reporting on the economy, that the ambassador was asking you to hold back, or do anything?

MCCUSKER: No, no. You see, when Sukarno started the campaign against the United States interests almost to the point of nationalization of American enterprises, we were not only reporting that, but I can't tell you how many formal protests I wrote to the Foreign Ministry on stiff paper complaining about the measures that were being taken against our companies, trade representations, etc. No, but I remember one incident which was very typical of Jones' attitude. We were at the palace together one day -- I've forgotten why I was there. I think it had something to do with a contract that an American company was getting Sukarno to sign. But Sukarno had just received, not one, but two new Cadillac cars which he had on the palace grounds. And he invited the ambassador to take a ride with him around the grounds in a Cadillac, which they did. The ambassador and I went back to the embassy together, and he said in the car going back, "Write up a short cable reporting that despite all of the anti-Americanism afoot in Indonesia sponsored by Sukarno through various means, that President Sukarno has just purchased two Cadillac vehicles." I thought that was kind of a dumb comparison of things, and I didn't make the comparison. I simply reported that, as some measure of sales of American products in Indonesia, "The President just bought two new Cadillacs." Of course, he had a Mercedes, and all kinds of vehicles coming out of his ears. Well, that was Jones, report the good side. I don't say he didn't report the bad side, but more objective reporting was done actually by the political section.

Q: And they were telling it like it was.

MCCUSKER: Yes, if not by despatches which Jones would not have signed, at least in official-informals, I think they were called. It was clear that there was a conflict of views between Jones and the Political Section, especially Bob Martens.

Q: We have interviews with Marshall Green, but I wonder if you could describe a little about how the arrival of Marshall Green and events as you saw it?

MCCUSKER: Yes. Let me put it this way. Jones left, I believe it was May of 1965. Now Green could have gotten there by let's say, June. However, if he had gotten there by June, he would have been there for the Fourth of July, and Frank Galbraith was the DCM -- Deputy Chief of Mission -- at that time. Frank was an old Indonesian hand. He had started out learning Indonesian way back in the '50s, and had first served, as a matter of fact, in the Consulate at Medan. I would say Frank spoke better Indonesian than almost anybody in the embassy staff. Well, Green postponed his arrival, to Frank Galbraith's dismay because Frank didn't want to give the Fourth of July party, but he had to. Green arrived then sometime later in July and, of course, his first exposure to Sukarno

was the dirty trick that Sukarno played on him at the credentials ceremony. It's normal for the Foreign Ministry to give you the text of the remarks that the Chief of State is going to make. We got it three minutes before the ceremony was scheduled, and that was done on purpose because the remarks turned out to be a diatribe against U.S. policy, and imperialism, and neo-colonialism, what have you. Green has already publicly reported on this, most recently in his book that just came out.

Q: Which in part the oral history we did with him helped inspire the book.

MCCUSKER: He had to be there and present the credentials, which he did, and he made a bland response. He did not turn on his heel and walk out of the palace, but he was very shaken -- Green was shaken by the experience. His instructions when he came out, and he was frank to tell us in the embassy that these were his instructions, were to be cool, but civil, to Sukarno. And he was. Fortunately it wasn't more than -- well, the first of October, they call it the 30th of September, it happened during the night between the 30th of September and the first of October, when the Gestapo, as it became to be called, which is a very neat Indonesian acronym. There's no question that Sukarno was out of sync with his country -- the top level of his country -- not only the army which was staunchly anti-communist, but also the civilians who were thinking about the future of Indonesia. He had lost touch with sensible people, really. Green treated him with civility but a noticeable lack of warmth.

DEREK S. SINGER
Peace Corps Director
Jakarta (1964)

Derek Singer was born in New York City. He graduated from New York University in 1952 and John Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies in 1956. His career has included positions in Columbia, Bolivia, Taiwan, Costa Rica, the Congo, Indonesia, Tunisia, Senegal, Zaire, Ecuador, Kenya, and Cameroon. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on March 9, 1999.

SINGER: I sure did. I had two others. Well, you could say, three. After finishing up my two years with the Peace Corps in Bolivia, I was offered the chance of going to Indonesia as director, based in Jakarta. This time, I wouldn't be the first one there - obviously, someone had preceded me. So, I would be inheriting a program. That was a little different. But, I would be going back to Southeast Asia, a place where, if you recall, some of my early education and training, and so forth had drawn me to. So, that was fine. I even spoke a little Indonesian, which I studied in graduate school as well. So, I went to Jakarta. Fortunately, as it turned out, I went alone. That is to say, I was going to get things set up and so forth, before my family came out to join me, my two small children and my wife. Well, when I got to Jakarta, I had not been given very much of a briefing. I was just sent sort of quickly, straight there with only a couple of days in Washington. I found that we had 24 Peace Corps volunteers in-country. Indonesia, of course, is an enormous archipelago, 3000 miles long with tens and tens of millions of people, close to a 100 million, I guess, living there. Twenty-four Peace Corps Volunteers after 150 in a tiny country, population-wise, like Bolivia, seemed a little anomalous, to say the least. It didn't take long to learn what was going on. These are the last days of

the dictator, Sukarno, before Soeharto came on the scene. There would be an excruciatingly bloody Civil War to come in a couple years later. But when there, things were still quite peaceful, but tense. Sukarno was ruling the country with an iron fist, a real nasty dictator. Nominally neutral, he seemed to be trying to cozy up to the Communist bloc. Again, we were still in the midst of the Cold War, and there were at least some political considerations in everything the United States did abroad.

Q: This was in 1963?

SINGER: Well, I think it was 1964. I reviewed the 24 Peace Corps volunteers who were there, soon to be replaced by another couple of dozen who were in training in Hawaii, by the way, or were about to go into training when I arrived . . . Out of those Volunteers, there were 18 or 20 who were sports coaches, physical education coaches of one kind or another, either for school kids, in "Sports Universities" and gym classes, or with sports teams around the country. All of these Volunteers had been medal winners in the Olympics. They had been hand picked after their Olympic experiences from various U.S. colleges and universities, and hand picked in a very unusual sense. They were all physical educators as well as accomplished athletes, and they went to Indonesia on Sukarno's personal request as trainers for his would-be Olympic teams. It turns out that Sukarno was "X'd out" and not allowed to participate in the International Olympics at the time, because he had used government funds to subsidize his athletes - something prohibited under IOC rules. So, he set up something called GANEFO, Games for the New Emerging Forces, which was to be his Third World (neutralist) group competitive with the International Olympics Committee and its games. He was going to try to organize GANEFO in Asia and Africa, with Jakarta as the center. He had built an enormous, expensive, and elaborate sports complex for that purpose in Jakarta. He had leant on and exerted great political pressure on a number of countries, including the United States, to send him athletes as coaches, trainers and physical educators to prepare his team to be the centerpiece of this new GANEFO ensemble. We went along with that. Talk about politics, we went along with that, we hand-picked, as I say, 18 or 20 American athletes to go there, and the other four to six Volunteers were all English teachers for Sukarno and his immediate family. So, that was the Peace Corps program I inherited when I went there in 1964!

Q: Very political?

SINGER: Extremely political. Now, that was questionable enough. But, beyond that, on a larger scale, things were getting worse and worse politically vis-a-vis our relations with Indonesia, and in particular, with Sukarno and his increasingly nasty approaches and policies. Relations were poor and they were getting worse. Bad relations between Indonesia and the United States were in store by the time Sukarno was finally overthrown in the bloody Civil War that transpired a year or so later. So, we are talking about the last few months of his power, when he was becoming very angry and frustrated, and a number of irrelevant political issues (irrelevant to the Peace Corps, anyway) were slowly poisoning his relations with the West. In any case, Sukarno ordered some of our Peace Corps volunteers jailed on trumped up charges. He even had some of them beaten up on the streets by his own bully boys, when they were on leave or just walking around the streets of Jakarta and other towns in the country where they were assigned.

I thought these actions were just totally intolerable, but I couldn't get very far with our Embassy in

terms of convincing them that there was at least some reason to question the viability and need for the American Peace Corps, given what I felt obviously should be our objectives, and the four goals of the Peace Corps, and so forth and so on. So, as I saw the situation getting nastier and nastier for our PCV's, I thought we should at least suspend the training of the replacements for the Volunteers who were now nearing the end of their assignments. The replacements being in training, of course, in Hawaii, as I mentioned. We should at least suspend that, pending clarification of whether or not the Peace Corps really belonged, at least doing these kinds of incidents in Indonesia. If worst came to worst, the trainees could be reassigned to other countries in the region. So, when I suggested to Washington that this ought to be looked at very carefully, I was invited to go back and consult in Washington six weeks after I got to Indonesia. I went back to Washington, I consulted, and somehow I found that it was not in the cards for me to go back to Indonesia. Things had been arranged that I would remain in Washington. I did, and then was reassigned to North African and Near East program.

Q: You didn't get a sympathetic ear in Washington?

SINGER: I did not get a sympathetic ear in Washington. Politics were such in the Peace Corps in 1964, the politics were such that we did not, repeat, not want a break with President Sukarno at that time. This was true even though it was becoming pretty clear that his days were numbered. Our own Cold War ideas and feelings about keeping Indonesia,, if not on our side, at least in the neutral camp and away from the dreaded Sino-Soviet Alliance. At that time, Washington felt that bete noir was ready, willing and able to gobble up the rest of Southeast Asia as fast as possible. The fear was so strong that Washington decided they would not make an issue of the invidious position of our Volunteers in Indonesia ; rather, we would keep a stiff upper lip and carry on as usual, perhaps trying quiet diplomacy to keep them out of harm's way, but certainly not allow the PC country staff to make an embarrassing public issue of pulling them out of the country, or their replacements out of training. So, in any case, it turned out to be a losing battle, this one. So, then, I was assigned to North Africa . . .

Q: Before we get to that, what were the Volunteers' view of the situation? It seemed kind of dangerous for them.

SINGER: Generally, the Volunteers' view was, okay this may have some risk, we certainly don't want to be involved where we are going to be in physical danger, but we are treated like sort of little Gods, and to the extent we're not the targets of serious attacks and retribution, the others, who were still assigned in these very prominent positions right around Sukarno's family, and working with the national sports teams as such, they were athletes. They enjoyed the prestige and they enjoyed even the challenge of the work, when they were allowed to work, and that was most of the time. In short, I don't mean to say that they were all under duress on a continuing basis, because they weren't, but there were nasty incidents that had occurred and seemed to be increasing, and subsequently I think they recognized this was not the place for them. But, most of them, up to the time I left, still liked the idea of being assigned several grades, if you will, above where they would be in a professional athletic or coaching career, working with the national athletic teams of the country there, as sort of high level sports figures, even though, in most cases, they were not many years out of college themselves. So, it was an interesting and ambivalent kind of a situation for them, as so many situations are. It wasn't clear-cut: when I was saying, "this is getting worse, not

better," the louder voice of the Ambassador and his staff were saying, "We can still control this, don't rock the boat, let's stick it out". For political reasons in the long run, maybe things were going to get better. It was possible that Sukarno was going to be swayed and lead successfully, to be back "on our side" after things got calmer. But, be that as it may, that's the way it worked out. Now, the Peace Corps continued on then until Indonesia, at least, I guess it was 1965, when the big Civil War broke out and Soeharto and his military forces went against the Sukarno regime, something that brought about an enormous blood and lengthy war. But, before that happened, the establishment was still hopeful that things would work out, so it was decided to pull me, not the Volunteers, out. As I look back on that time, I guess I was just ahead of my time - but I still think I was right!

THEODORE J. C. HEAVNER
Consul and Principal Officer
Medan (1964-1966)

Theodore J. C. Heavner was born in Canton, Ohio in 1929. He received his BA from Case Western Reserve in 1951 and he pursued graduate studies at the State University of Iowa and Harvard University from 1951 to 1953. He served in the US Army during the Korean War and entered the Foreign Service in 1955. His career has included positions in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Guyana. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 28, 1997.

Q: Yes. How did you find Indonesian after studying Vietnamese?

HEAVNER: Indonesian is a much easier language. It is not tonal for a start and the grammatical structure is not difficult. There are no or very few cognates, but it is a relatively easy language. They categorized it among the hard languages, but I'm not quite clear as to why that was done. It certainly did not compare in difficulty in any way with Vietnamese.

Q: Were you getting much of a feel for the situation in Indonesia through your training?

HEAVNER: I had had a year at Cornell and a little bit on all the countries at that point, including Indonesia. Since George Kahin was the person at Cornell who was most instrumental in setting up and running the program and was also an Indonesian expert, I had some background. I also talked to the people on the desk and did some more reading at the time. So, I had some useful background for that assignment.

Q: You went out there in 1964?

HEAVNER: Yes, the summer of 1964. I think I arrived in August.

Q: What was your job?

HEAVNER: I went almost directly to Medan. I was consul and principal officer in Medan. That

had been the plan from the beginning, it was not a change. Howard Jones was the ambassador there. He was a terribly nice man but in my view quite ineffective vis-a-vis Sukarno who really made a monkey out of him in many ways and publicly humiliated him. Jones was a very religious man and certainly turned the other cheek at every opportunity. A very different kind of leader than we subsequently got with Marshall Green, who was much more to my taste.

Q: I think this Howard Jones-Sukarno situation is an interesting one, an odd couple you might say. Before you went out there, what was the impression you got from the desk and other people about Howard Jones?

HEAVNER: I don't remember. I am not sure I got anything in that regard from the desk. Criticizing your ambassador at post probably would not be considered good form and if they had reservations about Jones, I don't recall hearing them. I certainly had them once I was in country, and I think Ed Masters, who went there not too long after I got there, shared some of my views. We were all very pleased when Marshall Green replaced him. Marshall had a very different agenda.

Q: You were in Medan on Sumatra island how long?

HEAVNER: I got there August 1964 and was taken out of Medan and sent back to Vietnam before I ended my two years there. I went back in January, 1966 to Vietnam because Ed Lansdale wanted a Vietnamese language officer and State I guess didn't have anybody else. The uproar in Indonesia was then correctly thought to be subsiding, so they pulled me out of Medan and sent me back to Saigon.

Q: Okay, let's talk about August, 1964. Did you get a briefing at the Embassy?

HEAVNER: I expect that I did, but I don't really remember that. You may recall that in that period we were in something called "confrontasi" when Sukarno was objecting to the formation of Malaysia. I am not clear anymore on what grounds other than that he may have felt his own position in Southeast Asia was being undermined in some fashion. Malaysia was to include part of the big island that used to be called Borneo, now Kalimantan. Sarawak, of course, was going to be part of this new entity, Malaysia, while the rest of the island was part of Indonesia.

One of the more exciting and pointless things that happened early on in my time there was when we got word in Medan, and I think it may have been true, although I have never been sure of this, that the Indonesians were going to engage any British vessels that came through the straits between Sumatra and Java and that they had given the military orders, the air force in particular, to engage them. That didn't happen, perhaps because the British didn't come through. Maybe it didn't happen because it never was going to happen, I don't know. But, I sent my only NIACT [night action telegram] from Medan on the basis of information we had from the military there that they had orders to do this.

Q: Can you describe the situation in Indonesia as viewed from your arrival in August, 1964 in Medan?

HEAVNER: It was a very interesting situation. Sukarno was engaged in a continuing balancing act

between Nationalist Muslim factions and the communists. His sympathies appeared to be with the communists. Perhaps he just thought the communists were the stronger partner and would prevail in the end, but certainly Jakarta at every turn was reinforcing by orders, by statements, by all kinds of assistance those factions in Sumatra that were either communists, pro-communists or playing that game. And there were quite a lot of them. In fact, it became increasingly clear that Ulong Sitepu, the governor of North Sumatra, was hand in glove with the PKI.

Q: That's the Communist party?

HEAVNER: Right. When the Pemuda Rakyat, the Indonesian Communist Youth Organization demonstrated, which they frequently did in front of the American Consulate, the reason why the police always came late or not at all, was that the governor told them to arrive late or not at all. There demonstrations became increasing numerous in terms of number of people involved and increasingly threatening and reached some kind of a climax when they actually invaded the consulate. The USIA [United States Information Agency] library was on the ground floor of the consulate and they announced there, having torn down our flag and torn the consular shield off the front of the building, that the library was being taken over in the name of the people of North Sumatra.

This was a very exciting morning for us. We had anticipated that something like this might happen because it had already happened in Surabaya, so we had a system set up so that the receptionist at the front desk down stairs could press a button if she or he saw a hostile group approaching. Sure enough, that morning she hit the button and the bell rang upstairs. We had a vault type door at the head of the stairs which we immediately secured, or Bob Blackburn did. He was so quick off the desk I just saw his tail vanishing as he went to close that door. Unless they set the building on fire, which they could have done, there was no way they could get to us. All the same, Bob was ensconced waiting to shred if need be the few documents we had left. We were already on a receive-read-burn kind of basis because we anticipated something like this might happen. Our radio operator was also on the radio to Jakarta saying it looked like we had big trouble.

We had a little aperture in the vault door that I could look through and I looked down the stairs there and saw that they were going into the library but weren't going into the administrative offices of the USIA which were immediately below us. So, Frank Ward and I, he was the USIA officer, went down stairs closing the door behind us with Bob locking it behind us and confronted the leaders who were making pronouncements. I said that I didn't recognize this action, that this was consular property, that it was immune to this kind of thing, diplomatic immunity, etc. I also asked for police protection. There were a few policemen on the outskirts of the crowd. The demonstrators didn't leave so I then went to the governor, who I couldn't reach, the police chief, who was out of town, the all-Sumatra commander, who was unavailable. I left a letter at each place asking for protection and eviction of these invaders.

By evening the police had herded most of them out after great palaver and with great ceremony and they had taken down the Indonesian flag, but left all the anti-U.S. signs up. I demanded that they take the signs down, but they refused so I took them down. We kept that library open even though Subandrio, the foreign minister, who was if not PKI was very obviously playing their game, had already announced that our library would be closed. Nevertheless, we kept it open for

another month before Sukarno himself told the ambassador that it had to close. At that point we closed the library and Frank was reassigned.

This was a sideshow in many ways because the real target, or the major target in Sumatra was the American rubber estates. They were ultimately taken over, as they called it, by communist mobs. The owners were compelled to sign documents signing over these estates. I suggested when they sign they put under their name “signed under duress,” which they did. Subsequently, under the military government, they did get those estates back, although I’m not sure the “signed under duress” had anything to do with it.

Q: When you arrived there I assume you paid your calls on the governor and various officials. What was your reception at that point?

HEAVNER: Oh, very cordial. The Indonesians are culturally given to a very cordial warm kind of interaction. Even if they see you as a deadly enemy, at least initially you are not going to get a confrontation with them. At least that was my experience. It is even more true of the Javanese I think than of the North Sumatra people, the Batak, who are really quite a different people from the Javanese. The Batak are much more direct, actually, and also Christian for the most part.

Q: This is on Sumatra.

HEAVNER: Right. They were the dominate group in the province of North Sumatra. But the northern tip of Sumatra is a province called Aceh. That is where your really dogmatic Muslims are and that is where the communists, of course, immediately got into trouble. Sukarno and the Indonesian military really misjudged the communist strength, at least in Sumatra. At the time of the abortive coup when all those generals were killed, General Mokoginta, who was the all Sumatra commander called me to his office and said, “Look, I know I can hold Medan, but in the Rantau Prapat area, I know the communists are rallying their forces and I am not sure about your people there. You had better get them into Medan where we can be sure to protect them.” We still had a number of Americans on rubber estates in that area. Well, we did that but the truth was that almost from day one the communists weren’t rallying their forces in Rantau Prapat or anywhere else in Sumatra, they were running for their lives because the Muslim youth very quickly became quite violent and were killing anyone who they suspected of communist sympathies, much less anyone who was obviously and openly communist. There was a lot of bloodshed in the countryside as well as in Medan. Later that year, my next door neighbor, who was Chinese as well as communist, which was a double whammy, because the Chinese were very unpopular and we had anti-Chinese riots, was beaten to death in his house.

Q: I would like to go back and get a little bit of the development of this. Was it the murder of the generals that started the whole thing, or had things been building up before that and what were the dates?

HEAVNER: Well, all the action really was taking place in Jakarta and I wasn’t there, so I am not terribly clear about all this. But, the tension between the communists and the military had been building for a long time. The military was very unsympathetic. Mokoginta, for example, certainly was not at all playing the game with Ulong Sitepu in North Sumatra, in fact, he was in any way he

could counteracting efforts to communize the university, for example, which was pretty well accomplished.

The big thing at the time, it seems to me that may have triggered it was this notion that they were going to arm a militia. Sukarno had launched this notion of an armed militia and it was congruent with the anti-Malaysia thing as well. But, the real aim, as the military saw it, and, for that matter, as we saw it, was to put arms in the hands of the communists so that they could effectively counter the strength of the military. It was at that point that the military was really digging in their heels and that may have precipitated the communist coup, I just don't know what made them think that the moment was opportune.

But, as you may recall, on one night they killed something like ten generals. They failed to get Suharto however. He was on their list. They didn't kill any Sumatra military for whatever reason. Mokoginta might have been an obvious target but was not targeted, at least nothing was attempted. We woke up to hear the news, like everyone else in Sumatra, that there had been this coup attempt and the military was rallying in Jakarta and insuring security and one thing and another.

Sumatra was involved peripherally because Subandrio, the foreign minister, was in Medan at the time. In fact, he had come to Medan a few days before, among other things, to announce or make sure that our USIS library was closed. In any event, when he arrived at the airport the consular corps was out there to greet him, as we always would be, and when we were driving back from the airport, my car was set upon by a group of communist youth. There were quite a lot of them surrounding the car and striking at it with signs and ultimately smashing the rear window with a huge rock, which if it had hit me would have really done for me. They smashed a couple other windows before they were done. Ironically, it was the air force that saved my butt. It was the air force which sided with the communists, you recall, in the showdown between the military and the communists. The air force sided with the communists. Well, air force headquarters was right there at the exit from the airport where I was set upon by the communist youth mob, and the guards came down from the air force headquarters and cleared the way for me and we were able to drive away. My driver was able to drive away. He was a cool one, I must say. My hat was off to him because instead of cutting and running like you might have expected him to do (In his case, I might have done it myself.), he just sat there and tried to drive through.

That was only a few days before the abortive coup, if memory serves, and Subandrio was still in Medan when the coup took place.

Q: After you woke up to hear what had happened, did you go out to find out what the reaction would be?

HEAVNER: As much as we could. Initially everything was pretty quiet and it was very hard to reach anybody in authority because they were fully occupied. But, then, as I said, Mokoginta called me in and he clearly had a very serious view of events. The military intelligence on the strength of the communists in Sumatra, at least, was as poor as ours. I suspect it was equally poor in Jakarta.

Q: They overestimated the strength.

HEAVNER: Tremendously.

Q: What happened in subsequent events. It was the army of Suharto's division that put things down in Jakarta, wasn't it?

HEAVNER: It was a very gradual process apparently in Jakarta. It took them close to two years to ease Sukarno out. From the beginning the military really took charge in Jakarta and never stopped being in charge in Sumatra, although they felt pretty threatened at the outset. They fairly quickly realized what was happening, namely that the communists were being put down by some youth groups which they, themselves, had supported. They not only continued to support them but then began to direct and reinforce their efforts to smash the communist apparatus. It was pretty scary sometimes to see these truck loads of youth with these enormous banners flying through the town chanting. Of course we had seen the same thing with the red banners not too long before, and we were the target.

Q: Were you able to report what was happening there?

HEAVNER: The best we could. I am not sure that we reported all that accurately or succinctly. Anyhow, Jakarta had its hands full and the action was really there. Sumatra was a long way off.

Q: What about the killings? It became a real bone of contention, 1) how many, 2) who was behind it. Your friends at Cornell, I think, tended to back Sukarno and all of a sudden it was Americans responsible for the killings.

HEAVNER: Actually I think that flap was long, long after the fact. I don't recall anything like that coming up at any point close to the event. But, you may remember that Bob Martens had an interview with a reporter in which he said something to the effect, or at least that reporter thought he said that he had given a long list of names of communists to the military after the coup and that had helped them in some fashion to rout them out and, oh, by the way, to kill them. This generated a freedom of information search at the State Department which caused Paul Gardner to come up with a lot of documents, including some from Medan, none of which supported that assertion. Certainly it was not true of anything we did at the consulate. I don't recall that we had a list of communists. We knew, as did the military, that certain leaders in the government apparatus, like the governor, were communists in sympathies, if not in fact. We didn't have to tell them that. They didn't need any help from us. How much they generated, supported and directed the Muslim youths who carried out a lot of killings, and how extensive the killings were, for that matter, I don't know. I know there were killings. I did see some bodies, saw a lot more during the anti-Chinese riots, I might say, which followed in December of that year. But, certainly the accounts that we got from the rural areas and from the plantation areas were pretty hair raising. Even allowing for exaggerations, I think there was a lot of killing.

Q: What were your contacts during this and before? Did you have much contact with the business and government communities of Medan and would they sit around and talk openly to you?

HEAVNER: Before the attempted coup, it became more and more evident that they were afraid to

talk very openly about what was happening. I think it is fair to say that our contacts were being closed down by increasing evidence and conclusion on the part of most Indonesians that the country was heading towards a communist regime because the governor and increasingly all the civilian apparatus, certainly the press and the radio, were controlled by communists or pro-communists in North Sumatra. At the university, people who were anti-communists were increasingly forced out. They just weren't being employed any longer or shut up. The nationalist Muslim party had factions, but the left faction was increasingly in the majority. People who were in that party who had been our contacts were increasingly reluctant to talk to us, or if they did, they mouthed the line. So, we were increasingly isolated. In fact we had a Chinese guy who used to come around and coach one or two of us at tennis because there was a tennis court on the consulate grounds and I had never played tennis and wanted to learn. He came to me one day and said he was not going to be able to come any more. I said, "Why not?" He said, "It is too dangerous." So that was a barometer.

Q: What happened after the upheaval in Jakarta? Did things change at all for you? Did you find that more people were reaching out to you?

HEAVNER: I wasn't there very long after the coup. You recall the coup was in September and I left the beginning of the following January. I think by the time I left a lot of people were breathing much easier and I guess access to them had improved, I don't know. It was a very gradual process in Jakarta. Ulong Sitepu, the governor of whom I was so fond, ultimately ended up in prison and died in prison. But, he wasn't in prison, as far as I can recall, until well after I left. In fact, I think, at least in name, he was still governor when I left.

Q: Were you there during the anti-Chinese riots?

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: Can you give your observations about them?

HEAVNER: They were pretty nasty. At one point I had a Chinese family who were employees of the consulate and a Chinese family that lived across the street from me, bivouacking in my house because they were afraid, with reason, that they might be set upon. The riots lasted over several days but the big occasion was the attack on the Chinese consulate. The vice consul had a house on the corner which looked down the street about two blocks away and had a good view of the Chinese consulate from the balcony of his house. We watched that event from his balcony. It was a really big mob, as big as we had ever seen outside our consulate, and a very aggressive mob. They did burst into the grounds and I am not sure whether they ever penetrated the consulate or not, but there was gun fire. I think some of that gun fire was coming from inside the consulate, although again, I am not sure. We saw several bodies carried out, so I think there were some deaths, or at least some very serious woundings.

Following that the demonstrators went on a rampage throughout the town smashing Chinese businesses and attacking any Chinese they could find. I don't know how many casualties there were, but there were enough. It was pretty damn serious. The military did ultimately appear on the scene and enforced some calm, but they weren't very quick about it and I'm not sure how

premeditated that was either. But it was the military, not the police, who finally broke up the demonstrations and the rampaging youth groups.

Q: I take it youth groups were sort of the designated weapon of choice, both of the right and the left then?

HEAVNER: Yes, I think that is a fair statement. Certainly with the youth groups that came to the consulate and tried to pull our flag down and broke windows it was the communist youth group, and then it was the Muslim youth groups who went after the communists subsequently and the Chinese as well. But youth was pretty loosely defined in those days. As I remember, the Pemuda Rakyat leader was in his 30s.

Q: At your working level there, during the pre blowup in Jakarta were you issuing student visas and things like that? Was there much in the way of information or flow towards the United States?

HEAVNER: We had the USIS library which was used pretty heavily. It was a popular installation. As to students going to the U.S., I am not very sure of that. I don't think we issued a lot of visas. I used to get American movies from time to time. We had the "Day of Drums" movie when Kennedy was killed, and even the communist governor of Sumatra came to see that and was moved to say to me something to the effect that Kennedy was a very great man. I think we had an important American presence there.

Q: Did you have any change of marching orders when Marshall Green took over from Howard Jones?

HEAVNER: I had taken a very unbending attitude from the beginning which clearly Jones did not fully approve. That is, when there were anti-American demonstrations in front of the consulate, I protested vigorously to the local authorities and demanded protection and was quite firm about it. No hat in hand stuff. I don't think that Jones ever said, "Don't do that," but then he didn't say "Don't do that," as far as I can make out to anybody. Green, on the other hand, liked that style and I think it was pretty much the way he handled things in Jakarta. He did not kowtow to Sukarno at any time.

When I left Medan, I, of course, went through Jakarta and talked to everyone including the ambassador before I left. The morning I left to go to Saigon, my flight was a very early one, about 6 a.m. Green was out at the airport all by himself to say goodbye to me. I still remember that as an important index of how he saw the way we had handled things in Medan as well as a sign of how supportive he was of his troops in general. There was no need for him to be there. He was just there to say, "Thanks, Ted." He was a great ambassador, and I always admired him.

Q: I realize it was sort of a very long transition when Sukarno was being eased out, but did you see the situation pretty much stabilized as far as Sumatra was concerned by the time you left Medan?

HEAVNER: It was, but I was not sure of that then. It turned out that way. But I wouldn't have predicted it. In fact, subsequently when I worked on Indonesia in the Department I said that I didn't think Suharto would be around very long - and he is still with us.

Q: It is 1997 and he is still there.

HEAVNER: Right.

PAUL F. GARDNER
Political Officer
Jakarta (1964-1968)

Ambassador Paul F. Gardner was born in Texas in 1930. He received both a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of. Mr. Gardner entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Madagascar, Laos, Indonesia, Cambodia, Turkey, and an ambassadorship to New Guinea. Ambassador Gardner was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: You left there in 1963 and then what did you do?

GARDNER: My wife and I both decided that we loved Asia but we would like to be a little further away from the Communists, so I applied for Indonesian language training thinking that I would finally be in a large country. I had been in tiny countries of less than 5 million in population. Indonesian is the easiest of the Asian languages so I applied for that and had ten months of studying Indonesian and then off to Indonesia.

Q: You arrived there at a very interesting time.

GARDNER: Yes. During that ten months that I had been studying Indonesian, things really deteriorated and I ran into a society that was very close to Communism. I ran into much the same thing that I had left. Except here the leader, himself, was the one who was leading everybody to the left.

Q: Sukarno.

GARDNER: Sukarno, yes.

Q: When did you get out there?

GARDNER: I got out there about June 1964.

Q: What job did you have there?

GARDNER: For a few weeks I was, again, in the consular section, although I had been assigned as a political officer. Then I was up in the political section, not the most junior officer this time. I was among the juniors in a rather large political section.

Q: At that time there was a very well-known controversial ambassador, Howard Jones, who seemed to have his own way of doing things. Could you describe how you felt about Howard Jones and also, maybe, how others in the political section felt about the situation and how we were dealing with it?

GARDNER: Howard Jones was really a very nice person. But many people there felt that because he was a Christian Scientist he really believed the best of everyone he knew, so to speak. He believed the best of Sukarno. I think Howard Jones felt that Sukarno was becoming more and more anti-American, but it was because of our role in Vietnam which they couldn't stand, and because Malaysian independence came in a way that did not please the Indonesians. In other words, he saw Sukarno's moves towards the left and against us as being caused partly by our policy and by clashes between our foreign policy and Indonesia's. So what we had to explain to the Indonesians was that we really wanted to see them play a big role in the non-aligned world, etc. Jones believed Sukarno, himself, was a nice person who was being pushed this way by the Communists and they were able to drag him that way because of the strong feeling of antagonism toward the US role in Vietnam and Asia. The United States also tried to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs earlier and there was a strong residue of distrust.

I quite frankly was never told anything officially about what we had done in Indonesia before by my government because it was too secret to pass on to junior officers. But when I got to Indonesia, I found all the Indonesians knew it and were glad to tell me about it.

Q: They had a pilot didn't they....?

GARDNER: They had a pilot of ours who was caught after a bombing raid on Ambon in which a lot of Indonesians were killed. We managed to get him released before I arrived. But we had done a great deal more than that. We had aircraft that were helping the rebels in Sumatra and we had also dropped guns to rebels in Sumatra. I learned about this from an Indonesian general who is now Minister of Defense. When he told me this I was on my second tour in Indonesia and Deputy Chief of Mission. I had a private lunch with him one day. He said, "Did you know, Paul, that in 1958 I was the captain commanding a group in South Sumatra, and in Pekanbaru there was a gun drop. We were able to capture these weapons which was designed for the rebels. It was all American equipment." He said that there was also an American major who it turned out had been advising the rebels. He had seen him earlier as an employee of Standard Vacuum in Medan. Then he turned to me and said, "What were you doing during that period?" I said, "I was in Madagascar, my first post." He said, "And what were you doing there?"

He was among the generals who were the most pro-American. In fact he suffered a bit from...having gone to school in the States and being too close to the Americans. But it was quite clear that his suspicion of what we were up to had lingered on into the new order. This was in 1980 that this conversation took place and, of course, the rebellion took place in 1956. So all these suspicions stayed with him.

What I learned is that these so-called covert operations may be covert in the United States but they are not covert there. They are very open and they have a strong residual effect that lasts for decades. And this was the thing that Sukarno used continually. He continually went back to the

fact that the Americans supported the Sumatran rebels, and had tried to infiltrate the Indonesian military. This was in many of his speeches.

To get back to Howard Jones, he felt that Sukarno's heart was good. He was being pulled in the wrong direction because of historic factors such as our meddling when we shouldn't have been meddling and our role in Vietnam. If we just kept contact with him and tried to explain things to him everything would be all right.

Virtually everyone else in the Embassy felt this wasn't the case at all. Sukarno was using our role, and was using Vietnam, and was using Malaysia for his own internal aims which coincided very closely with those of the Communist Party in Indonesia. Virtually all of us believed this.

I was really taken aback by one experience. As an Indonesian language officer, of course, I had to attend many of the rallies and there was a rally virtually every night. Sukarno would usually speak two or three times a week in one rally or another. This was what he called nation building. Building up the patriotic spirit of the country. I had to go out to the Russian-built stadium and listen to him rant and rave. He was, by the way, a magnificent orator. He held the audience, including me, spellbound.

First, you never knew what he was going to say. He left the UN one evening by just announcing it at one of these rallies. You had to keep your ears tuned very closely because that was where you might get first word of some important decision of one type or another.

But the other factor was that he was just a master of modulating his voice in various ways to hold everybody's attention. When you transcribed his speech later, we recorded these in the Embassy, you would find that it wasn't all that great of a speech. It was more or less his great charisma that carried it across. A lot of it didn't make very much sense. What you did detect was that although he would quote Jefferson occasionally, he had a tendency to quote Communism much more often, and more or less define patriotism in ways that made it very close to what the Communists wanted.

One night I went with the Ambassador as his translator and aide. He didn't often attend these meetings and I forget just what this was, but obviously it was a very important speech or else he wouldn't have been there. The meetings usually started with two or three other members of the cabinet speaking first. Usually each of them spoke for about 30 minutes, so you really were trapped in this place for two or three hours listening to speeches.

And before the speeches there were patriotic songs. The biggest one at that time was one that in translation went, "The English we will crush and the Americans we will iron flat." That was the name of the song. You looked across the hall and there were all these banners of Uncle Sam and John Bull being speared by the patriotic Indonesians with their bamboo spears. The Ambassador turned to me while they were singing these songs and said, "They are singing a school song aren't they Paul?" I said, "No sir. They are singing an anti-American, anti-British song." At that time we were worried that the Indonesians might do to us what they had done to the British, which was to burn down their Embassy and all their houses.

Q: The famous Ash Wednesday.

GARDNER: Yes. So he said, "Paul, I want you to pass this note to Sukarno." The note said something like, "There are a lot of rumors that the US Embassy and homes are going to be attacked. I wish you would ask that this not be done." I walked over to Sukarno who was still sitting because his time to speak had not come yet. He read the note and turned over and smiled to the Ambassador and nodded his head. When he got up to speak he ranted and raved about the United States and how it had to be crushed. Then, in English, and nodding a little bit to our Ambassador, he said, "Whatever you do I do not want you to harm the Americans." The Ambassador turned to me and said, "See Paul? Sukarno always keeps his promises."

So I had to go back and write a draft cable. I realized it was going to be very difficult to write a cable that he was going to sign. He and I had witnessed a completely different scene. He simply believed so strongly in Sukarno that he couldn't believe that these things were happening. It never occurred to him that Sukarno's asking them not to physically harm Americans would still allow them to do exactly what they had done to the British because they hadn't harmed the British physically. They had just burned all their belongings and their Embassy. They could have done the same thing to us.

So there was this problem, a basic problem, and I think the Ambassador felt a little deserted by all the people around him since none of us could really buy his views.

Q: Of all the embassies at this particular time it seemed to be the ambassadors in one course was a powerful figure in a way, and yet the Embassy and increasingly the State Department were going in a different course.

GARDNER: Yes. Well, the Ambassador was a very, very nice person and people liked him and he had an entry to Sukarno. A lot of people in Washington felt that all an ambassador really had to do was to have a personal relationship with the head of state and everything would be okay.

Q: That was very Kennedyish too.

GARDNER: Yes, that is right.

He had this personal relationship with Sukarno. He could get into see him virtually anytime he wanted to because he was doing what the President wanted him to do which was keeping things relatively quiet while he moved the whole country to the left as far as possible.

Q: Where was Jones' strength in the Department? Was Harriman a supporter?

GARDNER: I don't exactly know where his strength was back there. He didn't belong to any clique in Washington that I knew of. He wasn't that type. He wasn't the type to have that sort of ties with anyone.

Q: But you did basically have an Embassy which by official-informal or by word of mouth was saying the way they saw it. I mean Washington was not being kept unaware of the fact that Jones was going one course but there were at least professionals in the Embassy who were dubious

about this.

GARDNER: I think they had this view. We had problems getting cables out, quite frankly. This was before there was a dissent channel, so you had to be very careful of what you drafted. You almost had to be like the Indonesians and have people read between the lines to some degree. But, of course, some of the visitors who came out got the picture, because we talked to them.

Ellsworth Bunker was sent by President Johnson to survey the situation. I think the Ambassador wanted to keep him all to himself, so to speak. But I think Bunker may have gotten a feeling for other views at the embassy. How it was accomplished, I was too junior to know. I just read through the cable traffic from that period and it doesn't say either. But I think Frank Galbraith, the DCM, probably got some points across to Bunker. Anyway, rereading the Bunker reports you can see that he saw some of our side. The feeling nevertheless was that we had no choice but to get along with Sukarno.

Q: After you had been there for about a year you get a new ambassador.

GARDNER: Yes, Marshall Green. From then on the Ambassador and the Embassy were on the same wavelength. He was obviously on our wavelength in Washington when he was Deputy Assistant Secretary. He wasn't covering Indonesia in that position but he saw all the traffic and everything else. It was quite clear that we had a different type of leader. He was very anxious to hear all of our views and seemed to listen to them. I think he played things right.

Q: Well, were you in your role as political officer beginning to see more and more the buildup to the takeover of the Communists in support of Sukarno?

GARDNER: It was quite clear what was happening. I think Bob Martens helped a lot of us understand what was happening because he had been in Moscow. Mary Trent was also there and she had been in Czechoslovakia before it fell. Many of us felt that Howard Jones had brought Mary Trent out because she, too, was a Christian Scientist and they had worked together before and that he needed somebody on his side. Mary had not been there two weeks and she said, "This place is just like Czechoslovakia when it was going Communist."

Q: What was she doing?

GARDNER: She was deputy chief of the political section. Then Bob Martens pointed out that Sukarno and the Communists were using salami tactics which were quite obvious. Each month or so you would have a different group banned by Sukarno. And every time it was an anti-Communist group. So it was quite clear to all of us that it was moving close to Communism.

The only comfort we took out of this was that the place was in such a horrible condition...unbelievable economic situation...that the Communists would get probably the most difficult country to run on earth at that stage. The price structure was all out of whack. It cost more to buy a quart of water than a gallon of gasoline. This type of thing. The black market price of just everything was out of hand. You took four hours to drive the 28 miles to Bogor because the roads were in such bad condition. They had an inflation rate which I think was the highest in the world at

that time...some Latin American countries have now outdone them. I think it was going something like 1500 percent a year. And nothing was working. Everything was going down hill. You did have the comfortable feeling that when they got Indonesia they were going to get a country that was just an economic disaster. But that was the only comfort there was.

We had no feeling of any forces on the other side, quite frankly. The military seemed paralyzed. Part of their paralysis was that Sukarno was telling them that anything they did that was against his policies in Malaysia just lined them up with the neo-colonists imperialists...meaning us. Nasution had been in the United States and most of the other generals, not Suharto, but the others, had been in the United States and Sukarno was using this to push them aside. They were the only really anti-Communist group still around. They had banned the Moslem group that was anti-Communist and had only sycophants left on the Moslem side. The Nationalist organization had become completely pro-Communist. So the only thing left was the army that was anti-Communist and they were almost paralyzed by Sukarno with his charisma, which was fantastic, defining patriotism in such a manner that the army leadership appeared less and less patriotic. They weren't pursuing Malaysian confrontation in the field as Sukarno wanted because they knew it wasn't right. They really didn't want to get involved in a war. They weren't bringing Communists into the military and having political commissars in the military as Sukarno also wanted. It appeared to us that eventually they were going to cave in too because they seemed to be paralyzed.

I was quite frankly extremely pessimistic. There were no voices on the other side. Very few people would talk to us at all. The only people we did see were those who were already out of things, particularly the ones who had signed the Cultural Manifesto, which was an effort to obtain freedom of speech and artistic expression. Sukarno considered that terribly unpatriotic because all art should in his view support the revolution. The Sukarnoists were mimicking Soviet art, which doesn't go with their culture at all. All their statues at that time were heroic figures with great muscles, etc. breaking chains. This is not Indonesian at all. Their traditional heroes were all very slender people from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, not great muscled brutes. But it was Sukarno's type of hero because he sent his artists to Moscow and that is what they came back with. It was all dissonant with the local culture in my point of view. And yet it had apparently taken hold.

There was no one standing up to him. He would just fire people and that was that. They just seemed to disappear into the background. The people whom we had contact with would always come after dark to make sure no one would see them. When you were having supper you got very, very used to having the boy come in and say, "There is a guest at the door." And you knew that somebody wanted to take a peek at Time magazine which was banned or some American newspapers to see what the outside world was doing. Or, perhaps, it was just to borrow a book of fiction. There were no real books on the shelves of Indonesia at that time.

So my contacts were really young people, many of whom had studied in the United States or in Western Europe and were considered untrustworthy and didn't have jobs. Even they would come after dark.

You had a feeling with a society like this that there was no force on the other side. And we were fooled because there was a strong resentment to what was going on, but it just couldn't be expressed. And Sukarno was fooled. He hadn't allowed any negative feedback at all, so he didn't

realize, I am quite sure, the strength of anti-Communist feeling in Indonesia at that time. It only needed an outlet which the events of October 1, 1965 eventually provided.

Q: Well, what did you do during that period? This was when the generals were slain and the army came back.

GARDNER: Well, we were taken by surprise. I lived only about three houses away from the chief of staff of the army, General Yani, who had been killed during the night in his house. I didn't hear anything. I had air conditioning, of course. I got up and went to the office the next day. I always read the newspaper in the back seat while the driver drove. Why a junior officer had a chauffeur needs an explanation, I guess. It was an economic necessity because if you left your car unguarded for 15 minutes you lost your windshield wipers and you couldn't get windshield wipers in Indonesia. You had to order them from the States which meant that during the rainy season you couldn't use your car. If you left your car unguarded for 30 minutes you lost your engine. Because of the currency had been so debased, it cost us only about \$20 a month to have a chauffeur. And \$20 a month would pay for the windshield wipers alone. Plus it gave you someone to talk Indonesian to since few Indonesians would speak to you. We had a feeling that many of them were probably employed by the Deputy Prime Minister, who had his own intelligence operation, so we had to be careful what we said. But at least they would speak Indonesian to us.

On the way to the office that morning I notice that the road was blocked and the chauffeur had taken another road. Normally we would go right in front of Nasution's house and we didn't. When we got to the square where our Embassy was...a large square called Freedom's Square...I saw that there were soldiers all around. So I turned to my chauffeur and said, "What are they doing here?" He said, "Well, I think they are practicing for Armed Forces Day." I believe Armed Forces Day was October 15.

The Ambassador, Marshall Green, hadn't been there very long and we discovered that he got to the office very, very early. He quite often was the only person there at 7 o'clock. So we would try to get there early. That morning I was pleased to arrive just as he did. As I was walking up the steps he turned to me and said, "Paul, what are all those troops doing out there in the square?" I said, "Well, sir, I think they are practicing for Armed Forces Day." I was very pleased with myself for here was the new Ambassador who had recognized me and knew my name. He had asked me my assessment of the situation and I had come forward and reassured him very promptly.

As I went upstairs and listened to the 7:30 news I learned a revolutionary council had taken over. So I was hoping like the dickens that he would forget my name and what I told him. He has never mentioned it to this day so I am certain that by the time he got into the Embassy he had queried several other people and put my views aside.

The soldiers on the square obviously were not friendly because the radio announced a revolutionary council had taken over to protect the President and the nation from the CIA and others.

We were all flabbergasted. We simply did not know what was happening. We took tours around town and nothing had changed in the town. The soldiers didn't seem all that hostile to us. We

learned later that most of them didn't know what they were doing there. The leaders knew, but they didn't. We could move all around town. We didn't know where the President was. There was no mention of him anywhere. Then we started getting reports through the military channels of who had been killed in the early morning. By the evening we were well aware that most of the top army leaders had been killed but Nasution had escaped. We didn't know where he was.

It took four days for Sukarno to surface. We found out that he had actually been at the airport where the scheming had taken place. Looking back on it, CIA found some reports that did show that the air force had been training communist cadre out at the airport, but this was the only indication that something was up and the reports didn't say what the cadre were being trained to do. Obviously this had been a very closely held operation, so closely held that the military, itself, didn't know. They killed the head of the military intelligence, along with the others. Those top people had no hint of what was happening and neither did we.

Obviously we were very pleased to have Suharto take over, although we didn't know him at all.

Q: Your first impression was that the army's been beheaded and...?

GARDNER: Yes, this was our first impression that the army was being beheaded, but we didn't know by whom although we knew that it apparently was a Communist outfit. The radio listed the names of their revolutionary committee, including non-communist military leaders from the outer islands...obviously trying to get support from the outer islanders who didn't know what was going on. These non-communist revolutionary committee members were a screen to make the operation appear broadly based. But when people were contacted they had no knowledge of this organization at all.

We weren't sure what military forces were left, but it looked very bad. We weren't even sure which side Sukarno was on because the revolutionary committee dismissed the cabinet and set up their own rule. This would seem to be against Sukarno. There are still a lot of unanswered questions on the whole thing and they probably never will be completely answered. Why did colonel Untung's group dismiss the cabinet? Why didn't they come out in support of Sukarno right away and leave the cabinet the way it was? I don't know the answer. Certainly the Communist's goal was to emasculate the military and not to change the government.

Q: PKI was the Communist Party?

GARDNER: Yes. It did not wish to openly take power, it wanted a screen in front of it at this stage. But it wished to do away with military leaders who were prohibiting it from infiltrating the army. Those military leaders were the only things left between the Communists and power because they knew Sukarno was on their side.

Q: The Embassy most of this time was basically keeping its head down?

GARDNER: Oh yes. Keeping our head down and reporting. We were able to move around town because, as I say, those troops didn't try to keep check on us. Of course they only had control of the city for a day.

Q: These were the Sukarno...?

GARDNER: The battalions in question were actually headed by Communists, but the membership was not Communist. So they were just following their leader. Then when Suharto went out and talked to them and told them what they were doing he got them to leave. So Suharto took the town with very little firing. When they took the radio station, which was down the street from us, we heard some firing there, but there was very little bloodshed by Suharto's forces. They simply showed the other side that they had a preponderance of force. They did not attack Halim air base, but made it very, very clear that they had the power to take whatever they wanted, so that pro-communists at Halim surrendered. This is the way that Suharto has always acted. He amasses his force in a manner to allow him to avoid bloodshed. This is an old southeast Asian strategy which dates back to the period when people were much more important than terrain.

Q: As this went on...I have interviewed Bob Martens who was the number three in the political section and the expert on the Communist operations...In the last year or so there have been sort of accusations that when the counter-coup, or whatever you want to call it, took place that we were supplying lists of people to be taken care of by...

GARDNER: I had no knowledge of this. I didn't even know that Bob had passed over some of his cards to his contact there. Maybe he had mentioned it, but I didn't know that at all. If he did, I wouldn't have thought that it would have been terribly important. I think Bob believes that the military didn't have any knowledge of the Communist Party and I can't agree with him on that. I think they knew a heck of a lot more than we did. And when they started rounding up communists, they had lists and these lists didn't come from Bob Martens. This was quite clear, because this occurred before Bob Martens passed his first list there.

I have gone back to records since that time to look at this particular problem...the only lists that he passed to them were of the top communist party leadership saying where they were at the time. The confidential sources were excised before he passed the lists on. These sources, however, were principally from the army itself.

Q: So the army already had it.

GARDNER: His classified sources were military to a large degree and the other source was the PKI newspaper. So I just disagree with Bob. Most of us who were there then do, actually, including Marshall Green...that anything he gave to the Indonesians was not already known by them. But he didn't give this information directly to the military. He gave it to an aide of Adam Malik, who is Chinese. And Adam Malik, who was not then really close to the military at all...I don't think that list went anywhere, quite frankly.

I think it was helpful to the guy who gave it to him who was trying to become more of a political expert to Malik. In fact he handled Malik's personal financial affairs, he was Chinese. But he was also trying to enlarge his political role. So it was helpful for him to be a conduit and it was helpful to us to have somebody who told us how Malik felt, and this sort of thing. Malik later had a reasonably close relationship with the military, but at that time he did not. Principally because he

was a leader of the former Murba Party and the army didn't like the old Murba Party. So, I just don't think that that list went beyond Malik's office. His source said openly that he gave it to Malik, but he doesn't know what Malik did with it. I don't see Malik, rushing to the military saying, "Here is a list of the Communist leadership that I got from the American Embassy ." I can't see that.

Q: I might, just for the record, add here, we are talking about Bob Martens, who was in the political section and had this list which he had been maintaining as every political officer does and it was handed over. This has been used in some of the press in the United States, some 20 years later or more to say that we are responsible for a death list that went out to the Indonesian army to kill Communists. This has become a little...

GARDNER: Yes. Of course, we did have indirect contact with the military through an aide of Nasution. One of Nasution's aides was in contact with our military attaché at that time. But Nasution, himself, did not receive the Ambassador. The Ambassador never paid a call on him or anything. That would have harmed him with Sukarno. The military was very wary of any relationship with us because it would give the Communists ammunition to use against them. And Nasution told us as much. The last American to speak directly to Nasution at any great depth was George Benson, who was head of our military aid group there. He had helped most of these military men go to the United States for courses. He has a great personality and got along well with the Indonesians and had made a lot of good friendships there. Nasution's message to George as he was leaving...George left around April 1965...was to tell the Americans to lie low, "we will take care of this in our own Indonesian way" and to leave us alone. This is more or less what he said, and that is what we did.

We did have this contact with Nasution's aide occasionally. So if we, at the Embassy, had wanted to pass any lists of Communists or anything like that, we would have done it through that guy directly to the military. But we didn't, and they didn't want anything like that from us; they made that quite clear. This was Bob doing something on his own from his card file. We all had ways of getting our contacts. And since we had very few contacts, we all tried to get a few.

Q: Well, Suharto was really an unknown, was he?

GARDNER: Yes, he was. He was one of the few generals who did not speak English. He had served virtually all of his time outside of Jakarta and simply was unknown to us. Of course we knew the position he filled and we knew a little bit about his history and this sort of thing, but no one had ever talked to him or anything like that.

Q: On all these events, did you have any feel for what our involvement in Vietnam...was there any reflection of that?

GARDNER: Well, our involvement in Vietnam was something, as I mentioned earlier, that Sukarno used against us. He warned his own people that we were trying to do the same thing in Indonesia, that we were trying to run affairs in Indonesia just like we were running them in South Vietnam.

I think Sukarno definitely believed that history was on Communism's side. He saw what was

happening in Vietnam and believed that the historical tide was in communism's favor. He spoke of the Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, Pyongyang, Peking Axis, as he called it. He aligned himself with those countries because he believed the tide was all in their direction. He had a strong feeling that we would be defeated in Vietnam and that our efforts there was a colonialist thing that he could use against us.

Now, did the steps that the United States took in Vietnam embolden the Indonesian military? I had General Westmoreland as a visitor in Papua New Guinea and he asked this question himself. I think he wanted very much to believe that we were in part responsible for what happened in Indonesia because of the stand we took in Vietnam. This could be true, but I figure that was a marginal factor at most. The Communists made it a life or death situation for the military. They had to do what they did. So I don't think the fact that we might be a valuable ally was a factor or consideration. They had to do something to protect their own lives, so to speak, and that is what they did.

Some say, on the contrary that we were so busy in trying to run the war in Vietnam that we didn't focus on Indonesia. And that was perhaps a favorable factor for the Indonesia military.

Q: You didn't have any pressure from Washington to...?

GARDNER: At that time, 1965, things were so engrossing in Vietnam that they weren't able to pick up on anything else, except from the point of view of publicizing events there. I don't think anyone wanted to put their hand into Indonesia and Green certainly was not encouraged to do so.

Q: I take it you didn't have the press descend on you?

GARDNER: No. We had some reporters, not in big numbers...but some very good ones. The New York Times sent a permanent reporter down there, Al Friendly. We had some good people there who hadn't been there before, who obviously came to record the events after October 1. We had all the principal news organizations represented there. But nothing like Vietnam.

And again, we were not allowed to travel in the countryside and neither were correspondents to a large degree. This was a legacy from the Sukarno period. We were simply not allowed as diplomats to travel much. We even were supposed to request permission to go to our constituent posts, but we didn't pay much attention to that rule. We were not able to go out into the countryside. We were very suspect at the time and the local people may very well turn you in because they believed you were an enemy and spying on something. This was the mentality then.

There was still some of that around later. When I went back to a rural area in Sumatra and was looking around...1978, I think it was...I had some local people come up to me and say, "You are an American, what are you doing here?" I had obviously strayed close to some military encampment or something. So suspicion of the United States was still around. We were very much handicapped. We couldn't move beyond the major cities without being turned in.

Q: Did you have any feel or contact with the Soviets during this period? They must have had a large mission there.

GARDNER: Yes, they were in a quandary. They realized that the Indonesian Communists were behind the October 1 event. This is why I get a little bit upset with Cornell University, which is still pushing this line that the Communists had nothing to do with those events, that it was an internal army affair. All the Communist embassies knew what had happened and they didn't try to hide it. They knew that the PKI was in this. You can say that the PKI was principally in the Chinese camp and not in the Soviet camp. That is true to some extent, but the Soviets were a big source of arms. They were the ones who had a huge aid program.

So the Soviets were in a quandary. They didn't want to try to protect the PKI because they knew it was guilty, and it was also connected to China. They may have believed like the Indonesians that China had a hand in it as well. And yet they didn't want to see the Communist Party obliterated because they had no other friends. We didn't have much contact with them but the ones we did see admitted openly that the PKI was involved in the October 1 affair.

Q: Is there a school of thought that says the PKI wasn't?

GARDNER: Well, Cornell University put that out quite early after the coup. Some of their Indonesian experts published something, and I think a lot of them are still sticking by it. Their line is very, very close to the Indonesian Communist Party line which appeared in the newspapers the day after the coup. The morning of October 1 the Communist newspapers came out with the story that it was an internal army affair although they supported the coup.

Since it had happened at 4 o'clock in the morning and the newspapers went to press about 8 o'clock, it is obvious that they knew what was coming. But that line was also taken by some Cornell people and made us at the Embassy very, very unhappy, very angry because Cornell was known as the center of Indonesian studies in the United States and there was a strong feeling among the non-communist Indonesians that maybe the United States was not aware of what happened.

This was a continuing festering point between us Indonesian experts in the Department and the Indonesian experts at Cornell University, who were looking at things from a few thousand miles away.

Q: What did you do after the coup? You were a political officer and were there for three more years.

GARDNER: We were very busy reporting on what was happening because society was coming apart at first and then was eventually put back together again by Suharto and the army. So we had a tremendous amount of reporting to do. And, of course, as we moved further and further from October 1, more and more Indonesians would speak to us. And suddenly we found those people who were completely out of things in the old days, because they had the Western training that was needed by the government, came to the forefront. So many of the friends that I first knew as poor, impoverished students, are now extremely prominent in Indonesian society. There has been a complete turn about.

What puzzled us so much was how many people took to the streets, tens of thousands of people took to the streets against the Communists. We had never seen this sort of thing, nor had Sukarno, of course. We didn't know the strength of resentment to the Communists. It was very deep and very widely spread within the society. We had no hint of it because Sukarno didn't let these hints come forward. And I think Sukarno, himself, had no hint of it because he had such control over the society and didn't let any other voices speak, that he believed that he had a monolithic society that was all behind the revolution. Instead you had a very, very strong feeling among some of the most talented people in the country against the way the country was going.

Q: What was the Communist Party of Indonesia doing to cause this resentment to cause mass uprising?

GARDNER: There were a number of things. A lot of these people had lost their job. A lot of people feared what would happen to them if the Communists took over. This did seem to prove that the Communists would use force to take over. The other factor was particularly with the Islamic sector. The Communists had started a takeover process, a people's power so to speak. They decided to take land reform into their own hands. They were moving against landowners and occupying property.

Well, Indonesia, unlike the Philippines and a good many other southeast Asian countries, has no large landowners ...very few people owned over two hectares. So what they were doing was taking over...well, first government land. In some cases land that had belonged to forestry or rubber plantations and land that belonged to small farmers. A great number of these was Muslims. A strong hatred grew up between the Islamic society and the Communists, who seemed to be robbing them of their patrimony, their heritage in land. This became so strong that there were clashes around the country.

Henry Heymann, who was our consul in Surabaya reported before the coup and about a clash between the PKI and the Moslems, I think over some government appointments. He said the clashes seemed to indicate that the Indonesians who say there may be a civil war at some stage in this country, may be right. Henry had foresight. What happened was exactly that. The Moslems turned against the Communists and killed them in great numbers. Since the Moslem leaders who existed at that time seemed to be pro-Communist, you didn't have a strong feeling of what was going in the grass roots. We couldn't go to the grass roots and they couldn't speak to us Americans without endangering their lives. So you had to do more mind reading than we were capable of.

I think it surprised them too. I think when they started out in the streets they had no feeling that there would be so many people there. They were not allowed to meet each other. There was fear of Subandrio's intelligence organization which was reporting on everybody. All the anti-Communists had been weeded out of the faculties of the universities. So there was a great deal of fear.

Q: You are pointing out one of the things that gets lost sight of and that is that here is an Embassy supposedly keeping a pulse on a country and yet it is very difficult because...if Sukarno didn't understand what was happening, nor the military...unless the Embassy is engaging in crystal ball gazing, it certainly isn't going to be as good as the normal intelligence service.

GARDNER: We did have some insights on how to read some things because they were writing between the lines. We all learned how to do this, so we knew which forces were anti-Communist. But we also saw them being taken out one by one by Sukarno, because Sukarno had all the power. Each time he fired a group or abolished their organization, then all the people in it were intimidated.

I handled Moslems so I had some sources within the Moslem student organization which was always opposing the PKI student organization at rallies. These patriotic rallies that Sukarno had sometimes seemed like a football game. First they would all start with singing and yells and slogans over and over again. Secondly, there were often two different groups. A pro-Communist group and a much, much smaller group of the Moslem university association yelling against them.

At one stage the Moslem group was threatened with abolishment. I had become friendly with one of the leaders of this organization by teaching him English in the teacher's college there before they fired me for being a possible imperialist agent. I did it free of charge, needless to say, in my free time. He came to tell me that it was very difficult for them to have any association with us because they would be abolished.

They hadn't had any anti-American demonstrations. So they mounted an anti-American demonstration at the Residence. They were very nasty to Ambassador Howard Jones. They were a little bit violent, forcing themselves into the house, etc. We didn't know who had backed this demonstration at the time, but it was my suspicion that it was this organization. He came to me at night and said that they had to do it because they were about to be abolished and had to show that they were as patriotic as anybody else. And the way to show you were patriotic was to have a demonstration against the American Embassy.

Q: So were you beginning to get to a position where the political section could begin to talk to people within the government and do the things that you normally would do...not only reporting on a situation but also explaining American policy, going after UN votes and this sort of thing?

GARDNER: Yes, slowly. We couldn't go up for UN votes because Subandrio remained as Foreign Minister for a year afterwards and that guy was obviously pro-Communist.

Q: Why did he last so long?

GARDNER: He lasted so long because Sukarno wanted him there and because the army did not want to get rid of Sukarno because of his great charisma and he was the father of the country. They didn't want to cause chaos in the country. They waited for Sukarno to draw the noose around his own neck. It took over a year for Sukarno to do this ...to show his colors, for the people to get out, for the students to show what way they wanted to go. The students began demonstrating against Sukarno in great numbers. So it was Suharto's way of avoiding a civil war basically.

So during this period Sukarno was still President. He was still in charge of the cabinet but the army would ever so often say, "This is it, we won't have that anymore." He would say, "Okay." And then he would go backward again and appoint some other people to the cabinet who were pro-Communist. He was protecting people at his palace.

So it was going back and forth like a boxing match, shadow play, if you like. We were watching it and weren't absolutely sure that the military was going to win, that Sukarno wouldn't reassert himself in some way at some time. But as things went on and on we realized that the military did have the upper hand and that Sukarno would have to give in eventually, which he did. But in the meantime you had a period of dualism in government, which meant that things were very much up in the air. Some of the military commanders in the field were still pro-Sukarno, in particular Aidit in Bandung which was one of the biggest headquarters. In central Java where you had one of the biggest populations several of the military commanders were Communists. And in east Java as well, there seemed to be some pro-communist units. So the military, itself, had several people in their own ranks they weren't certain of.

Suharto has always followed the strategy of not pushing people to the wire, but rather of building your forces so large that the other side sees them and caves in. You don't need to attack. This is the way he played. Unfortunately this allowed chaos out in the countryside and there were loads of killings by the Moslems. There had before been some killing by the PKI, some assassinations of Moslem teachers in east Java, for example, and the Moslems got even with a vengeance and started killing people like mad.

In many instances I think they were aided by the military. There is no doubt that they were given arms by the military, because the Communists had armed their people as well. One of the big Communist campaigns at that time was a fifth armed force, which would be the people. They wanted to arm all the people. Well, this meant to the army that they were going to arm the Communist Party. They knew there were arms caches throughout the country. I think they overestimated the arms caches but there were several thousand arms in the country that the Communists had shipped in under the guise of building material for the great new complex that Sukarno was building for his replacement for the UN, come April, the Congress of newly emerging forces. We had intelligence of that. We knew that was happening. And they discovered on the night of October 1 that they had distributed weapons to the Communist youth groups and labor groups at Halim. The Communist Party was the largest party in the country at that time so if they armed their whole membership there would have been a war of certain dimensions. They did not though. It surprised us that the Communists were as weak as they were...pretending to be so strong, but actually most of their people were traditionalists ...you see there were what we call the Abangan people of Java, which means they were not Moslems, and tended to be more passive, to bend with the wind and that sort of thing.

In the first bloodshed after October 1 in central and east Java, the Communists came out ahead. But as these clashes built up and the military started arming the Islamic groups it went the other way and finally evolved into true massacres of communists. None of which we witnessed. I never talked to anyone who had firsthand knowledge of these killings. But I have talked to people who said they had someone working for them in the office who disappeared. We had sources that reported a lot of people were killed but they didn't see the actual killing. Most of the killing occurred at night. They would go into a village and kill, a lot of the killings seemed to concern grudges and had nothing to do with the political situation. It was one village against another to a large degree.

In Bali there were many indications that it was large family groups against other family groups who happened to be lined up on the Communist Party on one side and the Nationalist Party on the other. There were no Moslems in Bali, it was Hindu. But the killings in Bali were just as brutal as any place else, and perhaps a bit more. In Bali it was kinship wars and some class wars too. In east Java it was quite often an Abangan village against an Islamic village. They could get back at them now. At the people who were trying to get some of their land. They would quite often kill all the men in the village. We did travel to some villages much later and found that there were no men there. That didn't mean absolutely that they were killed because they could have fled, as many did, and come back later.

We never really got a hold on how many were killed and we said over and over again that it was something that we couldn't estimate. We kept hearing all these reports and Indonesians were very likely to exaggerate. They exaggerated this kind of thing and they got built up larger than they were. Nevertheless you had a large number -- I think Marshall Green used a figure of 250,000 at some stage. He now believes it was somewhat less than that. It was very hard to tell because you didn't know what the population was to start with. So even if you had a census taken, you didn't know what the prior census was because they hadn't had any in a long time. So it is hard to judge.

All I know is that no American in the Embassy ever saw a body and I think very few ever talked to people who had. Some sources bragged that they had been in killing groups. I am not sure whether I believe them or not, quite frankly. Nobody I talked to had ever witnessed a killing. Most of the killings were in the rural areas, not in the cities. There were some at the beginning in the cities. Where the army had word about these arms cache, they would go through the highly populated little villages (Kampongs) within the city and find the arms and kill off a few people. This was done quite often at night when people would be caught at home. There was a curfew. But I never realized that was going on in the city. I never saw it. All I saw was our intelligence reports afterwards, reports that somebody else said they had done this.

Not to my knowledge did any CIA person see any killings. They definitely talked to people who said that they witnessed these killings and may have participated in them. How often you believe that, I don't know, because some people like to brag.

Q: Yes, I know, particularly with the thought that that would be something that we would like.

GARDNER: Yes, and some of these people were going to ask for support, which we didn't give. In fact we were a little put off by some of this stuff. Some of the stories were very gruesome.

Now, we were not trying to say that we were standing off...we actually wanted the anti-Communists to win obviously because even our safety was dependent on that. We knew that we were the devils as far as the Communists went. They had told us this many, many times. So obviously our sentiments were with the non-Communists. But we were repulsed by some of the tactics they took, because I don't think the people they killed were actually Communists.

I was even more repulsed -- over ten years later when I went back first as political counselor and then as DCM. The government, under pressure from the Carter administration began to release the Communists from the prisons. I attended these ceremonies. You found so many people who had

spent eleven and twelve years in prison, who could have only been 12 or 13 when they were sent there. They were usually members of youth organizations at Halim and were believed to have been implicated in the killing of the generals because they were massed where the generals were. I just can't believe this happened. I saw a young lady who spent her entire life from 12 to 22 in a prison. I don't think that person was ever a real Communist. At 12 years old you are not a Communist, you just join youth group because somebody recruits you. Because she was there with the PKI they immediately put her in jail.

There were many, many cases like that among some 60 or more thousand of PKI who were in jail and released afterwards. I was a language officer and this was of interest to us. We were trying to get their release at that time. I went to four or five ceremonies in various cities. Some obviously went in as dyed-in-the-wool Communists and came out dyed-in-the-wool Communists. But some went in innocent and came out probably as Communists, because that was who they were living with.

I often wonder what happened to that woman, the one who went in as a child and came out a woman, whether she made it on the outside. I would like to go back and find out, but you can't do that. Americans can't insert themselves in a society like that because it hurts the people you are attempting to observe.

Q: To mix in. This, of course, is one of the great, as you mention, the cultural things that our natural interests and concerns can have very detrimental affects.

GARDNER: Yes, it can because we were people who had a certain image in that country and any situation we walked into to see what was going on would change by our presence. So therefore what we saw going on would not be what was really going on. So the best you can do is try to get second accounts from people who have been in these situations and can talk to you about them without inserting yourself directly into it.

We were lucky in a later period because the anti-Communist people, obviously a lot of them were students who had been fired and were out of jobs and would visit us after dark, became sort of heroes of the anti-Sukarno movement. And also because they were so intelligent and had so much gumption to put themselves on the wrong side -- the side against the wind at that time.

One student came to me, he had been the one who had signed the Cultural Manifesto. He was at graduate level. He couldn't get a job, couldn't get into the university, couldn't do anything because he signed the Manifesto. He got a scholarship to Belgium and came to me to ask me to loan him \$50 so that he could buy a suit because it would be winter in Belgium. I was very pleased that he was getting out of the country because I recognized him as a very, very intelligent and modest young man. I gave him the \$50 and thought that I probably would never see him again. He wouldn't dare to come back to Indonesia.

I had another friend who was also fired from his job. He was teaching agriculture. He would come over in the night. I had wondered what had happened to him because he couldn't get out of the country.

Another young man who had been an AFS (American Field Service) student in Buffalo, I met in Sulawesi. He was my guide when I visited there. That was during the Sukarno period. He told me afterwards that he didn't realize he was also supposed to spy on me while he was showing me around. I said that I knew he was. He said they asked him for a full report of who I saw and what I said. He showed up later and he wanted me to help him. He was very, very poor. The family that he had stayed with in the United States had sent him a check but he would be immediately branded if he tried to cash an American check in Indonesia. He asked me if I would mind receiving the check and giving him the rupiah. I did and I think they sent his letter to me through the APO. I cashed the check and gave him \$10 in Indonesian currency, which was quite a lot in those days. As I said I was paying \$20 for a chauffeur for a month. A lot of students lived off of \$10 a month. Since there were no books anywhere, he got a hold of a mimeograph machine and mimeographed books which he sold. That was how he worked his way through college. Later on he went back to Buffalo and got his Masters.

After this all turned around, and I came back, ten years later, I found these people still there. The little guy who had gone to Belgium was back and had become the editor of their leading magazine. He used to come at night and asked to look at Time magazine and their magazine was designed after Time magazine, Tempo. He is now the editor-in-chief and a luminary in the country. One of the top writers.

The agricultural guy had become one of the principal poets of the anti-Sukarno movement. He got a lot of publicity for his poetry and became head of the Fine Arts Institute and gave up the agriculture. He is now with Shell Oil.

The other little guy who went to Buffalo has remained a good friend all these years. He was then director of Union Carbide Company there and is now president of two companies and the first Indonesian manager to make over a billion rupiah a year, which is our currency is \$880,000 a year, from one of his jobs. He has another job which means he is making over a million dollars a year. So he is the highest paid non-Chinese Indonesian businessman in Indonesia.

So all of these young people who seemed to have no hope whatsoever and who I grieved over -- what was going to happen to these people -- turned out well.

The student who came and told me about the "patriotic" demonstration of his Moslem organization mounted at the Embassy residence -- when I came back I found him running an English language course on television.

Q: Why don't we stop here before you leave Indonesia and we will pick it up another time.

EDWARD E. MASTERS
Political Counselor
Jakarta (1964-1968)

Country Director, Indonesian Affairs

Washington, DC (1968-1970)

**Regional Affairs, East Asia and the Pacific
Washington, DC (1970-1971)**

**Ambassador
Indonesia (1977-1981)**

Ambassador Edward E. Masters was born in Ohio in 1924. He graduated from George Washington University in 1948 and from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1949. He served in the U.S. Army for three years and then joined the Foreign Service in 1950. In addition to serving as ambassador to Indonesia, he served in Germany, Pakistan, India, Thailand, and Bangladesh. Ambassador Masters was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 14, 1989.

Q: Then you went to the National War College in 1964, for a while. Then you went to Jakarta as Political Counselor. You were there from 1964 to 1968, which couldn't have been a more exciting time. I wonder if you could describe first what the situation was when you arrived there? This is 1964.

MASTERS: Well, I arrived on September 30, 1964, just exactly one year before things blew up on 30 September '65, with the communist coup attempt. And of course, as was well-known, Indonesia by then had moved very close to the Asia communist group; Sukarno had aligned himself with what he called the Jakarta, Peking, P'yongyang, Phnom Penh axis.

He was in with a group of Asian Communist -- or crypto-communist countries. The country itself was an economic basket case. Sukarno -- although he had done a lot for Indonesia, in giving it a sense of identity, and getting its independence -- had no interest, and no ability in the economic sector. He was more interested in playing a grand political role.

And the result was that the country was bankrupt, the inflation was running 600-700 percent per year. The infrastructure was in a shambles. The rolling stock, the highways, the shipping fleet -- everything was virtually inoperable. Food production was down. There was, certainly, starvation, in some parts of the country. So this is the situation that we faced.

Meanwhile, it was interesting, it was fascinating. But it was depressing to see what was happening to this potentially very rich country. And meanwhile, step by step, you could see the Communists increasing their position; neutralizing their opponents, certainly with Sukarno's blessing, if not his outright direction.

We'll probably come back into that, but let me talk a minute about the embassy that I found on September 30, coming in as a person with a little background on Indonesia, going back to this time when I had run that little branch in INR. But I was not a language officer at that point; I had not spent a lot of time studying Indonesia. I came in as the new guy on the block -- as Political Counselor -- to find the embassy was split wide open.

Howard Jones, the ambassador -- a very fine person -- felt that Sukarno was basically a decent person; he was misguided, had poor advisors around him -- he had malicious advisors. But basically his instincts were good, and he would come out all right. Most of the embassy totally disagreed with that. They felt that the problem was not the advisors, the problem was Sukarno himself, who was -- for whatever reason -- moving Indonesia deliberately, step by step, into the communist bloc.

Now, there were splits within that group, also. There was one group that felt that Sukarno was a dedicated Communist -- a card-carrying member; had been for years, and that this was all a plan that was unfolding according to a grand design that he had.

Q: Somewhat a la Castro, in a way?

MASTERS: Right, exactly. There were others -- and I put myself, generally, in this group -- who didn't think the guy really had a strong ideological bent, but he was an opportunist. That he was attracted by certain areas -- certain aspects of communism. He was turned off by a lot of what he saw in the West, except our Hollywood movie stars. And that without a firm ideological commitment to communism, he was nonetheless, moving the country into a communist-type system.

So anyhow, we had these gradations of how deeply -- let's say how thoroughly -- Sukarno was directing this move toward the Communists, on the one side; and on the other, we had Howard Jones, who was pretty much alone, feeling that it wasn't really him at all -- it was these bad guys around him.

Q: Well, how did this play out? I mean, you were sending reports in, you were dealing with the officers there, you were the key person for reporting on the situation. And here you had an ambassador who was -- in his own way -- a very strong personality. Yet, the embassy opinion was very definitely on the other side. And you were the person to handle this! How did you work it out?

MASTERS: Yes, I was kind of in the middle, and it's interesting the way it worked out. Howard and I had a good relationship. (I didn't call him Howard then, obviously; I did later on.) He accepted the fact that there was another point of view. He didn't share it, but he agreed, intellectually, that there was a case to be made on that other side. He and I spent a lot of time talking about this. And the way -- we never quite laid it out on the table this way -- but the way it worked was that Howard would control what went into the telegrams; and he let me control what went into the airgrams.

Q: Ah! You might explain what the airgrams are, for somebody who doesn't know.

MASTERS: Well, an airgram is a longer study -- maybe anywhere from a couple of pages, to 20 or 30, depending on the subject matter -- which explores an issue in greater depth, and which -- at least at that point -- was sent to Washington by pouch, rather than by telegram.

And, of course, what Howard knew was that the top levels of the State Department don't read airgrams; the top levels of the State Department read telegrams, or summaries of telegrams. So our

airgrams, which we felt were reporting the situation as it really was, were going to -- let's call it the working level of State, and other agencies -- who probably felt the same way already. But the telegrams went to the top policy level, and in the telegrams Howard would control, certainly, what was said about Sukarno.

Q: You know, in other interviews -- sometimes the reporting from a particular post -- it was well-known what the divergence is, and all -- and if there seems to be a problem, then that is taken into account by the Indonesian desk, and by the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Did you find that maybe they were plucking from the airgrams more than they would in the normal course?

MASTERS: Yes. Certainly the Indonesian desk people, like Dave Cuthell, and Frank Underhill, felt exactly as we did -- that Sukarno was the problem. And I'm sure that in the briefing papers they prepared, for higher levels of the Department, they used the information in our airgrams.

Q: Nothing is really secret as far as where there's a divergence of opinion, and these things percolate up to the decision-making level. Well, now you're on the spot there. Was there anything we could do, except sit and look? Again, I want to keep this unclassified, but was the CIA trying to do something? The military? I mean, were we trying to do something, or was it sort of standing on the train and watching it go towards the abyss?

MASTERS: There were some small things that were tried, which -- I guess I was fairly enthusiastic about them at the time, but in retrospect, I think were almost totally ineffective; to try to keep another viewpoint alive among the Indonesians, to show them that there were people that cared for them. And also, to give some greater strength to the domestic groups that weren't moving towards the Communists. But I did not feel that they were effective, really.

This gets, again, back to the split in the embassy. I think it gets into the question of how we could affect the situation. Of course, one way we could affect it -- and maybe did -- was just by being there. Again, there was one group in the embassy that felt that it was undignified for a major power -- or any country -- to take the kind of punishment that we were taking -- humiliation.

Q: I can recall that feeling percolating through the rest of the Foreign Service.

MASTERS: Oh yes.

Q: Why is Howard Jones putting up with this crap? I mean, although this was just as a serving Foreign Service Officer -- I think I was in Yugoslavia at the time -- I remember having this feeling.

MASTERS: Yes. Well, our libraries were smashed up repeatedly; our people were terrorized, in effect -- locked in their offices. Books were burned. The embassy was smashed up. Programs, one by one, were discontinued -- to the extent that we were not able to operate effectively in most areas. And there were some people, including within the embassy, who said, "We shouldn't take this crap. We should get out of here. We should preserve our dignity. We're looking bad, not only to the responsible -- to the non-communist Indonesians -- but to other countries."

But I'm convinced that a majority in the embassy did not feel that way. Howard very strongly didn't feel that way. I didn't. Even Frank Galbraith -- the DCM, who was one of the stronger people in the negative view towards Sukarno. We all felt we should stay; that we should preserve a position there; that we should not desert the people in Indonesia whom we would regard as our friends, or people who ideologically would be more in line with our thinking. That if we pulled out that would be the last straw, and they would give up hope. And, as I say, I think we all -- well, I think a majority in the embassy shared that view.

But most of us who shared that view felt that our presence should be far smaller than it was. Howard's view, again, was if you start to dismantle the organization, it may go all the way -- you can't control it. Besides, if he was right, and if Sukarno was basically a good guy, and you could get rid of the evil advisors around him, maybe things would open up. Howard always saw that day coming, when we could have a big AID program again, when we could move in with a stabilization program, and the climate would be right for it. Most of us didn't think that was going to happen, and we felt that meanwhile, we had an awful lot of people in the country that were at risk, and that we should get them out.

Q: I take it though that our -- we were talking about an awful lot of people -- it was mainly AID programs, and things of this nature?

MASTERS: Well, that was the largest group. AID had a huge bureaucracy there. They had their own building -- a big building on the most conspicuous street in town. But there also was a significant military aid group. USIS was quite large. They had several regional libraries spotted around the country, which were also always targeted by the Communists.

And we even had a small Peace Corps group, which made no sense at all to us. That was something that was put in at the personal request of Robert Kennedy, and there were something like 16 or 18 spread around the country. They were sports coaches. I guess this was considered to be politically acceptable. A great group; did a fantastic job, under very a difficult situation.

I remember there was one of them -- I think it was a basketball coach -- who was in Semarang, in Central Java. He was routed out of bed one night -- in the middle of the night -- marched off to police headquarters, interrogated the rest of the night, and then the following day he was paraded through the streets of town, with a sign around his neck saying, "I'm a CIA agent." And the only thing that they used against him was the fact that he had a portable radio. And it wasn't even a two-way radio, it was just to listen to the local radio stations. But they would take something like that, and parlay it into a big political incident.

Q: Yes.

MASTERS: So we felt that our libraries, and Peace Corps, and a lot of these AID people were at risk, and should be removed from the country.

Q: Well, now let's talk about how the situation played itself out. Howard Jones left in '65, didn't he?

MASTERS: Howard left in -- it must have been April. What happened that led up to that . . . Well, let me go back a minute. I don't want to give you more detail than you want, but I . . .

Q: I'd rather have more, rather than less.

MASTERS: Howard came into Indonesia after the '58 fiasco, when we were on the wrong side of an internal revolution, and we lost. It was known that we were involved, and in fact -- as I mentioned earlier -- one of our pilots was imprisoned. Howard came in and he did, I think, a super job of cleaning up that situation; of reestablishing as much credibility as we could reestablish with a guy like Sukarno. He had some major coups. One was helping work out a solution to the West Irian problem, which the Dutch had held onto after they turned over sovereignty in '49.

Washington's view was that it was great to have a person like Howard there, because he had access; he could get in to see Sukarno -- he could see people. And it's true -- he could. What Washington refused to recognize -- although various of us pointed it out to them orally -- was that although Howard had access, by '63 he ceased to have influence. He could get in to see Sukarno. In fact, after I arrived there in '64, I used to go with him sometimes. But he would not have any influence, really, on what was happening. I think he should have been pulled out after the '62 settlement on West Irian.

Q: You mention there that people would ask you 'orally.' I view these transcripts as being something that often researchers who are not familiar with the State Department -- how it operates -- will look at.

And there often is a sort of substrata of communication. People come out, they talk -- to sound the waters; and particularly if you have what amounts to a very controversial embassy. I mean, it was no secret throughout the entire Foreign Service; we knew that there was a major division within the embassy. And you must have had desk officers, assistant secretaries -- others, coming out and saying, "What's going on?" and talking about this, didn't you?

MASTERS: Yes, we had visitors from time to time, and various of us, from time to time, were back in Washington. And we would talk even more frankly than we would in the air-grams, about what we thought was happening, and what we thought the U.S. ought to be doing about it.

For whatever reason -- I've never [been] quite sure what the instigation of it was -- in the spring of '65 -- maybe because we were reporting at that point that we thought Americans' lives were in danger -- Ellsworth Bunker was sent out as, sort of, a last-ditch effort, to see if we could possibly work with Sukarno. A great fellow; [he] had prestige with Indonesia, because he was the one who helped work out the solution to Irian Jaya, in '62.

So Ellsworth came flying in, in a big U.S. Air Force plane. I tell you, it was a real shot in the arm for us, who were really being beaten down by that time, with these constant demonstrations and attacks. And he came in, and he was taken to see Sukarno. He talked with everybody. He talked with various of us individually. And, unfortunately, he didn't leave quite as grandly; he left in a little military jet, out of Saigon, I guess it was. I felt that was a bad mistake; that they should have taken him out in style, also.

But anyhow, he went back and it was shortly thereafter that things started happening, which we thought should happen; that is, the reduction of the American establishment, and the closing of USIS, and other programs. The first was the withdrawal of the Peace Corps. So this process started after the Bunker mission. And then not too long after that Howard Jones left, also. I think it was April that he left.

Q: Did the Indonesians -- Sukarno, anybody -- react to any of these closures? Obviously we were drawing in our horns. I mean, (inaudible) with pleasure to see us pull out? Or apprehension?

MASTERS: I think almost everybody welcomed the reduction, even our friends, who felt that these people were at risk, and that they could not operate effectively, and there was little sense in having them sitting around there.

I'm sure that Sukarno and the Communists greeted it with considerable enthusiasm. I think our friends greeted it with relief; just that we were getting out of the way. So that if there was a blow-up -- nobody was sure how this damn thing was going to play out -- but if there was a military upheaval, that at least they wouldn't have to worry about all these damned Americans.

Q: Often when there is a problem, our feeling is, "For god's sake, let's clear the decks." Because otherwise, you run into what we now suffer from so much, and that's the hostage situation; which means your policy options are badly limited. You have to get people out of there.

MASTERS: Yes, yes. Well, we went very quickly from a large diplomatic mission -- of 400 or 500 people, including all the AID, and military groups, and USIS, and so forth -- to, I think it was 35 we ended up with; which was most of the political section. And incidentally, I should say -- and I want to say -- that political section was a tremendous group of people. I think it was probably the best political section ever put together in the Foreign Service.

Q: Would you mention some of the people who were in that?

MASTERS: Oh yes, it was a terrific group. We had Bob Martens, who was an expert on communism, and had served in the Soviet Union. He was the one who looked at each devious statement, and move by the Communists; and was able to see how it fit into the pattern.

We had Bob Rich, who was a young language officer, who became particularly knowledgeable on the Moslem elements in Indonesia, and some of the domestic political groups.

Dick Howland. Bob Rich, incidentally, is now our ambassador in Belize. Dick Howland, who is now our ambassador in Suriname, was young -- I think it was about his second post. [An] Indonesian language officer; very bright, good analyst, good writer.

Paul Gardner, who was also an Indonesian language officer. One of the best drafting officers in the Foreign Service, who did a lot of the writing of the political section; some of the more thoughtful pieces, he did. And he was able to put things in broader context. He went on to become ambassador to Papua New Guinea.

Then we had Mary Vance Trent, who had been in Indonesia before, and who was back for her second tour; she had picked up Indonesian in the course of that, and had a deep understanding of the country. Particularly close to the women, and some of the women's groups. And this is important, because they're called -- in Indonesia -- iron butterflies. Certainly, the women in Indonesia are tremendously powerful -- influential. And Mary Vance helped us keep in touch with them, and also, she worked on other political issues as well.

Q: How did you all view the coming of the new ambassador, Marshall Green?

MASTERS: From what we had heard, we viewed it with great enthusiasm. Marshall was known as a no-nonsense kind of a guy, and someone who would -- who we thought would share our view; but of course, by then, almost everybody did. By then we were down to a small embassy. There must have been about a two-months hiatus there. Anyhow, there was a considerable time after Jones left. Frank Galbraith was chargé; I was acting DCM. Marshall came in, then, in July. And we felt that we would have a leader, at that point, who understood. I hate to use that term, because that's saying that Howard did not understand it, but I don't think, frankly, he did.

Q: No.

MASTERS: I don't think he knew what was happening -- as good a person as he was. We felt we'd have somebody who really understood what was happening, and we could work with him to see if there was any way we could influence the situation, or at least, that we could adopt policies to ensure that we came out of it with minimal losses.

Q: When he arrived what happened? I mean, let's talk about the operation of the embassy, recommendations, policies, (inaudible). Did you find that this expectation was, in truth, what you expected?

MASTERS: Yes, absolutely -- very much so. We had the kind of leadership that we had been looking for -- to lead us in the right direction. Marshall is a great guy. I don't know whether you have interviewed him or not.

Q: I have several times. Bob Martens did an interview on Indonesia, about this time, for this series.

MASTERS: That would be a good combination, with Bob interviewing Marshall. But no, Marshall did exactly the right thing. Of course, he had a tough job. From the very beginning the Sukarnoists, and Communists were out to discredit him, and undermine him in any way they could. There were demonstrations -- as you know. The famous "Green go home" sign, which he -- and it's actually true, comments on. Somebody wrote at the bottom of one of these "Green go home" signs, "And take me with you." (Laughs)

But the key was we had this good group left in the embassy. And we had Marshall as a leader, and I think, from there on we operated very effectively, and we operated as a unit. There were -- it was, a kind of, an inner core in the embassy -- the key group. There was, of course, Marshall as the head of it; and then the DCM; me, the political counselor; the station chief; and the military attaché. The

five of us coordinated closely, and managed things from there on.

Q: Well, how did the situation move? I mean, we were moving up towards the very critical time -- as far as it was seen from the embassy?

MASTERS: Yes, the tensions were growing very rapidly. The army, of course, was the only organized anti-Communist element. It was big enough, and effective enough to stand up to the Communists, but it was not standing up to them -- because of its leadership, largely; and the reluctance of Indonesians to stand up to Sukarno, who had the great charisma -- as the father of the country.

Meanwhile, the Communists -- obviously with Sukarno's blessing, whether with his actual manipulation or not we don't know, and we'll never know, I guess . . .

But anyhow, the Communists were moving step by step to neutralize the army. The latest move, at that point, was the arming of workers and peasants. The Communists' scheme -- and then it was adopted by Sukarno, as government policy -- was to set up a kind of people's militia, all over the country; workers and peasants who would be given weapons, and would be armed to defend themselves against foreign foes, and what have you. And, of course, this was tied into the confrontation against Malaysia, and the external threat that Sukarno manipulated to distract people.

The game plan, obviously, was to arm the people -- a lot of them -- under Communist auspices. The Communists would be sure the weapons went to what they regarded as the right people, and this would be another way of neutralizing the armed forces.

Q: Well, then were we reporting this? I mean, we saw this situation, and how it was developing?

MASTERS: Oh yes, this was all reported in detail, and it was obvious that the frictions were growing -- the tensions were growing. We would get reports, frequently, that in some village or other the Communists had killed the local Moslem leader. At the grass roots level, the political contest was, kind of, between the Communists and the political Moslems. Or we would get reports that in some other village the Moslems had killed the Communist leader. They knew who each other was.

Then there was the move toward arming the workers and the peasants. The tensions were growing very rapidly. There was always the possibility -- and I'm sure we reported this; I don't remember exactly what we said, but I'm sure that we reported the possibility that something could explode. But nobody predicted what happened.

Q: Did we have any ties to the military at that point?

MASTERS: Oh yes, we had ties to the military. We used to see them. We were still providing some limited military training which incidentally -- I certainly felt that military training program was one of the best investments we had made. And we had, up until very late in the game, a very small military group there, working on a communications project, helping the Indonesians to build

a communications system so that the military could communicate with outlying units. So we still had our contacts with the military, but we weren't trying to get the military to take some action against the Communists.

We also had a lot of other contacts. Just as an example -- and this is something that carried over when I went back for my second tour -- I developed very good contacts with the economic technocrats, the so-called Berkeley-Mafia Team; a fantastic group of people. And again, I think one of the best investments we ever made.

Actually, the training was done by the Ford Foundation. But this group was trained to be the economics faculty at the University of Indonesia. They were trained in interrelated disciplines of economics: trade, finance, micro, macro, theory, and so forth. [They] came back to Indonesia with their Ph.D.s, at the time when the worst thing you could have was an American college degree. And of course, they immediately became targets of the Communists -- claims they were CIA agents, and so forth. There were demonstrations against them.

I got to know them, and in fact, we used to show American movies in our house; we could bring them in through the pouch, although American films were banned for commercial showing. Sukarno brought them in and showed them in the palace. We brought them in and showed them in our homes. I used to invite the technocrats, and some other Indonesian friends in from time to time, for sort of -- as close as you could get in Indonesia to an American hamburger, and a movie. And they liked it. And they still talk about it, in fact -- those movies they used to see in '64 or '65, at that time. So I developed good contacts, also, with the technocrats.

Q: Let's move to -- when was the coup? October of '65?

MASTERS: Well, it was -- yes, it actually happened in the early morning hours of October 1st; it's called the 30 September affair, but it was early . . .

Q: What were you doing in the political section during that time?

MASTERS: Well, we were fighting off the demonstrators, and again, continuing with our analysis of what was going on. We had very frequent demonstrations at that time. And usually, when we had a demonstration it would be the political section that would receive a delegation from them, listen to their complaints. And it would always be -- sort of, fill in the blank. The Indonesian people are aroused by what you are doing in Dominican Republic, Congo, Vietnam, etc., etc. -- areas that the Indonesian people didn't really have any interest in, or knowledge of. These were used as the excuses for demonstrations.

We were just continuing to analyze how -- where this situation was going, and how it might end. But as I say, we did not predict the way it ended, and we were totally taken by surprise by it. I remember on the morning of October 1st, as usual, I had a driver and a little Ford Falcon. I was driving down to the embassy. And the route that we usually took -- I only lived about a mile from the embassy -- the route we usually took went past the home of General Nasution, who was the Minister of Defense at that time. He's called the Indonesian Hamlet. A person who had high respect -- an honest, honorable, good person, but one who had never stood up to Sukarno.

Well, we went down this street, and it was blocked off. I thought, "Well, strange, but maybe there's going to be a wedding or some festival, or something." So we detoured around. [We] saw a lot of tanks out on the street, and other activity, but nobody bothered me. So we went into the embassy.

Other people came in and they also had noticed strange things in their areas -- in different residential areas: roads blocked, tanks. One guy had heard shooting in the middle of the night -- it was one of the assistant military attachés, whose house backed up to one of the generals, who actually was killed.

And it was only piecemeal -- as the morning progressed -- that we started to get a glimmer that something serious had happened. And then, of course, the announcements started to come on the radio: that a group, led by Colonel Untung had seized power. He was in Sukarno's palace guard.

But it was some time before we really knew what had happened. In fact, one of the big uncertainties for several days was what had happened to Sukarno -- was he alive or dead? And we didn't know for sure; we got different stories.

We were only sure later. We were then living in the embassy. There was a curfew, and for that reason -- but also because we wanted to stay near the communications equipment -- we were sleeping in the embassy. And we had been listening to the Indonesian radio. And for some reason -- we were talking, or maybe playing bridge, which we sometimes did late at night -- we didn't turn the radio off after the station signed off for the day. And then it came back on again. The local announcer in Jakarta, came on saying, "Stand by for an important announcement." He was broadcasting to the regional stations. And this kept going on; "Stand by for an important announcement."

Eventually came the important announcement, and it was Sukarno. A very different sounding voice; a very subdued voice, but no question it was Sukarno. And he was broadcasting a message to the outlying stations, which was being recorded, which was to be broadcast at -- whatever -- seven o'clock or something the following morning. This was the first we were sure that he was still alive.

We also had great uncertainty over who this guy Suharto was, who was -- we were told -- the surviving senior general, and was the person who was pulling together the fragments of the demoralized military establishment. In fact, at one point -- Suharto is a fairly common name -- and at one point we identified the wrong one. It was another Suharto -- not the Suharto. So we finally focused on which one it was, but we didn't know much about him.

He was one of the few top leaders that had not attended a training course in the United States. He, apparently, had once visited the U.S. as part of a larger delegation, but had not gone to school here. So we didn't have a file on him. But eventually this worked out, and we found out who he was.

Q: Well, moving somewhat on, you left Jakarta in 1968, and then moved on to Indonesian affairs back in Washington. But how did you evaluate this by the time you left Indonesia? How did you evaluate Suharto and what he had done?

MASTERS: Pretty favorably. We felt -- I felt, certainly, that he had done an excellent job of bringing about a -- I won't say peaceful, because a lot of people were killed in the process -- but bringing about an effective transfer of power.

There were a lot of complaints that it took a long time, and it did. You know the story, that he did it in a Javanese way, without direct confrontation. He very adroitly undercut the bases of Sukarno's support, until eventually -- after a year or a year and a half -- Sukarno sort of fell of his own weight.

Had he moved more directly, and more quickly, there could have been a bloody civil war in Indonesia, that would have really set the country back. But as it was, that didn't happen. Suharto got power into his own hands gradually, effectively, and then put the country on, I think, a very effective course for a responsible world role.

[He] ended the confrontation with Malaysia, went back into the U.N. As you know, they had left the United Nations. They are still the only nation ever to walk out of the U.N. [He] started the process of economic development; started opening up to foreign investment; and adopted, generally, what we regarded as pragmatic, moderate policies.

Q: How did we feel about the -- at least the estimates at the time -- that there was tremendous slaughter of both Chinese and Communists after (inaudible)? (Inaudible) feel that this was part of his policy, or this just sort of happened? Or was there really as bad a slaughter as thought at the time?

MASTERS: Well, it wasn't as bad as a lot of people thought. I remember there was -- I think it was Topping, in the New York Times, who came out and spent some time in the bar of the Hotel Indonesia -- (you couldn't travel them) who wrote that a million people had been killed. And other journalists who spent most of their time in the bar in the Hotel Indonesia, wrote about rivers choked with bodies, and so forth. Well, those of us in the embassy never saw any rivers choked with bodies. In fact, I never saw a body. Now, we didn't travel in the countryside right away. But fairly quickly on, we started to get out, and we didn't see the kind of carnage that was reported.

That's a long way of saying I don't know how many people were killed. It certainly wasn't a million; it wasn't 500,000. I would be comfortable with a figure of 100,000. At one point, in the embassy -- although I think it was probably not accurate -- we seized on the figure of 350,000, and we used that for a while. But I think as time went on, and as we did get out and did more traveling, we decided that it was less than that. But a lot of people were killed.

Some Chinese were killed. Old scores were settled. The Communist Party, which had been a large apparatus, was virtually wiped out. Because as I said before, the tensions were there between the Moslems and the military on one hand, and the Communists. They knew who the Communists were. And there was very strong reaction against the killing, and the mutilation of the generals. And of course, that gave a signal -- which they hadn't had before -- to go get the local Communists; they did, and they did it very effectively.

Q: You came back to the United States in 1968, and you were the Country Director for Indonesian

affairs, until 1970. And then you were with Regional Affairs for East Asia and the Pacific, till '71.

This is right in the middle of our involvement in Vietnam, and where did Indonesia play in this, in our policy towards the area?

MASTERS: Well, there certainly was interest in Indonesia. I'm not sure -- well, I was going to say not really because of Vietnam, although there was. I know there were people who felt in the longer run Indonesia might be more important to us than Vietnam was; because of the tremendous size of the country, and the resources, and its international influence.

But when I think about Indonesia at that time, I don't think about it in relation to Vietnam. I think more in terms -- maybe it was partly because of that -- but our effort then was to help the Suharto government; to work with them in ways that they wanted our support. Thank god we didn't get in too deeply; we didn't get too far out in front. We didn't smother them with aid and attention, which might well have put the Suharto government in a difficult position. We let them take the initiative, and we responded. We moved in with economic aid to strengthen the country.

I suppose, in a sense, Vietnam had a role, because whether -- we didn't see ourselves losing in Vietnam at that point -- but however Vietnam came out, there was concern that if we had lost, Indonesia was even more important as a major country in Southeast Asia. And even if the Communists were defeated in Vietnam, that Indonesia was equally important.

There was concern -- but this was largely under Sukarno -- that the Communists could more or less leapfrog Mainland Southeast Asia, into Indonesia -- and put Malaysia, Thailand, South Vietnam for that matter, in a nutcracker.

Q: Was there a feeling, when you were back in Washington -- with direction from Marshall Green in Indonesia, and also from those involved -- to resist any pressure to put too much aid . . .

MASTERS: Absolutely.

Q: Was there a problem?

MASTERS: Yes, there was a problem. And in fact, rather than to try to energize the bureaucracy, we had to hold them back. There was great tendency by AID, by the military, to want to move in with too much; and with inappropriate types of aid.

Q: Could you elucidate?

MASTERS: Inappropriate refers largely to military aid. We did not feel, and neither did Suharto -- these were the messages that we got back through the intermediaries that we used to communicate with him -- did not feel that we should move in with a lot of weaponry. So our policy was to beef up training, and to provide Indonesia with non-lethal types of weapons.

Now, we had a lot of arguments over fine points: is a personnel carrier non-lethal or not? It can carry guys who are carrying guns. But on the other hand, a personnel carrier itself is kind of

neutral. We got into those kinds of arguments. I think we did give them the personnel carriers -- that was one big argument that we had. Then we got into pistols for police; another big argument. Tear gas was a huge argument.

But we pretty well limited ourselves to -- let's say to avoiding heavy weaponry.

Q: This was a very definite attempt -- particularly by those on the ground in Indonesia, in our embassy -- backed by the desk, and all -- to say, "Look, we know what we're doing. Don't send too much in. We want to fine tune this."

MASTERS: That's exactly right.

Q: Which is sort of unusual, isn't it? I mean, in the way our policies . . .

MASTERS: I think it is very unusual. But we had -- with Marshall and me back in the East Asia Bureau, and a like-minded group in Jakarta, including Frank Galbraith at one point there, when he was ambassador -- there was a total identity of view. And we had all been through this Sukarno thing. We'd been through the 30 September upheaval. We all felt that we had misplayed things before -- with the big AID mission, the big military group, and so forth. So we were determined not to reinvent the wheel.

It was probably remarkable -- probably an unusual degree of unanimity of views between the embassy and the bureau. We didn't want wastage; we knew that if we sent in a lot of stuff, inevitably a lot of it would be wasted. Then we would have problems: the Congress would come in, we would have investigations, and the whole program would be endangered. But more importantly, we didn't want to overburden this very delicate government that Suharto had put together, with a big American presence, and a lot of American programs.

Q: What were American interests in Indonesia in that period?

MASTERS: Well, they were considerably different, and more extensive than they had been when I was there in the '60s. By then we had heavy U.S. investment in Indonesia; largely in the oil business, but not exclusively. You're never quite sure how to measure those investments, because in Indonesia you go in on a partnership arrangement, rather than an actual equity. But I think we used to figure that the total investment there was in the neighborhood of five billion dollars. Trade was fairly extensive. Indonesia was playing a responsible role in the international community, and the U.N. -- in the non-aligned group, and even in the Islamic group. They're very moderate, very responsible.

A big country, of course; I guess at that time, 145,000,000 people or so -- maybe 150,000,000 then. So we had the interests there, of a large country, influential internationally, with substantial U.S. trade and investment.

Q: Did you have any instructions from the Department, or from the Secretary, or the President? Or did everybody pretty well assume that you knew what you were about?

MASTERS: I'm sure I had instructions, but much as I could recall they were kind of, "Go out there and keep things going the way they're going, because they're going pretty well." We didn't have any major problems with Indonesia. They aren't an ally; and in fact, fortunately, we don't want them as an ally. That would have been a disaster.

Q: You're saying this because -- why wouldn't we want them as an ally?

MASTERS: Well, for them to be an ally would have triggered all kinds of reactions among Indonesians, that would have made it not work. They would have then blamed us for all their problems, and it would have been, I think, a mistake for U.S. foreign policy.

But they were a responsible, non-aligned country. I used to say, privately, they were non-aligned on our side. Because, basically, we and Indonesia saw things pretty much the same, with some degrees of difference here and there. But we didn't have fundamental disagreements with Indonesia.

Q: I would imagine that the one problem you would have had with Indonesia -- you went out there during the Carter years. And human rights was a major thrust of our policy, and there were problems there. I mean, you had Timor, particularly; there had been a rebellion in Timor, hadn't there? And there was claims of starvation, and of military oppression, and things of this nature.

MASTERS: Yes. Human rights were the main problem, I guess, that we had. And then a couple of other things that I'll mention later, that sort of grew out of that. The first human rights problem was that Indonesia still had, salted away on an island some 80,000 Communists, or suspected Communists, from the '65 coup attempt. They were still out there, isolated and under detention.

And the human rights groups, and the U.S. government -- and I, myself -- did not think this was the thing to do. The people should either -- after all, we were then more than ten years after the event. And the people should either have been tried and sentenced, or let go.

So I worked on the Indonesians on this. I wasn't the only one; there were other ambassadors that felt equally strongly: the Dutch, the British, the Australian. I guess we were, kind of, the hard-core working to get these people sprung.

The problem in doing it was that Washington handled it very publicly. We then had an assistant secretary for human rights, and so forth.

Q: You're speaking about Pat Derian, who caused a great deal of pain, at least within the professional Foreign Service; because of this overriding concern for one aspect of our policy. And often really centered on making a good public relations record, at least that's the way it was seen.

MASTERS: Well, yes, I think, probably that's true; although, I think Pat achieved a good many things that needed to be done. But maybe [she] went about it in the wrong way. Based on her own experience -- she had been active in the human rights -- civil rights struggle in this country, in the south, where obviously you wanted publicity. That was a part of it; you did things that would get you publicity. When you are dealing with a foreign government, quite often publicity from another

country is counterproductive. And that's a point that I guess we in the professional service were never able to get across, or there were overriding reasons why they went public.

Anyhow, the publicity created a problem for me, because here it was public pressure from a big country. But I agreed with the objective, and we did over time -- we got all those people released. They came out in batches.

Q: But you feel that it was the approach of the international community that brought about the release?

MASTERS: Absolutely! Without that they'd probably still be there. The Indonesians just didn't want anything to do with this; it was a problem -- the Indonesian military felt that this was a group -- or these were associated with the group that had killed the generals, and preferred to leave them there. And it was only through this pressure that they were released. A few were tried -- very few. And the problem was settled.

East Timor then became the big human rights problem. East Timor, of course, had been split -- in the colonial days -- between the Dutch and the Portuguese. Each had half of this dumpy little island; a desolate place -- barren, arid -- but good for growing coffee up in the highlands. So it had some economic value.

Well, the Dutch half, of course, went to Indonesia in '49, when the Dutch left. The Portuguese -- because of internal upheavals in Portugal -- only gave up their half in '75. They didn't really give it, they walked away from it, leaving a civil war, in East Timor, between a group called Fretilin which was a Marxist group -- which had been given the weapons of the Portuguese military when they left -- and a non-communist group, and an Indonesian-supported group. There were three groups that were fighting there, but the Fretilin were the strongest, and they were by far the best armed.

And it was in this kind of a situation that Indonesia sent troops in, in -- what was it, December of '75? -- roughly there, anyhow; faced with this civil war, and very concerned because of their own experience with the Communists; very concerned with the communist influence in this little enclave, right in the middle of their archipelago. They felt it was a situation they couldn't tolerate. They moved in, and they took it over, in effect. Fretilin fled up into the mountains, with their arms.

So that's where I arrived on the scene: the fighting is continuing; there are disturbing reports -- some exaggerated, I think, coming out of the Catholic clergy, in East Timor -- some of whom, were still Portuguese, who are reporting back to the church in Portugal. But, obviously some very bad things were happening. There's no question about it.

And I started working on the Indonesians very early on this, saying in effect, "Look, this thing's going to blow up in your face. It's going to damage your reputation. It's going to hamper our ability, and others', to give you foreign aid, and so forth. And you'd better open it up."

Well, eventually they did. The first thing was a Jerry-built trip by -- oh, there must have been a dozen ambassadors from Jakarta, I was one, and the others I mentioned earlier; plus, even the Korean. I think the ASEAN -- their fellow ASEAN -- ambassadors were taken along. And we got

a staged trip. And everything was rosy, and the natives waved flowers, and this sort of thing. You think it's fine -- no problem there. But obviously, that wasn't enough, and I kept working on the Indonesians -- so did these other ambassadors, and other groups.

Eventually they agreed to let me go in with my AID director -- and it coincided with the visit of a senior official from the Catholic Relief Service, a Father Carlebois, I think his name was -- a French name. And we went in, and went where we wanted to. I said, "I'll only go if I can pick where I go. And in some cases, I'm going to pick it while we're in the air." Because we had heard where the problems were.

Q: *Yes.*

MASTERS: So we went in and we visited -- I don't remember -- eight or ten different places, and it was just awful; much worse than anything I'd ever seen in Bangladesh. These refugees had fled up into the hills, as a result of the fighting. Those hills, as I said, as barren and arid. There was no food up there. So they came down starving, and the Indonesians had herded them into camps, but weren't able to cope with the problem.

Now, I don't buy the idea that it was genocide -- that the Indonesians were trying to kill them off. I think they honestly faced a problem; they were surprised by the magnitude of it. These people came down out of the hills, and they just couldn't cope. And it was recognition of that, I think, that led them to let us in.

Well, the AID director, and Catholic Relief Service, and I went in and visited, and saw these things. We saw people in the last stages of starvation; all kinds of medical problems. And it was a result of that, that they let in the UNHCR, refugee people. The Catholic Relief Service mounted a program there. Other groups were let in. I fault the Indonesians on being much too slow; they should have come to grips with this problem much earlier. They should have let us and other groups in.

Q: *Why -- was this embarrassment, or was this unwillingness of passing the word up to higher headquarters about the immensity of the problem? What do you think was behind that?*

MASTERS: Probably all of those. Embarrassment, certainly. Maybe on the part of some of the military leaders, the fact that -- after all, the fighting was still going on. The Fretilin were still shooting up police stations, and army units when they could get at them. They didn't want outsiders in there. But for whatever reason, as I say, the main fault that I would lay on them is that they waited much too long.

Q: *Yes.*

MASTERS: But once they let us in, then things moved reasonably quickly, and we were able to get emergency food programs in. I then went in a third time with some congressmen: Lester Wolfe, Henry Hyde. We had a good trip, also. But by then, the situation had improved considerably; this was probably a year after the first visit. So I was there three times in all.

Q: Looking at this objectively, you feel that our intervention in this thing -- not only ours, but the international intervention -- played a major role?

MASTERS: Absolutely right, absolutely, yes. The Indonesians -- certainly the Foreign Minister -- recognized that they had an international problem here, and that they had to face up to it. The military were the ones who were slow to -- I think -- to come around to it. But they eventually did.

Q: How about -- speaking about problems of this nature -- dealing with the Vietnamese boat people. Was this a problem for you?

MASTERS: Yes, this was a problem.

Q: I might, just for the record, say that the boat people are those who were fleeing from Vietnam -- on often very overcrowded and small fishing-type vessels -- illegally, to escape the communist rule there.

MASTERS: Some of these boats were coming up on Indonesian islands, largely islands up toward Malaysia, and Singapore. And again, the Indonesians were not equipped to handle them. They didn't push them off, and I will give them full credit for this. Some countries in the area were pushing them back out, and people were starving to death, and drowning. The Indonesians didn't push them off. But again, it was kind of like Timor; they couldn't cope with it.

So we worked with them, and again, it was a slow, laborious process, but they eventually agreed to -- not give us -- but to, in effect, make available to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, an island up near Singapore, to be used as a holding center for refugees -- Galang Island. And the UNHCR moved in there, and with our help -- and a lot of others -- we built some barracks, and made it into a pretty nice location. So then the refugees, as they piled on these different islands, were all funneled into Galang, and were held there until they were processed for eventual repatriation.

The Indonesians, I thought, behaved very responsibly on this -- on this refugee problem. They were very cooperative. But, you know -- as an indication of the attitude of the Indonesians, when I was working with them to try to get them to agree to set up the processing center -- I should have known better, but I guess I had run out of all the other arguments. And at one point, I said, "The Philippines has agreed to have a processing center, and therefore, we hope you will also."

The gentleman I was talking with fixed me with a beady stare, and he said, "Look, Ed, the Philippines need you much more than we do." (Laughs) I got the message, but we also got our holding center, so . . . But it's an indication of the sensitivity of the Indonesians. They're great people, but they are sensitive.

Q: How was your staff at the embassy, at the time you were there? How would you evaluate it?

MASTERS: I had a very good staff. I brought in, as DCM, Paul Gardner, who I mentioned a long time ago, who had been in that very fine political section in the '60s. And Paul was a language officer, and again -- I felt it was useful -- of course, I had it -- but I felt it was useful if maybe I

wasn't the only one that knew where the Suharto government had come from; the experience with the Communists and with Sukarno's economic mess conditioned his thinking, and that of his top people. People that understood '65, and the trouble of replacing Sukarno, and so forth. So again -- Paul was political counselor, and I moved him into the DCM job.

We got a great political counselor, Harriet Isom, who -- also an Indonesian language officer -- had been consul in Medan. And I moved her in as political counselor. If you were going to pick somebody that you would say would never get along with an Indonesian, you would pick Harriet. She's six-feet tall, a raving blonde woman. And all of those things you'd think would cause trouble with Indonesians, who tend to be about 5'6", and so forth. She did a super job. The Indonesians liked her, respected her. She's now our chargé in Laos, incidentally. In fact, I remember writing in one of her efficiency reports that if the system worked, she should -- at some point -- be ambassador to Indonesia.

[I] had a good AID director, Tom Niblock, who again, was a good solid pro; the kind of a person who needed very firm direction. One of those AID guys who felt that, "By god, this is my operation." But, we worked it out okay.

The military side had a good colonel, who spoke the language, and was head of our military group. We called it the Defense Liaison Group, so it wasn't a military aid group, but in effect, that's what it did. This was Colonel Tombaugh.

By and large, I felt we had a very good staff there -- a good professional staff.

Q: What were your connections with Suharto, and how did you evaluate him at that time, and his government?

MASTERS: Well, my relations with Suharto were good; they were excellent. But Suharto is not the kind of person -- I don't think, at least -- that becomes really close to foreigners. He's somewhat -- not shy, at all -- but somewhat -- gosh, what's the word I'm trying to think of?

Q: Reserved?

MASTERS: A reserved person, as Javanese tend to be. But whenever I wanted to see him, I could see him; he was always responsive. He was always helpful, when it wasn't against his interests to be helpful. So I felt that we had a very good professional relationship. I saw a lot more, of course, of some of his staff people. In Indonesia you quite often have to do things indirectly, because Indonesians don't like public dissent, difficulty, and bad news. So I did a lot of work through intermediaries, some at the cabinet level, and some below the cabinet level; which again, I think shows the advantage of knowing the society before you get there -- knowing who those intermediaries are, and how to use them.

Q: Could you give an example of how? Let's say you have instructions; you want to get something done, or some response from Indonesia, and how you might go about this indirectly.

MASTERS: Yes, it depends on the issue. In some cases I would seek an appointment with the

president, and put it up to him directly -- or the foreign minister. But in other cases, I might still want an appointment, but I might want to pave the way for the appointment, so I don't surprise him. So there were a number of people in different areas that I would know were close to the president, or this minister, or that minister. And I would talk with them, and say, "This is what I want to do. Do you have any guidance on how we can work this out? What's the best way to handle it? etc. etc."

And he'd say, "Well," -- in some cases he'd say, do this, do that. In some cases he'd say, "Well, let me think about it." You'd know he was going to go talk to the guy that you wanted to see.

Q: So, in other words, you were paving the way. You asked advice in order to both get some advice, but also to let them know what you were about.

MASTERS: That's right, exactly. Sometimes it wouldn't work, but usually it would work quite well. And my view is it's much better -- particularly in the Indonesian context -- than going in and hitting him cold, on some kinds of issues. There are other issues where you don't; where you want to hit him cold -- you want to get a reaction. Of course, then, reading the reaction is sometimes difficult, and here again, you sometimes will use an intermediary.

We used to joke in Jakarta that President Suharto had four ways of saying "yes". He never said "no" -- there were four yeses. One really meant yes -- let's see if I can remember these. One meant "maybe", one meant "I hear what you're saying". This would be, kind of, as you're talking, he's saying "yes, yes". That doesn't mean he agrees with you. And the final yes means "it's a dumb idea, forget it", but he says "yes". So from the context, and the body language, and maybe knowing how the guy thinks, you've got to figure out which "yes" you're getting. And that, sometimes, I found -- even knowing the Indonesians as well as I did -- sometimes is tricky, but usually you can tell.

Where I had any doubt, I would go to an intermediary, and say, "What did the President really mean?"

And he would say, "He means it's the stupidest thing he ever heard of." (Laughs) -- or whatever. But if I had doubt, I'd double check it that way.

Q: So you're saying that this is a society, particularly, where it really pays to have both contacts for some time, and also to understand the society?

MASTERS: Absolutely.

Q: Which comes over a long period of experience.

MASTERS: Yes. I'm convinced that it takes at least a year to become effective in Indonesia. It's interesting -- we had a very good German ambassador when I was there. And he came in, charging ahead, and was going to do great things. But later on -- he left before I did -- as he was leaving, he said, "You were right. It took at least a year to really become effective."

Because, the Indonesians -- although they'll smile, and nod -- you're not really getting through to

them, until they size you up, and decide what kind of person you are: whether you really respect them, whether you take them seriously, what your real motives are. This doesn't mean you have to agree all the time, but they want to know where you're coming from. And then once they decide that you're okay, then fine, it's open. And of course, I had done all this in the '60s. So the great thing was that when I arrived as ambassador, it was just like I had never left.

And in fact, it was a little embarrassing. Because I had been off in other countries, doing all these things that I thought were interesting. And meanwhile, they're just sitting there. And of course, it's announced in the paper, "Ed Masters is coming back again." So they had time to think. So we'd run into these people, and they'd say, "Oh, how nice to see you. We remember that very nice movie party you had in 1966, and Allene wore that lovely green dress." Well, at first we couldn't remember who these people were, let alone the movie party! (Laughs) But it finally worked out. We had gone through the shakedown period. So I think -- as you said -- it was an assignment that made a lot of sense.

Q: You were mentioning American investment in economics -- commercial interests -- were playing a larger role there than they had, really, in any of the other posts you'd been in, by the time you came back. There was some mention in the papers about a problem with Ford -- illegal payments, and all that. Was that during your time?

MASTERS: Yes, I know what you're talking about, and I'm not sure whether the payoff took place . . .

Q: I think it had taken place before you were there, but . . .

MASTERS: I don't think that was an issue while I was there; I think it became an issue later on. But there was one of the those that came up, and again, I'm not sure which one it was. Anyhow, I didn't -- I wasn't involved. I remember I once set up arrangements for -- I guess it was somebody from the Attorney General's office to come in and take some depositions. But it was not something that we got deeply involved in.

Q: How about payoffs, and corruption? This is always a major problem -- how you deal with this. In some countries this is how business is done, and yet you were there during a time when we were particularly sensitive about American businesses doing that. Was this an issue, or a problem for you?

MASTERS: Well, it was a problem for American business, I know, because of our Foreign Corrupt Practices Act; American businesses were not able to do what almost all other businessmen in town were doing -- greasing the skids. I'm convinced that American businessmen were not paying off, because the stakes were too high. But certainly others were; there's no question about it. I personally took a very strong stand against this.

In fact, as one example, in addition to the embassy car I ordered a personal car from Australia -- a GM car from Australia. And it came in. And I told my staff, "No payments!" I told our local staff. The result was, it took six weeks to get my car cleared through customs; here's the American Ambassador's car -- six weeks! You can imagine how long it would take for somebody else.

Q: Yes.

MASTERS: Facilitative payments are the way you keep things going in a society like that. The customs people, and immigration, and all the rest, don't make enough to live on their salaries. They make it up through under the counter payments.

Q: *Yes, in many ways -- sometimes I wonder if it's not our problem. Because what you're doing is you're paying for services rendered. If you want somebody to stamp something, you pay him. Normally, this would be paid through a higher salary, but people who don't need that thing stamped, don't need to bother to pay that much (inaudible).*

MASTERS: Yes, I agree with that. The facilitative payment -- as long as it's within reason -- I could live with. It's the five and ten percent deals that create the problem. I think U.S. business lost out on a lot of good deals there because they couldn't do that, and didn't do it -- at that time, I don't think. If they were doing it, they sure wouldn't tell me, anyhow. But I don't think they were.

I worked very closely with the American business community: very closely with the Chamber of Commerce. There had been some problems in the relationship before. I had a monthly meeting with the Chamber, and we sat down, and they said -- at least -- that nobody had ever talked with them so frankly.

Q: *This is one of the things that is often overlooked, and that is getting together with the American business people, and having close ties with them.*

MASTERS: Yes.

Q: *Were there any other major problems, or tasks that you had while you were there -- that we haven't covered?*

MASTERS: There's one that I want to mention, and then I think I've got to go, and probably you do also. And that is that -- I guess because of the human rights problem -- the focus on human rights in Washington -- the Carter administration, I felt, missed some real opportunities in Indonesia.

For example, Suharto had been invited to Washington, under Presidents Nixon and President Ford. Even the two years Ford was President -- Ford visited Indonesia, and Suharto visited Washington. The personal contact is extremely important for an Indonesian; knowing the person, having a direct relationship. I could not -- absolutely could not get Washington to invite Suharto to visit Washington. I did my damndest. And I think what it boiled down to was that they felt they couldn't invite Suharto unless they could invite Marcos; and there was no way they were going to invite Marcos, because of the human rights problems. I think it was a bad mistake. It would have had a good influence on human rights. It would have had a good influence on a lot of things.

The result was Suharto took it as a personal affront, that he was not invited. And Carter never came to Jakarta. Suharto wasn't invited to Washington. And I think that was a bad mistake.

That may also -- similar considerations may have influenced some of our AID actions. For example, Washington decided at one point to eliminate the PL 480 wheat program to Indonesia -- stupid! We had wheat coming out of our ears. We've got millions of tons stashed away. And they want to eliminate this piddly little program in Indonesia, for which the Indonesians are paying in dollars -- albeit, soft terms. But it's hard currency repayable. I think the program was originally about \$100,000,000 a year. And Indonesia needed the wheat; was using it effectively. There was no problem of misuse. It was just -- here's a country, an OPEC member, making decent income, and no reason why we should give the wheat.

I fought it and lost, and was told the program was going to be eliminated. The Indonesians, fortunately, had the foresight to cozy up to some of the wheat growing senators, and the program was reinstituted.

Q: This brings up a point: do you ever find yourself explaining to other countries -- particularly Indonesians -- how to play the Washington game? In other words, that the State Department, and the President are not the only players in town; there's the Pentagon, there's the Congress, there's the Congressional staff, there's the media. I mean, it's a complicated world there, and technically, their ambassador should do it. But did you ever find yourself saying, "Well, maybe a senator might be more useful."?

MASTERS: I don't remember ever giving specific guidance like that. I certainly -- in all the countries I've been in -- have urged them to expand their range of contacts in Washington; but they tend not to. The Thai and the Indonesians are both very shy about what they see as pushing in. And they tend to always go to the State Department and not develop ties with the Congress. I used to tell them to get to know people on the Hill, and particularly the Congressional staff. In this particular case, I didn't give specific advice. And frankly, I wouldn't have, against a policy decision -- as much as I might have disagreed with it. But fortunately, they were smart enough to figure it out for themselves, or somebody else told them to do it. (Laughs)

**CHARLES A. GILLESPIE, Jr.
Regional Security Officer
Jakarta (1965)**

Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr., was born in Long Beach, California in March, 1935. He graduated from UCLA in 1958 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Following a six year term with the U.S. Army, he entered the Foreign Service in 1965 and was nominated by President Reagan as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to the Philippines, Indonesia, Belgium, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chile. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 19, 1995.

GILLESPIE: So I did. That assignment turned out to be a very significant time in many different ways. I arrived in Indonesia, got off the plane, and soon, thereafter, met the Ambassador, Marshall Green. The DCM was Frank Galbraith. The Administrative Officer, to whom I would report, was a

long-serving officer named Walker. I can't remember his first name now.

Within days I could see that the situation in Indonesia was extremely difficult.

Q: When was this?

GILLESPIE: It was June, 1965.

Q: Earlier on we were talking about the situation in Indonesia in September or October, 1965.

GILLESPIE: I can tell you that story.

Q: We'll come to that.

GILLESPIE: Yes. What happened was this. Indonesia saw the beginning of the Third World movement. President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt, Nehru of India, and others had agreed to hold a conference in Bandung in Indonesia in April, 1955. The Indonesians, and particularly Sukarno, saw themselves as the fathers of the Third World movement and the bastion against "Neo-Colonialism and Imperialism." Sukarno referred to this as "Nekolim." We had had an Ambassador who preceded Marshall Green...

Q: Howard P. Jones.

GILLESPIE: Howard Jones. The Jones-Sukarno relationship had become very complicated and very difficult. Ambassador Green arrived in Indonesia in June, 1965. I never knew Howard Jones. I met him briefly but never really knew him. I got to know Marshall Green very well. I can imagine that Jones and Green must have been distinctly different human beings.

Q: I think that Howard Jones was a Christian Scientist who thought the best of everything and everyone, no matter what happened. He was insulted right and left but felt that he would keep relations open, which had its points. However, at the same time, the people serving in the Embassy in Jakarta were in almost open revolt against Ambassador Jones. They felt that we had taken enough crap from Sukarno.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. I guess that Ambassador Green had just recently presented his credentials in Jakarta. He arrived in Jakarta very shortly before I arrived there in 1965. Ambassador Green had his agenda and, I'm sure, he had his instructions, which he had worked out very carefully. If he didn't have instructions, it didn't make much difference because he was going to do what he did anyway. Green had been Consul General in Hong Kong and had worked as a private assistant for Ambassador Joseph Grew in Japan before Pearl Harbor. He was just...

Q: We had a good series of interviews with him in connection with the Foreign Service Oral History program.

GILLESPIE: I'll bet they were. So Green was right out there in Indonesia, on the front lines. He didn't miss an opportunity to make his presence known, felt, and understood.

Here I was, the brand new security officer in Jakarta. Now I was in charge of the security unit and was now responsible for it. I had an American secretary, a wonderful woman who had been the secretary of my predecessor. I knew that I was in Jakarta on a temporary basis. I had moved into my predecessor's bungalow. He did not have a family. I took over the car that he had - a jeep with right hand drive.

I found that there was a large Embassy guard force. There were all kinds of things to do. I had some Indonesian assistants, but no American help. There was a good crew of people in the Administrative Section. The Embassy staff seemed to consist of people who really knew what they were doing. The staff was smaller than the staff at the Embassy in Manila. Although I had made a number of contacts in Manila, it turned out that the General Services Officer (GSO) in the Embassy in Jakarta was Robert Blackburn, a very dear friend of my brother-in-law. Bob was a good friend of my wife's brother. So that was a point of contact. I got into an international bridge playing group.

There was a young political officer whose knowledge of "Bahasa Indonesia" the Indonesian language was nearly perfect. His name was Franz Misch. Franz and his wife, Mary, do play readings with all kinds of people. I like to read plays, so I got involved with them very quickly.

Things were going along on the work front very well. I knew that this was a temporary assignment and wouldn't be a big deal. Well, I had been there for about three weeks when we had a message from the Department. The man whose place I had taken on a temporary basis had been direct-transferred to Brussels, Belgium, as the supervisory RSO. The Department did not have a replacement for him in sight, so it was decided that "Gillespie will stay in Indonesia indefinitely," until a permanent replacement is sent to Jakarta.

This news brought no happiness to my family in Manila, as you can imagine! My pregnant wife was unhappy. The supervisory security officer in Manila was very unhappy. The Administrative Counselor and his wife in Manila, who had become really close friends with my wife, was not happy on my wife's behalf, on the regional security officer's behalf, and on Embassy Manila's behalf. However, there was nothing to do about it, because in July, just as this was happening, someone decided to burn the Indian Embassy in Jakarta, which was very close to our Embassy. At that time we didn't talk about terrorism, but at that time there was a terrorist attack on the Indian Embassy in Jakarta.

Ambassador Green called me in and said, "What's going on here? What are our vulnerabilities and why is this happening?" He added, "It looks as if you are going to be around here for a while. I would appreciate it if you would just consider yourself my security officer, lock, stock, and barrel, until we get this situation straightened out." I said, "Yes, sir."

Frank Galbraith, the DCM, was the sweetest, most wonderful guy you could ask for. He was extremely supportive and said, "Any time you want to talk about this security situation, come and see me. This is getting really serious. A lot of things are happening here."

We had Consulates in Medan Sumatra and Surabaya East Java. A couple of weeks later a mob

attacked our Consulate in Surabaya. They threw a bomb at it, tried to burn it, and did things like that. The CIA officer who was there in the Consulate in Surabaya more or less kept the place from burning. I flew down to Surabaya to check into the situation, and we decided that we were going to have to withdraw people from the Consulate because we didn't know what was going to happen. All sorts of things were going on. A big, Soviet cruiser, Sverdlovsk class, came into Tanjung Priok, the harbor in Jakarta.

Q: Hadn't Khrushchev given this cruiser to Indonesia?

GILLESPIE: Exactly.

Q: It's still there, I think.

GILLESPIE: Yes, it's probably still sitting there - in the mud, in Tanjung Priok.

Q: Who was doing all of this? At this point Sukarno represented the leFort..

GILLESPIE: Yes!

Q: He was the President of Indonesia. How did we figure out...?

GILLESPIE: Well, of course, Indonesia was engaged in what they called "konfrontasi," a confrontation, with Malaysia, Singapore, and the formerly British states, territories, and protectorates in Borneo - Sarawak, Brunei, and British North Borneo. My office was a Regional Security Office. My responsibilities included Malaysia and the Consulate General in the British Colony of Singapore.

It happened that just before or just after this bombing there was a bombing incident involving our Consulate General in Singapore. I think that a bomb was placed near it but didn't go off. I was told to go up to Singapore. Well, to get from Jakarta to Singapore at that time was about like going from Cairo, Egypt to Tel Aviv, Israel at the height of that confrontation. I was not supposed to use the same passport. I had to go to Bangkok, Thailand. It was really complicated, but I did that. I went up to Singapore and investigated the attempted bombing of the Consulate General and prepared a report on it. While I was in Singapore, I was instructed to go to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to check out the Embassy there, and make sure that everything was ready and that the Embassy was prepared for any problems. So part of the activity going on in Indonesia was driven by the confrontation of Malaysia.

I don't remember exactly why the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Jakarta occurred. It may have been the result of something that someone in India had done or not done. It could also have been, of course, that there really were strong, ethnic tensions in Indonesia itself. There was the tension with the Chinese community, whose extent we later learned of, in every sense of that word - the animosities and the strains. The Indian element of the population of Indonesia...

Q: Were also shopkeepers.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Economically, they were very important and they stood out. So for whatever reason - it'll probably come back to me at some point - a bomb was also exploded at the Indian Consulate in Surabaya, early in the morning. There was the bomb placed near the American Consulate General in Singapore. So all of these things were going on in July and August, 1965. Things were tense.

Ambassador Green was really focused on what he wanted to do, and how he wanted to try to manage the Indonesian-American relationship. That put him on a very clear course. He stood very firmly for these things. He didn't confront Sukarno or the Indonesians, but he didn't take any guff on anything.

Ed Masters was the Political Counselor at the time. I don't know whether you've met him.

Q: Yes, I know him, and Bob Martens a political officer in Jakarta at that time.

GILLESPIE: And Bob Martens. The Chief of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Station there was Hugh Tovar, who later was Chief of Station in Bangkok. In my view he was an extremely competent fellow. From my vantage point this was a team effort at the American Embassy in Jakarta. I had been in the Foreign Service for all of four or five months. I was truly the new kid on the block.

There were some very strange things going on. We thought that we had been penetrated by hostile intelligence services. We had a technical security inspection and found some radio emissions coming out of the secure or sensitive areas of the Embassy.

Q: You're talking about electronic "bugs" (concealed listening devices.) We were basically thinking that these had been placed there by the Soviets?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Electronic bugs placed by the Soviets.

Q: The Soviets were big on doing that.

GILLESPIE: Sure, they were very big. As far as we were concerned and from my vantage point, they were obviously in bed with Sukarno. That was it. Obviously, it was much more complex than that, but that was the impression that one had. We went through a process of trying to beef up security around the Embassy compound. We put barbed wire in places where there had never been any before. We did a number of things after these incidents occurred. We devoted a lot of time and effort to physical security.

We burned much of our classified material, starting in August, just because of what had happened, primarily in Surabaya. We had tremendous amounts of classified paper. To mention a sort of funny note, I had the Marine Guards burning classified material out in a driveway. None of us noted that a couple of the antennas from the radio transmitter were strung up high above where we were burning material. We managed to burn through the antennas and cut out Embassy communications for a few hours. The communicators had to go back up and string new wires. You should remember to look overhead when you do an emergency burning. Had it been a real emergency, we

would have been in real trouble. Fortunately, we were able to deal with the problem.

We did all of these things and got things more or less in shape, because we didn't know what was going to happen. We thought that there could be problems. I wanted to leave the Embassy in Jakarta clean, when I eventually left it, and in good shape for whoever took over as Security Officer.

Finally, we got the word - I guess it must have been in early September, 1965, that I could go back to the Embassy in the Philippines. I planned to leave Jakarta on the morning of October 1.

Q: Wonderful timing!

GILLESPIE: I remember that someone - the Personnel Officer, I think - had invited me to dinner the night of September 30. I went to this dinner the night of September 30 in my jeep and then drove home. I had my bags out, ready to leave the next morning. I had an appointment on October 1 to say goodbye to Ambassador Green. The Embassy opened early there - about 7:30 AM - and I think that my appointment was for 7:45 AM. I was going to shake hands with Ambassador Green and DCM Frank Galbraith and then was going to get on the plane and go back to Manila, be with my wife and family, and get back to a normal life.

Well, about 2:00 or 3:00 AM something woke me up. There were loud noises and lots of light. I went to the window of my bedroom. I had the air conditioning on, because it was hot outside. I turned off the air conditioning so that I could hear. What I heard was gunfire - no question about it. I looked out the window and saw a dark figure silhouetted against the sky, holding something, with light coming out the end of it. It was somebody standing up and shooting into a yard, about four houses away from me. That was the home of General Pandjaitan, who, as it turned out, was one of the seven generals killed that night, along with his family members and others. The bodies of the generals were taken out into the countryside and dumped in a well on a military base. All sorts of things happened in connection with this.

I think that two doors down from me, in the opposite direction, lived a U.S. Air Force captain from the Attaché Office. We got in touch - I don't know whether it was by radio or by phone. Nothing had happened in Jakarta as whole. There was no tension at that moment. The captain asked, "Are you going in to the Embassy now?" I think that I said, "I'm going to wait until it's light and find out what's going on."

So we started to call around a little by phone. Clearly, something was happening. We arrived at the Embassy at about 5:30 AM. I think that I drove my jeep, and the captain came with me. Ambassador Green must have come to the Embassy at around 6:30 or 7:00 AM. I vividly remember that his secretary was Virginia Richardson. Virginia, the Ambassador, and I stood around there saying, "Sure, you're going to say goodbye to the Ambassador this morning," and, "Sure, you're going to get on an airplane, Mr. Security Officer. You're here! Tear up those tickets."

We had a Defense Attaché - I think he was from the Army. He had been in the Bataan Death March in the Philippines in April, 1942. He was extremely well connected. Initially, he was our primary source of information on what was going on.

These events were the opening gambit of a move by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), aimed, as it turned out, at unseating President Sukarno. They were turning against Sukarno.

Q: There was a feeling that Sukarno was behind the coup d'etat.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Why was he doing this? There was a man named D. N. Aidit, the secretary general of the PKI - the operating head of the party, whatever his title was. My primary Indonesian contact was a colonel in the Indonesian Army, who was responsible for the security of Jakarta. It wasn't right away, but it was within a short period of time, as this situation began to unfold, that he broadcast over the radio in opposition to Sukarno and in support of the PKI at this point. I have not tried to go back and look at notes I had on these developments - or even to refresh my memory very much. Maybe I should have.

Anyway, the situation was that the Presidential Palace guard was penetrated by people who were either operating at Sukarno's direction or at the instance of others in opposition to Sukarno. The seven Indonesian Army generals were killed. I may not have the sequence of events exactly right, but the city of Jakarta was put under a state of siege, martial law, by the Indonesian Army. Curfews were established, and fighting was going on, as it turned out, between troops under General Soeharto and the supporters of the PKI coup d'état. The Siliwangi Division was the primary element concerned in fighting the communists. It had been brought in from outside the Jakarta-Bandung area to put down or otherwise deal with a rebellion by other troops whose leadership was not totally clear at the time.

There was tremendous tension and gunfire in the city of Jakarta at this time. This was actually the first time that I had had bullets come so close to me that they might have hit me. The Embassy went on a more or less complete wartime footing. Eventually, all of the American dependents were evacuated - all the family members were sent away. For a period of a few months we in the Embassy were under siege while this whole situation played itself out.

Q: Normally, the Security Officer is the man to be in contact with the local troops and police to secure the Embassy, to make sure that it is neutral ground.

GILLESPIE: Well, this was the case. I tried to get hold of the Indonesian Army colonel, who was my major contact. It turned out that he was among those involved in the uprising. He was on the other side. So I had to deal with a couple of lesser lights in the Indonesian Army. However, they arranged to send troops. At one point we weren't exactly sure whose troops they really were - whether they were going to keep us in or guard us and in what way. So it really wasn't totally clear. We were in touch with the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. I would go along to the Ministry with the Political Officers to discuss the situation at that time. I can't remember whether I went along with Bob Martens or Ed Masters. Whoever it was, we were doing all the normal things there.

We were in touch with the people in the British Embassy, which had been burned out in 1963, with the Australians, and with others. We were all trying to figure out what was going on. Eventually - and this was all within two or three days - we all moved into the Embassy, including the Ambassador and the DCM. They started out, saying that they were going to take turns - one night

on and one night off. However, they wound up by both staying in the Embassy with a small team of Political and Economic officers, communicators, CIA officers, Defense Attaché officers, and a couple of people from the Administrative Section. Bob Blackburn and I basically moved into the Embassy and lived there for a period of several weeks. Our meals were either prepared at the Embassy, or, while she was still in the country, Mrs. Green had meals sent in for us. So we did this kind of thing.

From my vantage point it was confusing. I wasn't sure of the situation. All I knew was that it appeared that we had a very serious threat, first of all to our people - our personnel. We weren't sure what would happen out where they lived. There was an Agency for International Development (AID) compound near the airport, close to the scene of some of the coup activity. We tried to take steps to protect that area. We had Indonesian guards who seemed to be willing and able to help us. It seemed that the authorities who actually held power were extremely tense. At times they seemed to give the appearance of acting in an unfriendly way. They were very serious all the time. Nonetheless, they seemed to take very seriously their responsibility to protect us. So the Indonesian guards that we had, guarded us. There were some demonstrations during the day, but they were quickly put down, because I don't think that the Indonesian authorities wanted any demonstrations in the street because they didn't know what was going on. There was some real shooting going on elsewhere.

Q: However, essentially, the area you were dealing with had been taken over by Soeharto's military and civilian supporters.

GILLESPIE: Yes. What had happened was that the troops from the Siliwangi Division, from the West Java headquarters in Bandung, really did not speak the language used in Jakarta. They did not speak the national language Indonesian. They spoke Sundanese. They were brought into Jakarta. This was a large unit. I remember that Franz Misch and I, with DCM Galbraith's approval, went out one evening to see where these troops were and to try to make contact with them. Franz spoke Indonesian, and I was going to drive. We got through two road blocks and finally talked briefly to an officer, who told us that we couldn't go any farther. So we came back to the Embassy. Troops from the Siliwangi Division were all over Jakarta and had put on some kind of distinctive markings - I think white armbands, if nothing else - to distinguish themselves from the other troops. There actually were firefights between opposing troops going on - not so much in downtown Jakarta but in the outskirts of the city, out toward the roads leading to Bandung and Bogor.

There was a lot going on. The Embassy's ability to know what was going on seemed to me to be somewhat limited. Everybody was trying to find out what was happening. As I said, the Army Attaché seemed to be in the best position to find out what was going on.

During all of this Ambassador Green was both active and frustrated, to some extent. However, he ran the Embassy very firmly throughout this period. I remember some of this frustration. We got into the habit, while we were living in the Embassy, of meeting together at 4:30 or 5:00 PM to review what had happened that day. That would then move into a cocktail hour. I remember that he asked me to make drinks at about 6:00 or 7:00 PM. Then we'd have dinner together. I was very much a junior officer, but the senior people included me. I think that my price of admission was to

make the drinks. Then, Marshall Green is an absolute nut on bridge. We played bridge every night, if I remember correctly. Bob Blackburn was also a very good bridge player. I forget who the fourth man was, but there were four of us who played.

By about November, 1965, the situation was beginning to calm down, although terrible things were happening out in the countryside. There were a lot of murders and assassination of the Chinese element. People were blaming different people for what was going on. By this time the Department had identified someone to come in as Security Officer, so I took my leave from Jakarta.

During this time jobs became blurred and confused. A lot of different things were happening. The DCM would say to the General Services Officer (GSO), "Bob, would you talk to someone and find out what's going on?" Then he would ask someone in the Political Section to prepare the telegram reporting what the GSO had found out. He did the same thing to me. He would say, "Tony, you have contacts here. I'd like you to take your Security Officer hat off and find out what's going on from the people you know. Let's figure it out." So that's probably where I began to see other things going on beside the security part of the situation.

I left Jakarta in November, 1965.

PAUL M. CLEVELAND
Economic Officer
Jakarta (1965-1968)

Ambassador Paul M. Cleveland was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1931 and was raised in New York and Washington, DC. He received a bachelor's degree in English from Yale University in 1953 and then entered the U.S. Air Force. Ambassador Cleveland's Foreign Service career included positions in Indonesia, Australia, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, and Malaysia. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 20, 1995.

Q: In 1965, you were assigned to Jakarta as an economic officer. Was that at your request?

CLEVELAND: In light of my experience in Germany and at Fletcher, I wanted to a) not be reassigned to Germany or to any European post; b) be assigned to East Asia; and c) to be assigned to a position in an economic section. Personnel gave me a list of upcoming vacancies that met my criteria, from which I chose the job in Jakarta. I could have gone to Seoul; as I said before, Reinstein thought I was crazy to go to Jakarta where they "didn't have any statistics." I chose Jakarta because unlike Seoul, the other possibility, the American Embassy staff did not live in a compound, but lived in rented quarters in various parts of the city. I had had enough "compound living" in Bonn; I wanted to experience living among the local population. But I had never seen Jakarta -- perhaps fortuitously.

In fact, the Embassy did rent us a small house in one of Jakarta's nice residential neighborhoods --

Kabeiren. The house was right near a mosque from which prayers were broadcast at 5 a.m. every morning. We became friendly with some of our Indonesian neighbors. Four or five weeks after the military coup occurred in late September, 1965, we had six or seven tanks parked in a field right next to our house. They were there essentially as a watchdog for the neighborhood. We thought that the tanks would be gone in matter of days; in fact they remained for two or three years. It didn't take us long before we began to provide laundry service to the tank crews, as well as some food and other basics. The maids in our house provided entertainment to the troops that was becoming quite disruptive. So rather than complain to the command, we invited the whole tank squad into the house for a big party. We become well acquainted and they became wonderful neighbors for the years they stayed in that field. The tank men were extremely polite and very nice and we enjoyed getting to know them. It is not a practice that I would necessarily recommend for everybody, but it worked well for us. Our kids every once in a while got to ride in the tanks. Those tanks would periodically patrol the narrow streets on which we lived, knocking down trees indiscriminately. Sometimes the kids would be on board during these forays.

Howard Jones was the Ambassador in the early '60s, but he was already gone by the time we arrived. He was succeeded by Marshall Green. The DCM was Frank Galbraith, who soon left to be our Ambassador in Singapore and was replaced by Jack Lydman. The Economic Counselor was Perry Ellis, who left soon after we arrived to be replaced by Paul McCusker. There was one person USIS and a very small trace still left of the 1950s and early '60s assistance program. We had had a huge AID mission, but it was for all intents and purposes thrown out of the country by Sukarno. It was not until the coup several months after my arrival that we resurrected the AID program and rebuilt the AID mission. It was done on a much more modest level than had been true before, however.

The Economic Section consisted of four officers -- Paul, Gordon Donald, Malcolm Churchill -- the most junior -- and myself. Later Joe Havary was added as a Commercial Attaché. Initially, my specific responsibilities were to report on oil and mining. My first six months were almost exclusively devoted to oil, because the two big American companies -- CALTEX, STANVAC -- had made large investments in Indonesia and were being threatened with seizure. Later, my portfolio expanded to other parts of the Indonesian economy, such as communications, which also became a major area for US investment, aviation and Indonesian manufacturing. In fact, I came to cover the supply side of the economy -- one of the country's first "supply siders." And consequently my job eventually turned into an advisory service for potential American investors, who began to look at Indonesia as a possible base for investing, starting in early 1966.

When Suharto came in, the pressures to throw out the two big American oil companies eased. So I turned to helping some 56 American oil companies over the next two years, as best I could, as they tried to get into exploration for oil. The addition of the Commercial Attaché didn't decrease my work load. Joe Havary was a terrific guy and we just worked together in all areas; there was so much to do that there was never any time to worry about who was doing what; we worked as a team. I specialized in oil and mining matters plus aviation and communications, because I had spent so much time on them before Joe arrived. But, as I said, there was more than enough to do and the two of us never stumbled over each other. Paul McCusker personally handled some of the larger deals -- Freeport Sulfur's investment, for example. After the coup and with Suharto's accession to power, the business climate in Indonesia turned positive attracting many foreign

investors, including American. We believed that it was in our interest to have the Indonesians develop their economy. They had some very fine economists, known as the "Berkeley Mafia" because they had gotten their education at the University of California. The chief of this group was Widjojo; there was Emil Salim and Ali Wardhana, Sadli, plus several others. This group had been advisors to the Indonesian military before the coup. They had convinced Suharto and the other generals that economic development was crucial to Indonesia. When the military took power and overthrew Sukarno, this group of economists became pivotal in the new government. They continue to be influential to this day.

The Embassy, after the coup, was definitely pushing US investment, not only because we thought it would be good for American companies, but because we too viewed Indonesian economic development as essential to political stability and growth. As I said, we restarted an assistance program, but with a much lower profile than had existed in earlier years. Marshall Green, after taking over as Ambassador, developed the concept of helping the Indonesians through our AID program to help themselves. In earlier years, we had just poured money and American technicians into Indonesia to run development projects; we were of course trying to assist indigenous economic development; but we were essentially doing all the work and the Indonesians gained little. Green's view was that the Indonesians should develop and manage the economic development programs and projects themselves. We would provide such assistance as was appropriate, but we stayed in the background primarily. Included of course in the range of economic assistance was US private investment.

There were areas in which our investors were in competition with other foreigners. We in the Embassy promoted American firms. If there was more than one American company interested in the same activity, we promoted all.

There wasn't any promotion in the oil area. There was no need. We provided advice to interested American firms; we briefed as thoroughly as we could on how things operated in Indonesian oil and suggested various approaches depending on the nature of their interests. I told each of the 56 oil representatives that I saw during my tour that I would tell them all I knew, but that they would come to know a lot more than I very soon as they began their negotiations with the Indonesians. I only asked that they keep me informed of their progress or lack thereof. That arrangement worked out well and I developed close relations with many American oil people, enabling me to report a pretty accurate picture of the Indonesian oil business for the rest of my tour. This was important stuff to understand. There was a tremendous amount of investment that was made in the Indonesian oil provinces; earnings from oil exploration and production became the major foreign exchange return for the country. This has lasted until today.

Ironically the Dutch, and particularly Dutch Royal Shell which I believe was the first discoverer of Indonesian oil, decided not to compete for new exploration, even as Suharto came to power. That was a very curious development because Dutch Shell had major interests in Indonesian Borneo. It also had a 145 mile long pipeline in that area, but just as Suharto took power, the Dutch gave up and did not compete for any other exploration rights. It was true that they had found possible oil field in Sarawak and Sabah and they may have calculated that that was as much as they could handle. They left the fields outside of Borneo to other explorers. Perhaps they felt that they could not compete politically with other foreigners; I don't know the reasons. We found the Dutch

reticence intriguing and I wrote a number of reports on that surprising development. I suspect that by 1965, Royal Dutch Shell may simply have been fed up with Indonesia. They had been treated very badly by Sukarno, as had others, but I think the Dutch may have reached the outer limits of their tolerance before the other foreigners did. They therefore missed the golden days of oil exploration.

As I said, there was no shortage of American interest. Our companies became the dominant oil producers in Indonesia. CALTEX had been in Indonesia for long time -- even before WW II. By the mid 1960s it had known reserves in excess of 10-12 billion barrels, which is huge. Almost all of it was in Sumatra. STANVAC had smaller operations, but later found major gas fields as well as other oil fields. These American companies were well established in Indonesia and knew all the players well. They had done their homework -- geology -- well, but the first real exploration after Suharto's rise to power was really done by small American exploration companies with relatively small amounts to invest. The first company that I can remember that was successful was the Independent Indonesian-American Petroleum Company (IIAPCO). The local representative -- Don Todd -- of that company became a good friend. He was a geologist who felt that Indonesia had a huge oil base; this was almost an emotional belief. He had begun to negotiate for exploration rights in 1963 -- before Sukarno began pressuring the oil companies. In 1966 he finally negotiated a production sharing contract -- the first of its kind in Indonesia, or perhaps in the world.

Todd understood the Indonesians and they respected him. To some oil companies on the other hand, Todd reinforced their unhappiness with the new contracts that were being negotiated. The old contracts, which had been negotiated by the large firms, included such provisions as a 50/50 split of the profits after tax and royalty. These contracts were very profitable for both sides. But the smaller companies were willing to divide the oil at the well on a basis more favorable to the Indonesians. In return, the Indonesians would then have to market the crude.

In many respects, these new contracts were more favorable to Indonesia and were becoming a threat to those signed by the large companies. Caltex and Stanvac would come to the Embassy and tell us their concerns; they never asked us to intervene directly -- nor would we have come between the Indonesian government and the small oil explorers; It would have meant that we would be favoring one American oil company over another. We used to give everyone our best advice, but we told them negotiations with the Indonesians were their problem, not ours.

The situation was not unusual in the oil exploration industry world-wide. Armand Hammer, as head of Occidental Petroleum, had broken some of the standard contracts that the majors had negotiated in the Middle East. The same thing happened in Indonesia; a smaller American company submitted a contract that was somewhat better for the Indonesians which broke that pattern established by the majors many years before. Todd may very well have counseled the newcomers on his production sharing contract, which over time became the model for subsequent contracts for all oil companies -- large and small -- doing business in Indonesia. The history of the oil industry has basically been one of a continuing diminishing advantage that the big firms had initially built into their contracts. The increasing benefits to the host countries was repeatedly met with strong protests from the majors who held the position, year after year, that the new provisions would make exploration and exploitation of the oil fields unprofitable. As far as I know, however, no major oil company ever went broke even under new contract provisions!

The second largest investment opportunity for foreign investors in Indonesia in the mid-1960s was mining. Indonesia is immensely rich in natural resources. Foreign investors offered opportunities in the mineral area which were financially very attractive to Indonesia. They brought extraction processes that had the advance technology the Indonesians didn't have. So the foreign investment focus on the mineral extraction industry made eminent sense for the Indonesian economy, which their experts and ours readily perceived.

As in most such situations, there was some resentment about foreigners coming into Indonesia to pull out "their birthright". I don't think the Indonesians were unique in this matter; this resentment, whether virulent or just under the surface, has been known to exist in many parts of the world. But, despite Sukarno's departure from the scene, the Suharto regime was not exactly a model of democracy as we know it; the country was still under tight central control. When the government reached a decision that some activity was in the national interest, there was not much opportunity for other point of views. I am pretty sure that there was resentment in the population; we used to hear complaints about some of the new ventures from the opposition. But there was no vocal public outcry about mineral exploration. The Army was in control then as it is still today. And that was that.

Let me just speak a little about the coup -- Gerakan Tigah Puluh, on the 30th of September. I arrived in Indonesia at the beginning of July, 1965. At the time, the US was apparently more disliked in Indonesia than almost anywhere in the world. Whether this was a deeply felt popular view or whether it was imposed from the top, I can not say. As in most countries, the Indonesians took their cues from the political leadership; the population followed whatever winds were favorable to them. That was not unusual; we find obedient populations in many parts of the world. The anti-American feeling was undoubtedly whipped up by certain leadership groups, as the pro-American sentiment which surfaced after the coup was encouraged by the new leadership. In fact, I think the Indonesian masses were probably far more concerned about their personal economic problems than the political whims of the leadership, which they followed as the safest path.

In any event, the Embassy was daily pelted with stones in the summer of 1965. The Chancery was next door to the State House where Subandrio, the Foreign Minister, would hold forth in his demagogic way about the evils of the US. The crowd would then march next door and throw stones at the Chancery. Marshall Green used to have a couple of dirty old rocks and some slick marble pieces on his coffee table, which he would show visitors. The marble pieces had been thrown when Howard Jones was the Ambassador. Marshall would report; the rocks had been thrown through his own windows. Marshall used to point to the differences as an indicator on how the Indonesian economy had deteriorated!

So our initial year in Jakarta was scary or exciting depending on your perspective. I was still a novice and thought that those days were fascinating. But Sukarno took every opportunity to paint us as devils. The atmosphere was so tense that we didn't have much contact with Indonesians, either because they had been ordered not have any contacts with the Americans or because they were afraid to do so. That was frustrating, because, as I said earlier, I was anxious to become better acquainted with foreigners. So the first year in Jakarta was not very rewarding from that point of

view; only a couple of Indonesian were brave enough to sustain contact.

The immediate events of September 30, 1965 and the days after were extraordinarily interesting to me, and remain so to this day, even though I was not a political officer then. I did not have any forewarning of what might happen on September 30. Although some of the higher echelons in the Embassy may well have, I believe that there was general surprise that a coup was taking place. It took the Embassy a while to put all the pieces together. The first I personally heard of it was when I entered the Chancery lobby early the morning after. Bob Rigney, the Assistant Air Attaché and a friend, was there explaining to people that he had heard shots behind his house which was very close to the residence of the Chief of the Air Force. Others in the lobby had also heard unusual sounds. Over the period of the next couple of hours, all sorts of reports began to filter in -- generals having been abducted, Nasution -- the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs -- escaping from the back of his house.

Eventually it became clear that the communists, probably in cahoots with Sukarno, had tried to overthrow the Army and kill its leadership. They did in fact kill seven of the top generals, but did not catch General Suharto. At the time, Suharto was commanding a division in Bandung. After the attempted overthrow, he rallied his troops and moved them to Jakarta. He set up headquarters on the west side Merdeka Square; Sukarno's people were on the east side of the square; the Presidential Palace was on the north side. The American Embassy was (and is) on the square as well -- on the south. The feuding parties began their negotiations around the square. Suharto had taken control of the radio station on the first night, so that the news to the population was obviously one-sided. In any case, the negotiations began virtually under our noses. That was a fascinating experience.

At no time during this tense period, was our access to the Chancery impeded that I recall. We kept our normal working hours -- early morning to late at night. On the morning of the first day, of course, Suharto was not anywhere near Jakarta; it was only later that fighting began around the communication facilities in the center of Jakarta. I think I personally was naive and simply felt a sense of excitement stemming from the rapidly changing situation; I had no sense of personal danger, although we all recognized that the course of coups was unpredictable. I went down to Glodok, the Chinese quarters, a day or two after the coup started. I was startled and impressed by how the quarter had been festooned with red banners; they hung everywhere. I had not been anywhere before where communism had shown such a public face. It was a worrisome sight. The flags did not stay up long however. As soon as Suharto moved into Jakarta, the communists disappeared. Throughout, the Embassy people moved around the city pretty much at will; we attended the funeral for the assassinated generals and other public events. In fact, I don't think it took the Army very long to reestablish its control; the funeral was a major political event indicating the reassertion of Army control.

After Suharto and the Army reestablished control, a greater measure of calm returned to Jakarta. In early October, all the Embassy dependents were evacuated as a precautionary move. Carter and our four children went to Australia, from whence I retrieved them in April, 1966, after spending a couple of weeks there myself, seeing lots of old friends. The evacuation went as well as could be expected. We used commercial transportation primarily. October 1965 in Indonesia was not a time of great concern for our lives, as I have suggested earlier. It was not like other places which we had

to evacuate when American lives were in imminent danger. There were tensions, worries and concerns, but I don't think I felt that my own life was in great peril. As a matter of fact, Marshall Green did not want the families evacuated. He did not see threats aimed at Americans; it was the Chinese and Communist Indonesians who were "under the gun". Many of them were killed, although an accurate account has never been published, nor will there ever be one. So Marshall argued for keeping families in Jakarta, primarily as a morale boost for the employees. But the Department asked whether the Embassy could "guarantee the safety" of the Americans -- primarily official families, since there weren't many private American citizens in Indonesia. That of course was impossible, and therefore the families were evacuated. They went to Singapore and Bangkok and eventually most went to the US.

As exciting as the political events were, I remained professionally deeply involved in oil issues, trying to resolve problems that CALTEX and STANVAC faced. I was also following the doings of Royal Dutch Shell. Of course, my colleagues in the Political Section kept me abreast of the major political developments, but I was absorbed by my own work. One of the reasons why the American Embassy was so deeply involved in existing and potential American investments was necessity. By late 1965, there were no other American institutions left in Indonesia -- no American banks, no corporations, no American Chamber of Commerce. Only a few Americans who were working for the existing oil companies were left in Indonesia. And the Embassy. We had to work and help.

I should say that it was not immediately clear after the coup that Suharto and his cohorts were going to be any friendlier to the American oil companies than their predecessors had been. But I was charged to do my best to help the oil companies to "stay in the game." We should remember that the events of September 30 and the days that followed are best described as a "rolling" coup. Sukarno was not immediately thrown out as President. Many of the bureaucrats that had been appointed by Sukarno remained in their jobs. Suharto's final political victory was still many months away, so that it was not clear to any of us how this struggle would eventually end.

It soon became increasingly clear to Marshall Green and the Embassy political officers that Suharto was winning the battle, but it was not until a few months after September 30, that Suharto -- I think with Green's encouragement -- decided that the American oil companies and American investment and aid were necessary to Indonesia's development. So there was a hiatus of several months during which the oil companies were not sure of their future. We felt from the beginning of Suharto's influence that the American trained economists would see the benefits of US investment and had high hopes that they would swing Suharto and his entourage to their point of view. But, as I said, it was three or four months, December 1965 I believe, before Suharto finally reached that decision. The top echelons of the Embassy were certainly pushing the value of US aid and investment.

The Embassy of course welcomed the change from Sukarno to Suharto. The former -- and his cohorts -- had been as difficult a leader as we had to contend with around the world. We had been greatly concerned about Indonesia going communist. That would have been a real blow to us in the mid-1960s as we were entering into our major effort in Vietnam. So Indonesia was viewed as a very central if lower profile issue in the struggle between communism and free world. The Suharto victory was received with great relief. Our relationship with Indonesia took a 180° turn. After the end of 1965, we had access to Indonesians, thereby enabling us to better assess both economic and

political developments and to engage effectively. Also the country began to open up, particularly after the limitation on diplomatic travel was lifted in April, 1966. That enabled Bob Rigney to be the first to travel out of Jakarta. Dick Howland and I were the second pair out. We traveled all across Java from Jakarta to Surabaya and back by car.

Gradually the attitude of the Indonesian bureaucrats changed. Gordon Donald, the number two officer in our Economic Section, knew the "Berkeley Mafia." One day he told me he wanted to introduce me to an Indonesian friend. He took me to a house near the Embassy; there, on the porch, sat a white haired man, nevertheless rather young, who turned out to be Widjojo. I left that conversation impressed by the man's intellect and rationality -- until then, I had not met many "rational" Indonesians. So we knew that if the "Berkeley Mafia" could be put in positions of influence, that among other things American investments would be welcomed. And that is in fact what happened. By the end of 1965 or early 1966, Suharto made the decision to allow the oil companies to stay. It was a welcome decision because the American oil people, with whom I met constantly during this hiatus, were understandably quite nervous. As I said, the Americans decided to stay; the Dutch decided to leave.

I have to underscore that there was considerable difference between our efforts to keep the American oil companies in Indonesia and our efforts to bring new ones in. For the first six months of my tour, I devoted all my attention to helping the existing American oil companies in Indonesia. The following two and a half years of my assignment were devoted increasingly to new investments. I think new oil companies seeing what the experience of CALTEX and STANVAC had been decided to try their luck in Indonesia; we made no effort to attract new investments, but as I said, there was a steady stream of interest starting in the Spring, 1966 and for the next few years. Don Todd was my first new customer; he was followed by Bryan Ebee, an older man, who had been an employee of US Shell for many years, oddly enough. When he came to see me, it was, I believe, as the representative of ZAPATA -- a large off-shore platform builder -- in which George Bush had an interest. Then came a steady stream -- UNION and CONOCO, etc -- all looking for oil. I guess the word was getting around in the oil circles that Indonesia was the place to be. Indonesia had been a major oil producer even before WW II and the only thing that had kept it from really prospering after the war was the political situation. There was never any doubts that oil could be found in the archipelago. The same thing could be said for mining prospects. The availability of ore was never questioned; only the country's political stability and attitude towards foreign investment were in doubt.

Starting in the late Spring 1966, all kinds of Americans began to trickle into Indonesia. They came in increasing numbers. It became a subject for discussion in the Embassy because we had come to the conclusion that almost every kind of American was beginning to come to Indonesia -- Bunker Hunt, Roy Huffington and other Presidents of major US corporations. I met some of them in my office and some in Paul McCusker's office. But then there were the adventurers and con men. Some caused us some trouble. One for example was named John F. Kennedy, if you can believe that. He insisted to all Indonesians who would listen that he was a close relative of the former President. He built a fairly large structure -- an office building that he was putting up on spec -- across from the Hotel Indonesia. It was about half way up before the Indonesians found out that he was a complete fraud and perhaps even a criminal. As the Indonesians began to close in on him, he suddenly disappeared. The building stayed half erected for many years. So we had a large number

of unsavory characters trying to make their fortune in Indonesia. They misled the Indonesians and certainly did nothing to enhance American reputation.

The biggest single incident of that kind of fraud in which I was personally involved did not concern an American. A major bidding war took place in 1967 among several companies for the rights to mine the lateritic nickel deposits in Sulawesi -- an immense deposit. Among the bidders were: International Nickel, headquartered in NY, although registered as a Canadian company; Kaiser Nickel -- a French-American joint venture; and Sumitomo. Japanese. In the course of that bidding, Kaiser raised questions about the propriety of the Embassy's role in the process. It believed that we were supporting International Nickel, which was not true. I told Tom Singer, from Kaiser, that I would offer him exactly the same advice and assistance that I would somebody from International Nickel, which was more than ½ owned by Americans. And in fact I did. The fact was that Phil Jessup and Bill Bell of INCO showed up ten times as often as Singer did, which may have made it seem that we were leaning towards INCO.

The competition was decided at technical levels by the Ministry of Mines in favor of INCO. Then the real battle began. I didn't realize what was about to happen, being rather new at this game. Kaiser-Nickel offered to build some projects -- waterworks, etc -- as political bribes, if the political decision makers would reverse the technicians. Bell went to the Canadian Ambassador -- Olivier -- who was absolutely no help, although INCO was really a Canadian company. One evening, Bell came to see me, quite upset with the French for trying to win the bid with bribes. I suggested that we go see Marshall Green, which we did at his Residence. Bill Bell explained the situation as he saw it. Marshall became as angry as he ever got. When asked what he should do, we advised him to see the Indonesian government officials, which he did. He went to see Sudomo Umardani, a key military officer with direct access to Suharto.

This bid for mineral exploration rights was essentially the first large contract that the new Suharto government was going to sign. It was worth \$1 billion approximately, which in 1967 was a huge amount. Marshall told Umardani that if the technical level decision were overturned, it could cast a long shadow over any future investment considerations which would be a real set back for Indonesia. Marshall's strong argument took Umardani by surprise. His representations were duplicated by the Economic Section; we all went to our contacts with the same argument. All our arguments, but mostly Marshall Green's of course, I think helped carry the day. The Indonesian leadership upheld the technical findings and recommendations, and INCO won the contract.

The Kaiser people then went to the State Department and complained vigorously about the Embassy and its involvement in a "private" matter, but there really weren't grounds for their complaints. If anything, Kaiser should have been berated for trying to win a contract by bribery. We weren't taking sides. All we were really doing was defending the decision that the technical levels had reached; it would have been a real blow to Indonesia had the decision gone in another direction. We were defending the integrity of the bidding process so that future potential investors would not be concerned by any hanky-panky and could feel comfortable investing in Indonesia. It was very important that the Indonesians understand the importance of the perception of an honest bidding process to the future of investment in their country. I am not sure they necessarily remembered the lesson forever, or even for long, but at least in this case, the final judgement was technically and ethnically defensible.

I suspect that even in those days, French companies were making "under the table" offers. The waterworks offer to Makassar was clearly a political bribe -- if not a cash one -- because the Trade Minister would have been the beneficiary of the project that the French were willing to build in his district. And he was one of the key decision makers on the nickel project. Bribery was rampant during Sukarno's regime. I don't really know whether the new military (Suharto) government reduced that kind of activity; it may have but it is very hard to document. But it was always assumed that a certain amount of bribery was taking place. Paul McCusker had a close friend, Vladimir Gold -- a Czech/American -- who was close to the Indonesian Central Bank's President. Vladimir had extensive knowledge of bribes which he used to report to us -- except (I assume) for any amounts that he himself might have skimmed off. So in general we had a pretty good general picture of "the under the table" activities taking place in Indonesia. But I am not sure that during this early period, bribery was an overwhelming factor in commercial transactions. Someone who had been in Korea thought the Indonesians were minor league compared to the Koreans. I don't believe that bribery in Indonesia was out of line from that taking place in East Asia in general, where that type of activity is much more part of the culture than it is in the West.

The oil area, which took much of my time, also undoubtedly included bribery, but there was also much more irregular activity than that involved. This was an important situation which colored a lot of foreign investment in Indonesia. General Ibnu Sutowo was in charge of Indonesia's oil activities. He reported directly to Suharto. I was warned about Sutowo by some of my Indonesian contacts. From the day he was appointed, he began to make himself an independent political/economic power and built his own fiefdom, which we thoroughly reported to Washington. PERTAMINA -- the Indonesian government oil company that he led -- hired bodyguards with the uniforms and equipment of a regular army. He built a civilian "air force" of considerable magnitude which he used to fly people all over the country. At a later stage, he began to try to acquire some old tankers from the Dutch -- which would have given him a small army, air force and navy as well. He became very powerful. He did not, I was told by American oil men, solicit payments personally. He established an insurance company in Hong Kong. If any oil company wanted to do business in Indonesia, it had to buy insurance from this Hong Kong company. That was a very lucrative business, but that was apparently only one of his ancillary industries. Needless to say, Ibnu Sutowo became extraordinarily wealthy and an independent political power. It was no news to the Indonesians economists that this was happening; it was a concern to them because they understood that the major foreign exchange earner for Indonesia was the oil business which was controlled by Ibnu, reporting directly to Suharto. That is not a process with which a professional economist is comfortable. Ibnu was probably completely unconcerned by the macroeconomic impact of his empire. I must say that it was the general perception that much of PERMTAMINA's profits were being channeled through the Army into the economic development of Indonesia, but it was not a process that was under the control of anyone but Ibnu and Suharto. I used to discuss these issues with reporters like Bob Keatley of the "Wall Street Journal" and he wrote some reports on these Indonesian practices.

I was professionally concerned about this informal process as well as other schemes that grew up as foreign investment in Indonesia poured in. Long after I left, Ibnu Sutowo overplayed his hand and was fired by Suharto. At the time I was there, my advice to Marshall Green was to avoid Ibnu Sutowo. He was not a savory person with whom the American Ambassador should be associated,

in my view, even if he was a forceful and effective manager. His personal aggrandizement was not the model that we should have encouraged in Indonesia by being seen with him. Marshall never did. I must say that after 1968, Ambassador Frank Galbraith and Colonel George Benson of the MAAG did have contacts with Sutowo; I thought that was unfortunate, but it was probably more realistic.

I am not sure that PERTAMINA was unique; there were probably other industrial power centers developing, such as the tin mining business, etc. Most likely, each of these major ore extracting business had one Indonesian "shepherd" who took advantage of the opportunity to help himself. But Ibnu Sutowo was I think the leader of the pack...because oil was so big.

Before making further comments, I should point out at this stage of my career that I was pretty callow. I had finished my apprenticeship in the Foreign Service -- with some rough spots that I have described. My assignment to Indonesia was that of a journeyman reporting officer; I was learning my craft in Jakarta, and I think I was coming along. I still had some idealism in me, however. What I found in Indonesia -- the empires built by people like Ibnu Sutowo, the corruption, the inefficiencies -- always took me somewhat by surprise. I don't know what I expected, but much of what I saw in Indonesia was an eye-opener.

This was my first assignment to a country under a military dictatorship. That was also novel to me. Marshall Green was instrumental in shaping my views on issues such as that which I hold still. Marshall's view was that the first generation of Southeast Asia leaders, like Sukarno, had been nationalists whose goals were the establishment of independent nations. Sukarno must be given credit for achieving Indonesia's independence from Holland and for forming one nation out of a number of disparate islands. But his political agenda did not include economic development; few if any of the first generation Southeast Asia leaders had given much thought beyond independence.

Economic development was left to the second generation of leadership. That required qualified technocrats and in Indonesia's case, it was fortunate enough to have them. It was the technocrats who were able to look to the long range future and were able to develop their plans unencumbered by the exigencies of the moment. In Indonesia, these technocrats included the generals, who had become engineers and builders and who had been smart enough to surround themselves with people, like Widjojo and the "Berkeley Mafia." They had heard these economists at their War College in Bandung, and when the generals came to power, they quickly brought these economists into posts of influence. Even generals like Ibnu, despite his personal predilection, was a great manager and used the economists to maximize the exploitation of oil for the benefit of his country.

We understood that the military was not forming democratic institutions, but with their focus on economic development there is no doubt in my mind that Indonesia needed Suharto and those generals at that stage of the country's development. A military, with an appreciation of the importance of economic development, can be useful to that process in a Third World country. I think that in the late 20th Century, some countries need strong central control to marshall their human resources -- bureaucracy, industry, farmers, etc -- to foster as rapid development as possible. I think it is not appropriate to measure Third World development against the earlier experiences of Europe and the US. They developed in different times and places. The US did not have examples outside its geographic area which could be used as models of development. The

Industrial Revolution was native to England and Western Europe; the opening of the West was native to the US. We developed on our own -- albeit more slowly.

That is not true of the Third World today. The countries of Africa and Asia have the West and the US helping them to move ahead in order to close the economic gap between North and South. Furthermore, the populations of the Third World have access to the economically developed world and have a model which they wish to emulate as rapidly as possible. I suggest that these Third World countries can afford to achieve rapid economic development even at the cost of some political freedom. The direction provided by strong central governments is most likely the avenue which will accelerate economic development the most. This trade-off -- repression in exchange for hopes of a rapidly rising standard of living -- is not always, in all cases, desirable, but I think many of the Third World populations feel that the short term pain is worth it if the long range economic gains are realized. I ran into this dilemma in Korea later on, where I think the trade-off was consciously and correctly made by the Koreans.

The debate about Sukarno's dictatorship in the Embassy in Jakarta was quite acute before I arrived in 1965. By the time Marshall Green took over, however, the tensions had pretty well dissipated. Marshall himself was such a great leader that there were no internal frictions in the Embassy. Aside from his brilliance and professional insight, Green's puns and humor were instrumental in maintaining cohesion in the Embassy. When he first arrived, the Embassy staff was invited to the Residence. When we got there, we found that there were already 3 or 4 thousand Indonesians in the square in front of the Residence. They had signs, along the lines "Green, go home." Marshall was somewhat startled, having just arrived. He started that day -- and still does today -- to refer to these demonstrators as "Gringos." He said that despite this unfriendly welcome, he took heart because at the bottom of one of the signs there was written in lipstick: ".....and take me with you." That was a sign to him that eventually he would be welcomed.

There are numerous stories about Marshall Green. He is one of the heroes of the Foreign Service. One day, I took some mining people to see the Ambassador. I was the note taker and was busy doing so. But with Marshall, once you got to know him, you could feel when he was about to make one of his famous puns. On that day, at the end of the meeting, as people were saying goodbye, Marshall stopped them and said: "Gentlemen, just a minute please before you leave. I have been thinking about your mining prospects. Freeport Sulfur I notice is out here looking for copper, US Steel is out looking for bauxite; Anaconda Copper is here looking for tin. The trouble with you people is that no one is mining their own business."

Whatever of substance he had told them, the miners remembered that pun. Marshall had a tremendous intellect that could make a point in a very unusual way. His wit got him into trouble a little later, however, when he told Stanley Karnow that "he knew what we were doing in Cambodia; we were widening down the war." Karnow printed that without attribution, but the substitution of the word "widening" for "winding" immediately pointed to Marshall. Henry Kissinger reportedly knew where the leak had come from. No one else in the US Government could have coined a phrase like that. But Green's immense intellect and wit, bolstered by tremendous spirit and energy, was a unifying force for the Embassy in Jakarta and an inspiration to me personally.

I had met Marshall just once before when I was in Canberra; he and his wife Lisa had come down to Australia. Australia held a life long fascination for Marshall; I think he was happy to conclude his Foreign Service career as Ambassador to that country. On that early visit, he had blown through the Embassy like a whirlwind; so that is how I remembered him.

I might just add that in terms of my own personal development, I felt I was an apprentice in the Foreign Service until I was assigned to Jakarta. The early period was not a period that I remember with any great relish, particularly the Bonn assignment which came close to ending my career then and there. Jakarta was a tremendous opportunity; I grew professionally there. I found that I was interested in reporting and writing and although ostensibly an economic officer, I was reporting on political economic matters -- mining, oil and the politics thereof. I began to develop a writing style which I think enabled me to communicate quite well with readers. I also began to think in broad terms, putting the immediate experience in broader contexts; i.e. feudal baronies at the center of economic development; the impact of bribes of all sorts on a government. But not only the limitations: the ability of Suharto's military dictatorship, using well trained economists, to bring order, stability and development to a chaotic situation was apparent. Furthermore, I began to understand that it was the role of an American embassy to assist American business -- that is a theme that became increasingly important to me in my later assignments. The American business community comprises a very influential part of the power that the US is able to exert in different foreign countries. That led me to the conclusion that an embassy should aid American business ventures -- not always obviously and not blindly -- but as a tool of US foreign policy. All of these views emerged and were strengthened by my Jakarta experience. So I consider that assignment to have been pivotal to my career and my own life. I think back on it as being one of two most important assignments along with Korea. It was a great maturing experience.

I must say, though, that by the end of my tour in Jakarta, I had had my fill of economic assignments. The Department however, had different views; it wanted to use my Indonesian experience and assigned me to the Office of Fuels and Energy in the Bureau of Economic Affairs in Washington. I would have preferred to work on the Indonesia desk or some other assignment with more political content in the East Asia Bureau. During early days in the Foreign Service, I always intended to follow the footsteps of my older cousins, Stanley -- an economic officer in the Foreign Service -- Harlan and Van, who had been deeply involved in the Marshall Plan. As time progressed I hoped to move out of the economic specialty, however. I wanted to become a political officer. That view was reinforced by my Indonesian experience, which, as I suggested, called for more political than economic analysis. I never felt very confident as an "economist"; Gordon Donald and the more junior Mal Churchill knew a lot more about macro-economics -- GDP, balance of payments, foreign exchange, etc. -- than I did. I did not need to have that statistical background for my job in Indonesia; I was comfortable dealing with the supply side of an economy, but the issues that I had to analyze were more often than not political rather than economic. That reinforced my desire to move into the political "cone" so that I could study how people acted and reacted. How governments operated and how to deal with them on political and security issues.

MARSHALL GREEN

**Ambassador
Indonesia (1965-1971)**

Ambassador Marshall Green was born in Massachusetts in 1916. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1939 and joined the Foreign Service in 1945. His career included positions in Sweden, Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, Indonesia, and Washington, DC. Ambassador Green was interviewed by Robert J. Martens in 1987.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, you arrived in Indonesia in June or July of 1965 I believe. Can you tell me your impressions of Indonesia's political orientation at that time and the state of US-Indonesia relations?

GREEN: Indonesia was clearly under the full control of President Sukarno who in turn depended in part on the strong support of the PKI, which was the Communist Party of Indonesia and the dominant party of that country at that time. Sukarno had totally neglected the economy and the economic issues that were threatening his country; he was moving ahead toward expropriating foreign companies including important American companies like CalTex and Goodyear. The state of our relations at that time was obviously bad and getting worse. We were reducing our presence in Indonesia and our aid programs. We were still trying to get along with Sukarno since he was the only effective force in Indonesia and Indonesia was such an important country. However, already by 1964, our government was split on how far we should go in playing up to Sukarno or opposing him. Our ambassador at that time was Howard Jones, rather a saint of a man, who had a close friendship with Sukarno and tended to see the best in all people. Although he was quite aware of Sukarno's shortcomings and the dangers that he posed to our country, Howard Jones, nevertheless, believed very firmly that the best thing that we could do, pending the time when maybe Sukarno would change or things would change for the better, was to just muddle along, continuing our aid program, although reducing it somewhat but in all events to keep in close touch with Sukarno personally, attending his parties and playing up to him and not insulting him unnecessarily, in the hope that some day conditions might turn out to be better.

As far as my own arrival on the scene, Sukarno hated to see Jones go and saw in me a different type of diplomat, one that was perhaps best described as a no-nonsense type, a man who was not going to play the Jones game. Therefore Sukarno made life rather uncomfortable for me. My arrival was attended by signs all over the streets of Jakarta saying "Green go home". Under one of those signs someone had scrawled in lipstick "And take me with you". So I always had faith, especially in the students who later on played a very major role in Sukarno's demise. When I presented my letters shortly after arrival, maybe within two weeks, there was a big affair at the palace. Thousands of guests were there. I was attired in a white business suit, as indeed all my principal officers wore. We all lined up facing Sukarno and some of his 105 cabinet members in the Istana (which is the palace) -- at which time I then read my carefully prepared remarks that had been cleared in Washington for the occasion and in which we said all the nice things we could possibly say about Indonesia and its president. Then I stepped back and Sukarno stood forward and delivered a terrific blast against American foreign policy. Well, you know, on occasions like that diplomats oftentimes leave the room, but I decided that I had no choice but to stay. When he finished, Sukarno then introduced me to the leading guests. Our voices were being carried by microphones

all over the room, everyone was listening, so this is how I got back at Sukarno. When he introduced me to the third-ranking person in the Foreign Office, a woman who was one of his many former mistresses, Madam Supeni, who is a very beautiful woman, I said to her, very loud so that everybody could hear: "Madam Supeni, it's a great pleasure to meet you. You know with that beautiful raven hair and flashing eyes and green sari I really couldn't keep my mind on what the president was saying during his recent remarks. Could you tell me what he said." Well, there was a ghastly silence and Sukarno, who in a way was flattered by the attention I gave to his former mistress, slapped his thigh and laughed and everybody laughed. There was a general sigh of relief around the room.

Well, when that occasion was over, my wife and I went back to the Embassy residence which is about a mile or two away. En route to the Embassy we could see large mobs forming in the streets. These were so-called student demonstrators but they looked to me more like what we called Sukarno's goon squad which consisted of betjak (pedicab) drivers and the like, with banners screaming: "Green go home" and all that stuff. The Chief of Protocol of the Indonesian Foreign Office who accompanied us was clearly nervous at what was about to transpire. We had all the gates locked, but the mobs began to swarm all around the residence. I knew that on occasions like these the best thing to do, because I had been told this by members of my staff, was to receive a delegation of these protesters. So we admitted about a dozen of them and they all came in, rather sheepishly, except for one or two of their organized leaders who were probably dyed-in-the-wool Sukarnaites, or professional Communists. They came into the residence, we sat around on our porch and they delivered themselves of tirades against the United States. I told them that I would take their points into consideration and inform my government about it and good-bye. Well, they left, but I was humiliated the next day to read in all the government-controlled press that GREEN was cowering and trembling under the sofa while they read this declaration. This was typical of the kind of humiliations to which the American Embassy was daily subjected. You asked me what the relationship was like; I can go on describing a lot more of these encounters that I had with Sukarno and the communists, but I'll stop there.

Q: You mentioned that there were differences between your approach and that of former Ambassador Jones, and I believe in general there had been rather optimistic hopes by many people in earlier years concerning former President Sukarno's probable intentions once West Irian had been brought to an apparent successful conclusion in 1962, as I recall. Could you tell us from your experience as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asia Bureau prior to your assignment as ambassador, what your impressions were of US policy toward Sukarno and what was the degree of US re-evaluation of its policy?

GREEN: Since September of 1963 we started to cut back on our military assistance.

Q: That was when the British Embassy was sacked?

GREEN: That's right. The flow of MAP (Military Assistance Program) material was cut out and we confined our assistance to items that would not in any way enhance Indonesia's military capabilities because of Indonesia's armed confrontations against Malaysia and the British. However, the Indonesian Army had many members who were our friends. We regarded the Indonesian Army as perhaps in the long run containing the elements that might save the situation

in Indonesia. We did not like to do that which cut back our contacts with them. So we did continue to give civic action type support to the Indonesian military and we continued to receive Indonesian military in our advanced schools which turned out to be a very good investment. But back in Washington there was a growing rift among Secretary Rusk's advisors as to how we should be handling the whole Indonesian situation. I might start by saying that Dean Rusk in my opinion was one of our great Secretaries of State, but, as far as Indonesia was concerned, he never was very interested in Indonesia. He reacted so strongly to the Indonesian attacks on Malaysia and the British that he stood back from Indonesian affairs leaving them in other officials' hands, two in particular: one was Bill Bundy, who was the Assistant Secretary at that time -- I was his Deputy -- and, on the other hand, to Averell Harriman who was Senior advisor to the Secretary of State in his capacity as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Averell Harriman was very much of the Jones' school. His background experience had been Europe, but he was deeply interested in the developing world, recognizing Indonesia's importance and Indonesia's importance tended to intrude very much on his policy views as to how Indonesia should be handled. His message seemed to be: "We shouldn't do that which would affront Indonesia. We have been too European oriented, we have to make up for the colonial past." All of that tended to make him sympathetic to the Jones' school of thought and he had backers in the National Security Council staff like Mike Forrestal, and in the CIA like Bob Komer. Those two in particular were strong supporters of the Harriman-Jones' school of thought. On the other hand, Bill Bundy was so tied up with Vietnam that most other responsibilities in the area devolved into my hands, including Indonesia.

We had on our staff David Cottrell who was the officer in charge of Indonesian affairs and who opposed the appeasement line. He believed that Indonesia needed a good punch, that the best way to turn things around was to hold Indonesia at arms' length and not give in. He, you might say, was the opposite pole from Jones. I tended to side with Cottrell on this. I wouldn't express myself perhaps so forthrightly as he did sometimes. He was not a man to mince words and he was a marvelous lampoonist. Anyway David had a good deal of influence on my thinking.

We had a showdown early in 1965. At that time it was decided to send Ellsworth Bunker out to Indonesia to take a hard look at the situation. I had several meetings with Ellsworth whom I came to respect as a seasoned diplomat. He was balanced, objective, and middle of the road.

He had a very successful trip to Indonesia. I was not with him, but I talked to him before and after his trip and I was impressed with the line that he took in his conversations with Sukarno. He said something which I had long believed. We had too large a presence in Indonesia. He recommended a reduction in terms of Sukarno's own interests, as well as our own, in order to present a smaller target to the strong nationalistic emotions of the Indonesians. Therefore he was recommending to our government that there be a reduction in the size of our Embassy and of our programs. In other words, he carried out very diplomatically the whole idea of reducing our presence and standing back a bit from events. That was the same policy approach I pursued later on when I was named Ambassador to Indonesia.

I was visiting Korea in the Spring of 1965 when a telegram was received from the White House asking: was I interested in being ambassador to Indonesia and had I any reasons to have reservations about taking it on? I replied that I would be delighted - no, not delighted- but I would be glad to take on this challenging assignment. So I did. So that brings us back to the time of my

arrival. I knew from Jones' letters, because he and I were in close touch, that it was not going to be any bed of roses.

Q: The so-called Gestapu coup occurred on September 30/October 1, 1965 not long after you arrived. There have been various accounts of what this was about. Can you tell us what happened?

GREEN: The most important thing to bear in mind in that connection is that Sukarno had been pressing for a Nasakom government, which was a blending of nationalism, religion and Communism. That's how you get the Nasakom, the "a" being religion (for the Indonesian word agama). Now at this point Sukarno was favoring the Communists but he had as his principal opponents the Army. That doesn't mean the Army was not obeying his commands, because they were. But Sukarno knew very well that most army officers were anti-Communists and so did the Communists.

At this time Sukarno's health was deteriorating. He long had had kidney and other ailments which appeared to be intensifying. Sukarno consulted both modern Western doctors as well as traditional Chinese doctors who would come down to see him. The word got around that his health was deteriorating and he might not be long for this world. The PKI (the Communist Party) was clearly fearful that if Sukarno should suddenly leave the scene, the Army would crush the Communists, which is probably what would have happened. Hence the PKI, probably with Sukarno's connivance, raised charges about there being a council of generals that was going to do what they feared, in other words they flushed out into the public domain the possibility, the probability, that the Army would move against them, that they had to act while Sukarno was still around to neutralize the generals. This was the setting for the Communist attempted coup. They pulled the coup on the thirtieth of September, actually in the early hours of October one in which they succeeded in killing five or six top generals but they missed out on Nasution and Suharto. They almost got Nasution. Suharto was away and apparently escaped for that reason. The grisly way the generals were killed had a great deal to do with the popular reaction afterward. Circumstantial evidence would indicate that, as soon as the PKI coup succeeded, Sukarno would then set up a Nasakom government possibly in Jogjakarta or in Jakarta. But the coup misfired and misfired very badly. The Communists were actually in control of Jakarta for less than a day.

Q: There have been charges by some that the Embassy or CIA was involved and was behind General Suharto and the Army. What is your response to that?

GREEN: There was absolutely no Embassy or CIA involvement in the coup or behind it in any shape or form. I know that the charge was raised which is one of the reasons why one of the first things that I did when I learned about this coup, particularly when it failed, was to caution Washington about claiming credit or saying that we anticipated this event. Our credit was that of a surf board rider who came through the thundering surf unscathed ashore. We didn't create the waves: we only rode the waves ashore. One of the first things I did was to send a telegram, Bob Rich I think drafted it, and said in so many words to shut up. As a matter of fact, my friend Howard Jones was beginning to write a series of articles for the "Washington Post", which he had contracted to do a week before the abortive coup. Howard Jones recognized the situation and cancelled them. It was a time for us to be quiet. By keeping quiet, the American role, such as it was and laudable as it was, has never received adequate notice.

Q: I remember myself from that time that we were riding around town for the next two or three days trying to find out what was going on because it was very difficult to understand and it was only two days later when we really understood that Sukarno wasn't dead. We thought at first that he might have been assassinated.

GREEN: We were just as puzzled as everybody else. The night of the coup I had been out in the kampongs (villages) with my New Zealand colleague in a betjak looking at some wayang shows. When we came back I heard or saw nothing unusual in the streets. That was about one o'clock in the morning. The actual attack took place at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. I came down to the office at 8 the following morning. There were some strange military stationed along the street. I couldn't identify them nor could our military attaché, Willis Ethel. The radio station seemed to be in the hands of the coup group and orders were being issued in the name of a Colonel Untung - a name unknown to all the diplomats. Even so, we weren't sure how extensive the coup control was. Was it a real coup d'etat or what? We were just as puzzled as the whole community.

Q: Can you give the atmosphere during the next week or so that followed as to conditions in the Embassy? How people reacted to it? How you reacted? How we gradually began to understand what was taking place?

GREEN: Well we did come gradually to understand what was taking place partly through our own officers who were fanning out, partly from radio announcements and the like, partly from communications with other officials and our diplomatic colleagues. But it soon became apparent that the coup was effectively over, except for fighting in the Mount Merapi area. The RPKAD, assisted by elements of the Siliwangi Division, moved swiftly to rout the coup group, but the military refrained from arresting Sukarno. Sukarno continued to be president, albeit a weakened and suspect president. It was a very uncertain, potentially explosive situation.

The biggest problems I faced with Washington was over evacuating Americans. George Ball and Sam Berger (who had succeeded me in the FE Bureau in the Department) had set up a telecon with our Embassy. Flanked by my principal officers, I then discussed the situation through the telecon for half a day with Washington. First of all, they asked for our assessment of what had happened and they urged evacuation of all American dependents. We said that none of the other diplomats were leaving town, that, as a matter of fact, it was almost impossible to move around, that we couldn't even get to the airport. Since the city was under curfew, it would be very difficult to carry out any kind of evacuation of Americans. The best thing and the safest thing for Americans to do was just to stay home, stay off the streets. The few we needed in the office went there. We would decide later what should be done. But a very nervous Washington refused to accept that advice and we were told to evacuate, but they at least acknowledged that we did not have to evacuate right away. We should evacuate Americans as soon as possible. Although we did not agree with that order, we had to carry it out. I do remember calling all the Americans together saying this is "the Declaration of No-dependence" because all dependents are going to have to leave. My wife was very upset by this order and thought that at least she should stay. Of course a lot of the senior officers felt that way, recognizing that the wives were playing an important role in the Embassy. Nevertheless we did have to evacuate all dependents, which we did over the next several weeks.

Q: The Embassy had been cutting down a great deal already in its personnel staff...

GREEN: That's right.

Q: AID had largely gone, and USIA, I believe, had been reduced to one person.

GREEN: We had a small staff. As a matter of fact it was one tenth the size of the mission that I was in charge of in Korea sometime earlier, to show you how small we were relative to other U.S. embassies.

Q: By this time, as things began to unfold, the Army, particularly General Suharto, was taking charge, how soon did we have contact with General Suharto and with the Indonesian military generally?

GREEN: I don't believe I had any talk with General Suharto until May 29th, 1966 which was about nine months later on. I did see Suharto sometimes at a public function, we'd nod at each other, but I'm talking about meeting with him privately. From the beginning we recognized the importance of establishing some contacts at authoritative levels of the government, which meant Suharto, and Malik. Malik was effectively the Foreign Minister. He had been Minister without Portfolio and he was clearly a man who knew what was going on and had strong sympathies for Suharto and Suharto for him. It was largely through Col. Willis Ethel, our Army Attaché, who knew Suharto's aide -- they were good personal friends -- that I carried on a relationship with Suharto for the next nine months. I did meanwhile have a relationship with Adam Malik. I saw him from time to time. It was almost always in a sort of clandestine setting. I would meet him in someone's house and in that way I had a very clear idea what Suharto thought and what Malik thought and what they were proposing to do, and it all made a great deal of sense to me. In fact I was impressed with Suharto from the beginning. He was rational, pragmatic, balanced, objective and also modest. He had no pretensions. He was a professional soldier and a man of the people. His parents had a very small farm in Central Java. They couldn't even afford a bullock to plow the field. He was not what you would call a sophisticated thinker but he was ready to listen to the right people. Meanwhile we began having contacts with other people in the government, particularly in the economic ministries. Many of these people had had advanced training in the United States, most of them at Berkeley, so they were called the Berkeley Mafia. Thus we began to discuss issues with officials who had effective responsibilities in this new government. Sukarno, of course, meanwhile continued to be president and this gave rise to a whole series of problems which we can talk about subsequently. I'm simply talking about the problem of communication with the new government. One of the first things that I did for Suharto - they didn't ask for any assistance but clearly they were in need of assistance -- was entirely on my own, I ordered that all 14 of the walkie-talkies that we had in the Embassy for emergency communications be handed over to Suharto. This provided additional internal security for him and his own top officers, but the real reason was to show that we recognized that their safety was that important to our country. I reported this to Washington and received a most gratifying telegram back from Bill Bundy who always gave me great support as did Sam Berger and Frank Underhill. Another way we assisted Indonesia - which was in terrible financial straits - the interest rate was 2% a day at one point - was through a secret arrangement that was legal. We didn't have to have Congressional approval. We gave Indonesia medicines as permitted by law. We realized that they were not going to need all those medicines and they sold

some of them to earn critically needed foreign exchange. We are not talking about large amounts. It was quite clear we were dealing with a new government that had its sights set on that which was congenial to our own foreign policy aims and those of Indonesia's neighbors. It was a great moment in history.

Q: After the September 30th affair, as it is called, the Indonesian Communist Party or the PKI as it has been referred to several times, was almost totally destroyed in the months that followed. At that time it had been one of the largest Communist parties in the world. It was something like three and a half million full members and about twenty million perhaps, an estimate, of the members of various front organizations. People were surprised by this rapid collapse, and by the fact that it did not fight like the Chinese had in the thirties. Why do you think this collapse occurred so rapidly?

GREEN: I don't know, and I believe, Bob, that you probably know more about this than anybody, but, for my part I would say that clearly one of the reasons was the very size of the Indonesian Communist Party which some claim was the largest in the world..

Q: Outside the Soviets and the Chinese...

GREEN: But it came mighty close to being as large as theirs. I mean you're talking about millions of people. Now when you have that many in a country like Indonesia you're dealing with a lot of people who don't know much about Communism. And when you spread it out that thin you're obviously bringing in a lot of people that are not going to be very good in the crunch. They certainly were not properly trained and disciplined so that the whole structure, cadres and so forth, was eminently weak. If anything happens of a cataclysmic nature it is going to blow it all away. I think that is fundamentally the reason why the Party collapsed so readily. They obviously couldn't stand up against the Army and the strains of the moment.

Q: The strategy also was to rely almost totally on Sukarno. So it was kind of a revolution from the top that had its great advantages when Sukarno was riding high but when this sudden failure occurred, Sukarno's prestige was rapidly eroded and the PKI was caught with their fingers in the cookie jar. So Sukarno could not really support them completely. Their total reliance on Sukarno was then a weakness because they had no reserve strength really.

GREEN: I think there is another fact too that might be worthy of mentioning and that is that the PKI did have particularly close connections with the Chinese Communist Party, and the Chinese basically are unpopular in Indonesia. The association of the PKI with the Chinese, in the last analysis, put them in a more exposed position.

Q: There have been many reports, of course, of the thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people that died in the cataclysm that followed. Many of these being Communists in Central and East Java particularly, in Bali, in north Sumatra; many of them probably were not, they were people like those you mentioned who may have had nominal connections with the Communist Party but who had been induced to join the front organizations. No one really knows the total of this. Maybe the story has been overstated. There are some of us who believe that the numbers killed were probably much less, but nobody really knows. What is your view of that?

GREEN: I share your view that probably the figure was less than we reported. I was called back to Washington in early February, 1966. We were beginning to receive reports of killings already in November 1965. Most of the killings seemed to have taken place in October, but the reports were vague. There were no photographs. Nobody in our Embassy saw any bodies. Nor did we meet anybody who had seen the killings. They were all rumors. As I said, President Johnson called me back to Washington in early February and I knew one of the questions that they were going to ask me in Washington was how many people were killed. We didn't have any idea, so I asked everybody in our country team to put down on paper how many they guessed were killed and I averaged it out. The result was three hundred thousand, so when I was asked in Washington how many were killed I said "We don't know, but if we had to make a wild guess it was probably around three hundred thousand." I should have said about three hundred thousand, plus or minus two hundred and fifty thousand, that would have been probably closer to the truth. But our report leaked out, and the three hundred thousand figure was the one that came to be more or less generally accepted.

Q: I remember that Henry Heymann, after going down to Surabaya as the consul general, it was one of the areas where there had been considerable killings, he went out a number of times when reports came in that the Brantas River was choked with bodies and he never found a body. It was choked with bodies that weren't there, although he did tell me that the British Consul that lived on the bank of the river had seen two.

GREEN: That was the only report I remember: what the British Consul had told Henry Heymann.

Q: About two or three months after the September 30 affair occurred, the gradual build-up of resistance to Sukarno's effort to regain power, and as a part of the movement to overcome what was called the old order, or the order in which Sukarno and the Communists had been riding high, the student movement began. This was particularly strong after about January 1966. It began with the University students called KAMI coming out and followed by the high school students called KAPPI. Can you discuss what you feel was behind the student movements, were they entirely spontaneous, were they partly spontaneous, what were their motives. What were they trying to do?

GREEN: I don't think anything is purely spontaneous. There was a degree of spontaneity in their moves. First of all Sukarno continued to remain on as president. He continued to say things that tended to outrage the students justifying his past actions. I do think that the economic situation probably had something to do with it too. Wild inflation was setting in and devaluation of the rupiah went to one hundredth or more of its earlier value. It was particularly difficult for the students. They didn't have any means of livelihood except the old worthless allowances. They just couldn't afford bus fares or things like that and there was a great deal of resentment. In that situation probably there were people in the Army (of course we know that Sarwo Edhie was one of the principal ring leaders of the students) that saw in the students' movement a good way of bringing pressure on Sukarno to vacate his power or at least to get off the stage. This was better than the military doing it themselves. Also the students in many other countries had done this. I had been in Korea, where the students had brought down Syngman Rhee. Probably the memories of how reversals in other countries had taken place, ousters that had taken place with the use of students, were known to the Army. The student movement was spontaneous to a degree but also

manipulated by the military.

Q: We had no role?

GREEN: No, not at all. The students had always been friendly to us though. I remember even when Sukarno was in power, driving past truckloads of students with the American flag at the fender of the car; I never took it off. When they saw the American flag, they yelled "Hidup America." I don't remember one student ever making an ugly gesture at the flag.

Q: Hidup means "long live".

GREEN: They liked the Americans. And I think Americans generally are seen as outgoing, friendly people. Anyway in the eyes of the students we seemed popular, just as we had been in Korea.

Q: Well, I think they were quite fed up with what had been taking place, with the old regime. Well, then finally the Army took control in March 1966 some seven months or so after the so-called September 30 affair, the original coup. Why did this happen? Why did it take so long? Was this an Army coup to overthrow Sukarno, or was it something else?

GREEN: The very fact that it took so long to come about substantiates the view I've held from the very beginning that this was not an Army coup. The Army was caught by surprise. It was the RPKAD supported by elements of the Siliwangi Army division that saved the situation initially, but getting rid of Sukarno took a long time. Nasution was really in charge of the military; he was the senior officer, being the Defense Minister, and the principal leader of the military, and Suharto would probably be number two in the pecking order.

Q: Nasution was still Minister of Defense, I believe.

GREEN: That's right.

Q: He was fired though by [Sukarno in February 1966].

GREEN: That's right, he was fired, but what happened was never fully reported. I remember very well two or three incidents that are still fresh in my memory. One of them was a palace meeting around December 22nd in 1965 in which Sukarno ordered Nasution to take certain steps

Anyway Nasution backed away from confronting Sukarno. He shrank back in the presence of Sukarno and a gathering at the Istana. Suharto then stepped forward and took responsibility and effectively took power away from Nasution. That was the turning point. Then shortly after that encounter on January 1st, Suharto managed to reverse Sukarno's order known as Directive 6 which was to take over all the foreign companies. There was a meeting of the economic ministers up in Bogor. Suharto arrived there in his helicopter, marched into the conference room, and with his marshal's baton rapped the table and said there was not going to be any taking over of foreign companies. He was talking specially about the oil companies and the possible loss of foreign exchange earnings for the Indonesian government. This was a loss Indonesia couldn't afford and

therefore there was not going to be any such Directive. With that he marched out. It was an event that has not been adequately recognized by historians. But I think it was a very important one in which Suharto really asserted his authority over Sukarno, the old order, and in many ways over Nasution or anybody else who might have been vying for the leadership of the country. It was effectively in the beginning of 1966 that Suharto took responsibility for national security.

Q: Again the final moves. There was a so-called March 11 order by Suharto, before which Sukarno was in a sense trying to get the power back.

GREEN: Trying to get the power back. I remember in February 1966 talking to my diplomatic colleagues one by one. Most of them thought Sukarno would come back. They thought the military would not be able to handle the economic situation and the country would begin to fall apart and the military would begin to fight amongst themselves. There was, you might say, an impending battle between certain components of the armed services (the Navy, the Marines, the police, the Air Force, on the one hand- all shot through with communists) and the Army, though there were also pro-communists in the Army. About eleven or twelve Army battalions which were pro-communist were shipped off to some of the outer islands and never heard of again. That raises another question how the Army, Suharto in particular, dealt with the issue of the military purge, which I think again has never been adequately recognized as one of the greatest things he ever did.

Q: One of the problems too is the inter service rivalries in which the Navy, the Marines...

GREEN: Well that's what I have been referring to. If the Army had ever moved in and tried to clean up the Marines or the Navy, or the police, or the Air Force, that could have touched off internecine fireworks. The Army didn't. I used to meet with the Minister of the Interior, Basuki Rachmat, to talk about this issue because I considered it crucial: whether Suharto was going to be able to clean up the military without there being fighting among them. This he did. He did it largely by letting each one of the services clean up its own ranks. It took some time, but he gained victory in the long run. The armed forces are today united to a degree they never were in the old days.

Q: You mentioned earlier the evacuation of dependents that was ordered from Washington in the early stages. However, they returned but the struggle between the two sides continued to go on for some six or seven months afterwards and as I recall, the Embassy was even attacked pretty severely in March 1966. All the automobiles were burned in front, there were some Molotov cocktails thrown. Do you think the American community was in severe danger at any point? Was evacuation considered on a wider scale at any point?

GREEN: I don't think it was considered on a wider scale. No. Were we in danger? It is hard to say. At the time I worried a great deal about it because I was receiving threatening telephone calls - I remember getting one at two o'clock in the morning from a voice that wouldn't identify itself but saying that within hours they were going to attack and burn down the American homes in Kebajoran. Here it was in the middle of the night. What could I do about it? Very little. We were under a strict curfew. The curfew ran from 6:00 to 6:00. We had arrangements whereby on a rotational basis senior officers would stay overnight at the Chancery.

In fact, I spent every night at the Chancery for over a month, sleeping under the conference table,

although there wasn't any real fighting going on. Staff members were down there principally because we wanted to be in touch with Washington in case anything happened. You couldn't get to the office from your home if something did happen. There were, of course, persistent rumors that something was going to happen, and, as you say, we did have some occasional attacks on the American Embassy. One of them was quite serious in which one of our people was injured but we had recently built better fences all around the Embassy, it was one of the last things I was able to get from Subandrio.

On that point let me add that it was after the attack on the Indian Embassy back in late August of 1965 that I sent back a telegram to Secretary of State Dean Rusk saying I had just seen the ruins of the Indian Embassy in company with the Thai, the Indian, the British, the Egyptian, the Canadian, and the Australian ambassadors. I warned Secretary Rusk that the same would probably befall us if we continued our current policies. The time has come at long last, I said, where we simply have to issue an ultimatum. I requested instructions to call on Sukarno or Subandrio to tell them that if there was one more act of depredation against any American citizen or American installation, we would require that the Indonesians withdraw their Embassy and consular personnel from the U.S. and that if this resulted in the breaking of relations, so be it.

Q: This was before the September 30 coup?

GREEN: This was several weeks before the affair. And it is an important episode because when I told this to Subandrio -- I can remember every minute of that conversation -- I was amazed that Subandrio seemed almost relieved. He smiled. He seemed to untense. He picked up the phone and called the Chief of Police and said he should meet with me tomorrow and be responsive to the requests I had regarding the security of American property and people. He was good to his promise. The next day I went to Police Headquarters where I was greeted with an honor guard and band that played our national anthem. Our flags were displayed. I can remember being escorted upstairs where all the principal officers of the police were assembled. I sat down, I presented nine or ten requests of what we needed in the way of protection, including that of our consulates in Medan and Surabaya which had been occupied. The Police were good to their promises, including removal of the guards around our Embassy that we knew to be pro-communists. That happened several weeks before the abortive coup.

Turning to January, February, and March of the following year, Sukarno was still around (albeit under suspicion), the economic situation was going from bad to worse, the students were conducting demonstrations up and down the streets, and, by the way, when one of the demonstrations came to our Embassy, its leader told me in confidence they had to demonstrate against us because otherwise they would not be allowed to attack the Chinese Embassy. We all laughed, but I said: "Now be easy on the Chinese; let's not have any real trouble." In this connection, we had the good fortune of having as dean of the diplomatic corps, the Thai Ambassador, Phinit Aksin, a career diplomat. He organized joint diplomatic protests every time an Embassy was attacked in the name of all diplomats in Jakarta, since any attack on a diplomatic installation is a setback to our profession as well as a danger to all diplomats. I'm getting away from the demonstrations. One time our residence was attacked. My wife was there alone, which she still recalls very graphically, but fortunately the attackers were driven off by security forces before any real harm was done.

Q: My own feeling was there was no real danger until that last week or so before the March 11 order, when the Communists and Sukarno were getting so desperate that they were capable of lashing out...

GREEN: The lashing out was the danger...

Q: And that last week, that was only as I recall four or five days before the March 11 order when Suharto took full power that the strong attack on the Embassy occurred.

GREEN: That was the most serious attack we had. It was clearly by old PKI elements bolstered by the betjak drivers or what I call the goon squads. And they did manage to get into the premises and broke a lot of our windows and forced our people upstairs into the second floor of the chancery which is our strong area where we had iron grills. We set about furiously burning all our records. That was the most serious attack. I recall, Bob, that that attack was lifted by the KAMI and the KAPPI (youth groups). They had just been demonstrating at the Foreign Office when they heard of the attack on our embassy.

Q: That's right, they were retreating...

GREEN: They were coming from the Foreign Office where they had done a job, and when they saw us being attacked, they lifted the siege.

Q: A lot of shots were fired when the troops came in.

GREEN: But in many ways that was probably the most serious attack we had on the Embassy.

Q: In fact there were stories as I recall that a larger attack was scheduled for March 11 but fortunately the Army moved, basically the night before and it was all called off. Could you tell us what your instructions or guidance was during this period of long dual authority from the September 30th Affair to March 11.

GREEN: After October 1965 we pretty much wrote our own instructions. It's amazing how, when you succeed, people turn to you. Furthermore, it was a baffling situation to all of us. In Washington they really didn't know what to do. We talk about getting instructions but who originated the instructions? Well, we did. Two such instructions I mentioned already, one was maintaining a low profile and the other was delivering my ultimatum to Subandrio. It was also our policy to keep in touch with Suharto and Malik and the new economic ministers. We offered limited assistance of the type that I mentioned before, but we were not going to get ourselves involved in any resumption of AID programs until we got the green light from Suharto and Malik. Those were generally our recommendations but our dominant theme was to maintain a low profile, keep out of danger, let things mature.

Q: Eventually we did get to the point of assisting the Indonesians. You mentioned earlier some of the steps that were taken, they were more of an ad hoc nature. After a while, I recall, multi-lateral aid came in. This was after the March 11 order and the full taking of power by Suharto, Malik and

the economic minister group. Could you tell us when this occurred?

GREEN: The thing I remember most clearly was having to resist very strong pressures both from Washington and from some of my diplomatic colleagues, including the Australians, who were pressing for the resumption of aid to Indonesia by the United States and by other countries. I came under immediate pressure when I was in Washington in early February 1966. Meanwhile I had learned from Suharto and from Malik - largely it was through Malik that I learned about Suharto's wishes - that they did not want U.S. assistance prematurely. Otherwise it might strengthen the Sukarnoists and give them the kind of relief needed in order to pursue their efforts to return to power. Malik's message to me was : "Wait until the Sukarnoists are clearly out. Then we will let you know what we want in the way of aid. We are certainly going to need it some time". My first job was to resist pressures, which I did, almost at the expense of my friendship with colleagues like the Australian Ambassador.

Now I recognized that, when we did resume aid, the Indonesians were likely to ask for a lot of things that we couldn't provide, which would get us off on the wrong foot. We did two things that avoided trouble. Bob Barnett, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs in the Far Eastern Bureau, had been already working on a plan to bring the Japanese and other donor countries into what we came to call the IGGI which is the inter-governmental donor group for giving international assistance to Indonesia. Bob Barnett and his Japanese opposite had devised the concept of the United States giving one third of all foreign economic aid, the Japanese giving one third , and the other donors giving the final third. So that was already being worked on. What I was more concerned about was the other key problem of their asking for that which we couldn't give. So, I worked out with Malik and with Washington what kind of package we could provide. We didn't have any aid appropriation money and therefore we wouldn't be able to provide regular aid until the following year, 1967. That was a long time ahead, but we did have authority under PL 480 to give certain emergency commodity supplies. And so we worked up a package of twenty-six million dollars food and cotton aid which Washington permitted me to divulge privately to Malik, on the grounds that that was what Malik would ask for.

So when Malik finally called me to his office, in late May 1966, and asked for aid, I offered him this pre-arranged package. He accepted it gratefully in a public gathering and we got off to a good start. Meanwhile Bob Barnett and others were in touch with the Japanese, Dutch , Germans, British, French, Australians and others. So all that worked out pretty well. Of course our initial aid package was peanuts compared to what Indonesia needed but we were able to come through with substantial PL 480 within a few months. One of the main problems we faced was the shortage of PL 480 rice. There was plenty of bulgar wheat in our stockpile but the Indonesians wanted rice and we didn't have it. We pushed bulgar wheat, which they disliked. Trying to change a country's taste, I might say, is impossible.

The formation of the donor group was most successful, resulting in later deliveries of fairly generous packages. It was never enough to satisfy the people around Suharto. Suharto was always gracious enough, but there were people on his staff who made it very difficult for me to get through to see Suharto. One of the most dismaying experiences that I had when I was in Indonesia was being informed by certain generals that Suharto was very displeased with our economic aid and that it was going to be very difficult for me to see him unless I made it possible; which involved

our being more generous with our assistance. Well, we were doing all we could and I deeply resented such tactics. I finally got through to Suharto with the backing of Washington, especially Vice President Humphrey who was particularly helpful to me throughout my four years in Indonesia.

Certain Indonesians were doing all kinds of end runs, visiting Washington and badmouthing the Embassy, but Vice President Humphrey and the State Department gave us solid backing. You know in many ways life was much more complicated during the days when we were coming back into a friendly relationship with Indonesia than in the days when we were being harassed. Our responsibilities were now much greater, and the issues we had to contend with were legion. One of our problems with the Indonesians was how to handle foreign investments and award contracts in a proper fashion. Corruption was rampant and we had to fight off under-the-table ways of doing business. There, again, we had great support from the economic ministers, as well as from Malik.

Q: These were the habits of earlier times.

GREEN: That's right. These were the way things were done in Indonesia but were contrary to U.S. law. One of the real showdowns I had was over International Nickel. This was a case that gave me more concern than perhaps any investment issue I had when I was out there. Indonesia was about to award a key contract to a certain company which was not American, on the understanding that that company was going to build, free of charge, a large municipal project. We couldn't do that sort of thing by law, quite apart from the fact we are not inclined to do business that way. It looked as though we were about to lose the contract even though our offer was the best. We battled that right down to the wire. It involved many overseas telephone calls, but finally the problem was worked out. It resulted in Indonesia establishing a method for reviewing bids in which there was an unbiased, objective way of making decisions involving a panel of all the concerned ministries. Thus we were involved in the creation of new machinery for orderly ways of doing business.

Q: You mentioned earlier your interest in maintaining a low profile and of course one of the attributes of aid is that you often get a very large bureaucracy. Did you have any problem with this? This in a later period after let's say a year or so after the March 11 order came about and there was a time when you were getting the AID appropriations and was there difficulty in keeping the numbers down?

GREEN: Yes there was trouble. Various U.S. agencies wanted to put more officials in Indonesia than we thought was desirable. We were always fighting against pressure to increase our staff. Of course, we had to have more and more people to deal with increasing aid but the tendency was to keep sending attachés of various sorts, overloading the Embassy administrative services and capabilities and, above all, giving us too high a profile at a time when charges were being made that we were running things in Jakarta. Of course we were deeply concerned and took the lead on many inter-governmental issues. We were glad to see the Japanese, the World Bank and the IMF taking more and more of the lead.

Q: Many people said that the American stand in Vietnam had strengthened the resolve of the Indonesian Army and had strengthened the resolve of the moderates so that the failure of the Communist coup in Indonesia might be attributed to some degree to US-Vietnam policy. What do

you think of this connection?

GREEN: The Indonesian cataclysm was far more momentous than has generally been recognized. It was not only important in terms of Indonesia's size, being the fifth most populous nation in the world, and of its location where two oceans and two continents meet. We must remember the time in which this occurred. We were deeply involved in Vietnam, fighting against the North Vietnamese who were backed by the Russians and the Chinese. Thus we were caught between the Communists to the North, and the Sukarno-backed communists in Indonesia. Had Indonesia gone communist, American forces in Vietnam would have been caught in a kind of huge nutcracker. Indonesia came perilously close to going communist. After all, many of the people in the military were on the communist side, the PKI was the dominant party, and Sukarno was definitely pro-communist if not a full fledged communist. He had the Air Force, the Navy, the Marines, and police on his side and some of the battalions in the Army. Just think of how close Indonesia came to going communist. Supposing they had, then what would have happened? First of all we would have been put in an even more untenable position in Vietnam. All Southeast Asia might have come under communist domination. As it turned out, it was just the other way around, with Indonesia today playing a constructive role in international affairs, enjoying good relations with its ASEAN neighbors. It was a great turnabout. It reversed the whole course of history, not only of that region but probably of the world. The world never grasped the significance of those times.

Q: I think it is very true. I think that the Sino-Soviet dispute which had gone on up to that time on the basis of a Chinese view that the whole region was going to fall to them and perhaps the whole Third World and this was the heart of the Sino-Soviet dispute for the Soviets argued that the Chinese and the other Asian communists were being overly optimistic. But with the change in Indonesia you had a tremendous turnaround in the nature of that dispute so that it became more of a direct border clash while the Chinese retreated into the Cultural Revolution...

GREEN: ... certainly, and another thing, remember there had been an extensive non-aligned movement. It was almost crypto-Communist in organization...It embraced much of the developing world including India, even Yugoslavia, but also the so-called non-aligned world of which Indonesia under Sukarno aspired to be the leader; all that came crashing down. We really didn't hear much about that subsequently. We heard, of course, about the North-South problem but that was not communist tinged. The setback that the Russians and the Chinese suffered helped to remove them as a dominant influence in the developing world. The Russians were so set back by this tremendous reversal that they called back all their Ambassadors from that part of the world. Evidently they were not clear as to how they were going to move. Brezhnev's call for an Asian security arrangement came shortly after that. It was a kind of call for help. Moscow didn't know what to do. Meanwhile the Chinese and the Russians began to point the finger of blame at each other. I'm sure the Russians must have been furious by the way the Chinese had handled or mishandled this coup because it had brought the Russians low as well as the Chinese. Another thing about the Russians that always occurred to me - you're a greater authority than I am - but it seems to me that at one time the Russians were making a concerted move to gain influence in three key developing countries: (1) Egypt, which was the leading Arab nation, (2) India, which dominated the subContinent, and (3) Indonesia, which was about one-half of Southeast Asia. Here were to be the three great projections of Russian influence in the developing world. Today Egypt is anti-communist and a constructive force in the Middle East. India is neutral. Indonesia is a

member of ASEAN, enjoying good relations with its neighbors as well as with Japan and the west. Indeed, Indonesia in 1965-67 changed the course of world events.

Q: There have been momentous changes occurring at this time. It was certainly an anomaly that at the very time that criticism of US policy was at its height in the late 1960's that the world was changing at that time more favorably for the United States. You had this tremendous change over in Indonesia you had the retreat of China into itself. You had a couple of years later the passing of Nasser in Egypt and his replacement by a much more moderate figure in Sadat. In Algeria you had the fall of Ben Bella; he was replaced by people who were also tinged by Marxism but not to the same degree that you had before and, in fact, the Afro-Asian conference collapsed just before the September 30th affair. Then you had the fall of Nkrumah in Ghana. Quite a number of these things were taking place and the great hope of the communists was that the Third World after it got its independence would become a target of opportunity. But all they achieved were some minor successes and eventually their hopes were shattered and largely in that period.

GREEN: Yes the breakdown of democratic centralism in China has been ascribed to China's reversal in Indonesia. Those reversals may also help account for subsequent changes in China's policies - from the extremism of the Cultural Revolution which was so disastrous that it led to a kind of counter-revolution, under Zhou En-lai. Zhou En-lai was in my opinion one of the greatest men of this century, when measured in terms of the pragmatic trends he brought about in China. Some of this tracks back to the reversals Maoism suffered in Indonesia in 1965-66.

Q: Let me put just one more question before we close. On the other side of what happened in Southeast Asia, the United States of course had committed itself strongly before the September 30th affair in Vietnam and to what degree do you think the fact that we were in Vietnam bolstered the resolve of the Indonesian Army?

GREEN: That's a very interesting question deserving study. I do sense that the Indonesian Army probably took heart from the fact that it did have potential outside support. In other words, the Army leaders knew they had friends that they could turn to eventually. Also many of the key officers were sympathetic to the United States and what we stood for. But if meanwhile Southeast Asia had been overrun by an unopposed North Vietnam, quite clearly they would have become dispirited and they would have been all that more distant from friends. In the psychological stresses of that period, their isolation might have been their undoing. But the knowledge that we were there, that we were prepared to stand up to communism, meant that communism was not an inevitable wave of the future. If we hadn't been opposing the communist tide in Asia, who would? What would have been the sense of the Indonesian Army opposing Sukarno and his communist colleagues in the long run. Maybe the best way to survive would just have been to give in. Therefore I think our role in East Asia, including Vietnam, was probably crucial.

Q: Someone could say that when the actual attack occurred on the generals on the night of September 30/October 1, the Army had to fight back, they were fighting for their lives, they would have done it anyway. But what you were speaking of was the broader context in which there would have been a dispiritedness there to continue that fight. Furthermore, in the period before the September 30th affair, the Army was under great pressure but General Yani and some of these generals who were killed were standing up at least to a degree to Sukarno, opposing the so called

Fifth armed force and opposing a commissar system. This was a major reason why Sukarno and the PKI were moving to carry out this coup, that is because the Army was not buckling under their pressure. And so you had a period leading up to the coup in which the Army stood up but they might not have stood up if they had felt that the situation was hopeless for them anyway because communism was becoming triumphant throughout East Asia.

GREEN: I don't know enough about the composition and the attitudes of all the different military units; we do know that the Siliwangi division had very determined leadership, but I'm not sure about the other divisions, and the situation in some of the other islands.

Now I agree entirely with what you just said and I think you raised a very important question that somebody ought to run down a bit more, particularly by interviewing some of the Indonesian military.

Q: If only we could do that.

GREEN: After all, that's what you are really trying to get at, what they thought, not what we thought they thought.

Q: True enough. Well thank you very much for your comments and, as I said in the beginning, I hope there will be further interviews on other aspects of your career, particularly the period when you were Assistant Secretary.

GREEN: Well, thank you, Bob, and I just want to say in closing, that's it's people like you and other Foreign Service Officers with whom I dealt, who were - and are - the core strength of American diplomacy. You talk about this period that I went through, and I said: "I did this, I did that," the fact of the matter is, we all acted together in a collegial way. I don't think there were any real differences amongst us. We didn't always have the same opinions, but we always came out to the same policy conclusions. They were a distillation of our collective wisdom. You were our expert on communism. You had more knowledge about the Indonesian Communist Party and how it was organized and how to deal with it than anybody else in our mission and possibly in our whole government. And I am glad that you're now working on this problem in trying to bring some of these loose ends together. It's very important because soon all of us who dealt with these events are not going to be around. This is such an important episode in history and yet it has never received the attention you are now giving it.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
Chief Consular Officer
Jakarta (1967-1969)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign

assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: How did you and Indonesian get along?

LA PORTA: Very well. Number one, while Indonesian is among the so-called “hard” languages, it is one of the easiest ones to learn. My wife took language with me and that was a win-win situation. We had superb instructors. In fact, two nights ago I had a little reunion with one of our instructors who is still teaching, and our other instructor is now head of the Indonesian, Tagalog, Burmese and Thai language section in the language school. Our linguist was superb, a guy named Joe Harter. Indonesian stuck with me pretty well. I just came back from ten days in Jakarta and even today the language holds up pretty well.

Q: You went out to Indonesia when?

LA PORTA: We arrived in early April 1965. We flew via Hawaii, Saigon and Singapore on a Pan American Airways Boeing 707. Because Indonesia was so unstable, planes didn’t remain in Jakarta overnight. Pan Am flew into Jakarta twice a week but, paradoxically, there is no U.S. airline service to Indonesia.

Q: What was the situation in Indonesia at that point?

LA PORTA: It was pretty chaotic. The abortive communist coup against Sukarno occurred at the end of September 1965 and there was a student-led movement to clean out the government and the economy all but collapsed. The army under Suharto restored order and ended the conflicts with Malaysia and Singapore.

Q: I don’t know if it was the year of living dangerously, but damn close.

LA PORTA: Sukarno was in internal exile and the last remnants of his power were removed about the same month I arrived in Indonesia.

Q: What were you learning about Indonesia before you went out there? What were we trying to do there?

LA PORTA: I was assigned as chief of the consular section. While I was somewhat familiar with Indonesia, the only country-specific preparation we had was the half day of area studies we had during language school. Otherwise we were on our own to read, try to find knowledgeable people in the department, or whatever. The situation in Indonesia was very murky for more than a year in terms of what the post-Sukarno era was going to bring. Ambassador Marshall Green had arrived only six months or so before we arrived. The embassy had been evacuated and families were just starting to come back to the mission in early 1967. There was a general lack of clarity, although what was clear was that the United States was banking on the army under Suharto to restore stability and to create conditions to get the economy moving. In this regard, USAID (United States

Agency for International Development) had just reestablished its mission as a small unit in the embassy and the multilateral organizations – the World Bank, IMF (International Monetary Fund) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) – were moving in.

On the political side, I think the only thing we did know at that point, and this was certainly Marshall Green's view and the one that he pressed with Washington, was that we had to get behind the moderate forces of Suharto. The fact was that there was only one person in the U.S. government who knew Suharto before he actually emerged to lead the army. He was Colonel George Benson who had been the defense attaché in the late '50s and got Suharto military training in the United States at Fort Leavenworth. Suharto literally came out of obscurity to command the army after the top commanders were killed in the abortive coup. Suharto was head of the strategic army command and he had accumulated a group of loyal officers who were opposed to Sukarno's socialism and who were virulently anti-Communist. What we did know in late 1965 and 1966 was that the Suharto government was going to shape up as something good for the United States and good for the region. At least the Indonesians weren't going to go back to war or Konfrontasi with Malaysia and do other foolish things that they were doing under Sukarno.

Q: Konfrontasi?

LA PORTA: Konfrontasi was Sukarno's way of picking fights with the former British colonies. After the abortive coup, most of the leadership of the communist party was rounded up and there were 12,000 people put on trial. Our officers in the political section, Dick Howland, Paul Gardner and Bob Martens, who was an experienced Sovietologist, were gathering information on the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Communist Party of Indonesia); they knew these guys, had networked them, understood the relationships within the party and front organizations to the extent possible. The military under Suharto under marshal law rooted them out branch by branch.

Q: Bob Martens has been accused of supplying Suharto's people with a death list when what he was doing was compiling lists of party cadres, mostly from open sources. As a Sovietologist coming right out of Moscow, you read the paper, you found out who was going to what meetings and all that and had a pretty good list.

LA PORTA: He had card files and as they were able to map the communist party bureaucracy. Now, most of what they were working on at the same time has been studied by scholars. Even by that time Arnold Brackman, the foremost scholar of the PKI, had published four books on the PKI, so public knowledge was available.

Today, public information substantiates the information that Bob Martens, Dick Howland and others developed during that period.

Q: When you arrived out there, did you feel, I mean were you still picking up although this had taken place before, but sort of the residue of the tremendous split there had been in the embassy when Howard Jones was ambassador and seemed to be far too tolerant of Sukarno?

LA PORTA: I would say that those very quickly became non-factors because the embassy was evacuated right after October of 1965. 30 September 1965 to be precise.

Q: This was when the generals were all killed?

LA PORTA: In the violence after the attempted coup, families were evacuated and the embassy had only a skeleton staff for eight months to a year. Marshall Green succeeded Howard Jones. Marshall Green was a man of unquestioned integrity, balance, judgment and had very good access in Washington. It was very difficult to convince Washington that it was in the U.S. interest to provide assistance, mainly economic, to the new Suharto government.

We had a couple of officers who were well experienced Indonesian hands who were in the AID side and those offices were integrated into the embassy because the AID mission was dismantled well before the coup. We had military attachés and George Benson was making trips back to the country. The office of Defense Cooperation was just one or two officers. You had a small well knit and well directed country team during kind of those formative months in late '65 and '66. Marshall Green treated every officer, even the most junior, as a professional. I recall that I received my promotion to FSO-6 on the airplane heading to Indonesia. As an FSO-6 I was treated with respect and dignity by Marshall Green. Truly extraordinary.

Q: Did you fall victim to his puns?

LA PORTA: Oh, absolutely. Everybody did and I quote some of them to this day.

Q: He's a tremendous man. I've done world histories with him and of course he's passed on, but we have a good solid record in various stages of his career.

LA PORTA: For that reason, when he became assistant secretary after he left Jakarta a lot of us who were fortunate enough to work with him, said, gee whiz, Marshall Green is right about the aerial bombing of Cambodia and other military activities that did not bring credit on the United States. Marshall loved his golf and he occasionally got snappish, mostly at Mrs. Green and she snapped back at everybody else. She was still a wonderful lady. Jack Lydman, a model of rectitude and high professional standards, was the DCM. My wife and I were treated with unfailing kindness by both the Lydmans and the Greens. I subsequently worked with Jack Lydman in Malaysia and of course saw the Marshall Greens over the long span of years. The relationship between Jodie Lydman, Jack's wife and Lisa Green was not always good. Jodie, we learned later, was scared to death of Lisa and yet when Jodie was the ambassador's wife in Malaysia, we thought she was pretty imperious.

Q: It was a different era. As a consular officer, what were you doing?

LA PORTA: We had a very heavy workload in the consular section. We had two and a half consular officers. I had a vice consul working for me, Dick La Rocha. With La Porta working in the same office it was confusing, in fact somebody called us the two La's. Get whichever La is there and tell him to get his butt up here, that kind of thing. We had three consular clerks and the large workload was caused simply by travel of any kind, business or pleasure, after the worst of times during the Sukarno period. All Indonesians wanted to go somewhere and mostly to the United States.

The second factor was ethnic Chinese Indonesians who wanted to get out because of periodic violence against them and because the Chinese as a group fell under suspicion as a result of PRC (People's Republic of China) support of the PKI.

Q: These were the overseas Chinese?

LA PORTA: When the going gets tough you take it out on the overseas Chinese, especially the unassimilated Chinese. In the mid-60s, unless the Chinese were from Central and East Java, they were for the most part unassimilated, that is, they were Chinese speaking Chinese, most of them living in urban ghettos, most of them going to Chinese schools, which Sukarno banned. Later in the late 70's when I served in Medan, we could see the enduring effects of discrimination against the Chinese.

Q: They were small shopkeepers, weren't they?

LA PORTA: Mostly small businessmen, but later groups of very affluent Chinese businessmen emerged to support Suharto and in fact became the core of Suharto's very corrupt and personalized system by the mid-80s and beyond.

Q: What were the Chinese, did they want to go to the United States?

LA PORTA: They wanted to go for education and business, but once they got here, graduate school or undergraduate school was a vehicle to bring the families over. We really had to clamp down a lot on specious applications.

This situation gave rise to some very good stories. My vice consul at that time was Tom Reynders. He and I occasionally did a "Mutt and Jeff" routine with suspicious visa applicants, especially relating to the Chinese problem. One day we had an applicant and his name was Ed Yani. We knew his family was well off and he wanted to go to the United States to join his sister who was in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh. We kept him coming back, asking for more information, believing that he was an intending immigrant. Finally he said, look, let me tell you the real reason I want to go to the United States. I want to get married and I'm going to marry this girl who is in Connecticut. We said, why didn't you say so? No problem, you want to get married? We've got our little process for that. Bring in an affidavit of support from your intended father-in-law and some information about your fiancée. Once he fessed up, issuing a visa was no problem because we got to know him pretty well by that time.

Some months later my wife was in charge of the American Women's Association welcome committee, so new Americans arriving in Jakarta would get a visit from my wife. She'd take a basket of goodies, some books and we had a little embassy orientation. My wife came home one night and she said, "I met this real nice girl. She says she just started teaching at the international school." I said, "Okay, why don't you invite them over for a movie?" Those were the days when you had real movies, not videotapes or DVD's.

Q: Because you could show them in your home.

LA PORTA: We had an embassy projector. I don't remember what the movie was that night. Then this very lovely looking American girl teacher came to the door with her husband behind her. It was this fellow Ed Yani who we sweated so much over his visa. We looked at each other and we both pointed to each other at the same time, "you!" They are good friends to this day and we know their family and their boys. It's one of those rewarding things that do happen in our business.

Q: This is in the mid-60s and all. It was also the period of young Americans, college grads, they're also getting messed up with drugs and all.

LA PORTA: The drug trade was through Afghanistan, Nepal and India. Hippie types used to get on the hash trail and come down to Jakarta. We had enormous troubles with American citizens services. I remember my wife and I going out in an absolute deluge of a rainstorm at midnight trying to find a druggie who had gone berserk. We found him holed up in the Catholic Cathedral in the middle of Jakarta. We got him into our car and to the mental hospital. The practice there was that any druggies they found they used to put into the mental hospital but the inmates always bribed the guards and were able to escape. We were constantly faced with those kinds of situations.

Q: Was Bali in your district?

LA PORTA: For a while Bali was in Jakarta's consular district but when our consulate in Surabaya got sufficient staff and a dedicated consular officer, we transferred Bali to the Surabaya district. Later on a consular agency was set up in Bali.

Q: I think Dick Howland was telling me that. Were you having problems with Americans as a case, I mean sometime ago a couple of American guys hiking have never been found.

LA PORTA: We had several Americans disappear. We had an American missionary who disappeared in Papua. Michael Rockefeller disappeared in Papua from the mission in Ogontz on the South coast. We had hikers who disappeared going up a volcano in North Sumatra. The supposition was that they became overcome by fumes and probably fell into one of the pools as the remains were never found.

Auto accidents were always a difficulty, the bane of consular officers everywhere. We had an epidemic of auto accidents and one whole family was killed in Central Java. Another thing that was not great fun during those years was the plague, Bubonic Plague outbreaks in Central Java. We had to check out reports there were Americans in the area. We would literally have to find them because there was no electronic means to get in touch to warn them about the plague and tell them to leave the area.

Q: Is there anything else that we should cover in this period, in Indonesia, this was what '65 to '67?

LA PORTA: '65 to '67 and then I switched over to the political section.

Q: Have we covered the consular section?

LA PORTA: I think we've pretty much covered consular work.

JOHN J. TAYLOR
Consul
Kuching (1968-1969)

John J. Taylor was born in Arkansas and attended Vanderbilt University before joining the US Marine Corps and eventually the Foreign Service. Overseas Taylor served in Ghana, Taiwan, Malaysia, China, South Africa and Cuba. He also served in INR, the NSC, as the deputy assistant secretary for intelligence coordination and as the chief of mission in Cuba. Taylor was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: After you left Michigan in 1968, what was your next assignment?

TAYLOR: I went to Kuching as US consul for Sarawak and Sabah, states of Malaysia, and for the British protectorate of Brunei. It was a Somerset Maugham assignment in the heart of Borneo. We lived there from 1968 to 1970. This was shortly after the collapse of the MCP insurgency in Sarawak, which had been supported by China and Sukarno Indonesia. Sukarno had opposed Sarawak's becoming part of Malaysia. He called his policy "Confrontasi." By 1968, Sukarno had been replaced by the military and Indonesia had accepted the incorporation of Sarawak and Sabah into Malaysia.

Q: What was Sarawak like when you arrived?

TAYLOR: Kuching was essentially a southern Chinese town, much like the other Chinese cities where we had lived - crowded streets and blocks of shops with sidewalks under an arcade. Kuching had well over a hundred inches of rain a year. Hokkien, also the native Taiwanese dialect, was the spoken language of the Chinese population. My limited ability in this dialect proved useful in winning smiles. We lived in a house on Pig Lane built on stilts because of heavy rainstorms and snakes. We found cobra skins on the patio or "orchid house" where we usually ate. Parts of the year, it rained and rained and rained - often and copiously. On my travels into the interior, I would usually fly to Sibu, which was on the Rejang River in the heart of Borneo. From Sibu I would take an old river steamer upriver to visit the Jungle bazaars. Among the passengers, one expected to see Humphrey Bogart or Peter Lorre. Where the steamers ended their trip, I would climb aboard a traditional Iban long boat outfitted with the important addition of an outboard engine. In this sort of craft, I would speed through the rapids and then up quiet tributaries, eventually arriving at traditional long houses in remote areas that had not changed in decades or centuries. Betsy went with me on one of these trips.

After eating a traditional dinner in a long house, along with drinking the potent "arat," we would sit around on a bamboo floor and listen to music on little battery-run tape machines. Unfortunately, they were not traditional songs we heard but Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and other modern

primitives.

Q: Why did we have representation in Sarawak at all?

TAYLOR: The post was established originally because of our concern for the insurgencies in South-east Asia, most of them supported by the PRC, and in the case of Sarawak also by Sukarno Indonesia. As I said, the insurgency had essentially ended in Sarawak by the time I arrived. A few guerillas remnants remained, but terrorism had stopped. We were also interested in the overall welfare of Malaysia, which had become independent about ten years earlier. Our interests in good relations with Southeast Asian countries were then very strong, because of the Vietnam War. Brunei oil was also important. In short, it was a piece of the world that seemed worth having one American officer who understood its political, economic, and social dynamics. The Kuching consulate was like one of the many US Navy destroyers cruising around the world doing nothing particularly vital, but providing training and experience for unknown contingencies and an initial command for a middle grade officer.

We did not issue visas. It was strictly a reporting and representation post. I wrote about internal political affairs, the relationship of Sarawak and Sabah with the Malaysian government and with Indonesia, and about the economies of the area. You can go to any place in the world and find fascinating aspects of political and social life. Where there are humans there is politics and a competition for power. For example, I reported on the developing relations between the Chinese, the Malay, and the local indigenous people, a complex subject. Brunei, a neighboring state, which I also covered, was oil-rich. The Sultan was an absolute ruler and absolutely rich although he also created a little welfare state for the people. Brunei was a story out of Somerset Maugham. Oil of course was its major export then as it is now. The second largest export was empty soda bottles. The Bruneis imported quinine water and coca-cola from Singapore and sent back the empty bottles. In other words, except for oil Brunei had no other exports.

Q: What were you observing in Brunei?

TAYLOR: Primarily, the political situation and the oil and timber businesses. Brunei seemed likely to become independent at some point and so part of my job was simply to build a good relationship with the Old Boy, his royal highness. Soon he would have a vote in the United Nations, ASEAN, and other international organizations. Besides, his financial holdings alone warranted good relations. Actually, the Sultan was an Anglophile and pretty much had to be nudged toward independence by the British. He loved England. He had a museum in Brunei devoted to Churchill memorabilia. It was one of the world's best museums of this genre - maybe the only one.

The British really ran the country and Shell produced almost all of its wealth. Brunei was at the time a "special" protectorate; it did not gain independence until 1984. As far as the Sultan was concerned, the internal affairs of Brunei were as the same as they had been for 500 years; i.e., under the rule of the Sultan. The British viewed it as a protectorate, but as far as the Sultan was concerned, he was in charge of all domestic affairs. He wanted and expected to remain absolute ruler forever. He had once authorized a go at an elected assembly with limited powers, but while I was there it was in suspension. Some token opposition political types did carry on with whom I

could talk. But it was all very low key. A Gurkha battalion existed to protect the Sultan. Their presence enhanced the feeling that one was in an outpost of the Raj.

The British Governor was a jolly good chap, who could have served anywhere in the old colonies. Along with the Falklands and Hong Kong, this was the very last. Shell was the only oil company allowed to operate in Brunei. Tons of sterling flowed into this little settlement and that was even before the first tremendous rise in oil prices. At least 50% of the working population were employees of the public works department - or at least they were on that payroll. Many didn't really work at all. One quarter claimed to be related to the Sultan, and this was displayed by a special flag that fluttered over many of the simple wooden huts that sat on stilts in the Bay. The government provided free medical care for the population and education was also free all the way through college - Oxford even - for those who could pass the entrance examination.

Q: Was there any efforts by the Chinese communists to influence the situation?

TAYLOR: No, China did not enter the picture in any way in Brunei except that the commercial class was, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese. I did a good bit of economic reporting on the oil industry – its developments and prospects. I visited a couple of the oil rigs in the South China Sea.

On Sarawak and Sabah, the third state that I covered, I wrote economic reports primarily on the timber industry, but also on fishing, tourism, etc. I visited the great virgin timber cutting areas in both states. In Sabah, I also had the chance to tour an “Orangutan jungle warfare training camp” as I called it. In this camp, Baby oranges that had been confiscated from smugglers trying to get them out of the country for sale on the global black market were given the chance to learn survival skills, mostly just by hanging out with other oranges. Eventually they were released some place deep in the forest far from the camp.

In Sabah, the Malays were a smaller minority than in Sarawak, but again they were again in charge politically. The natives were largely Christian. Together with the Chinese they constituted a majority. But the Malays essentially had a deal with the Chinese. In return for their political support for the Malay party (UMNO), the Chinese would be left free to pursue their business interests. The same social-political contract existed on the Peninsula - Malaysia proper. So, major political tensions did not exist. In Sarawak, the Ibans were running the government when I first arrived. But they later lost out to the Malays (UMNO) who proved to be better organizers and manipulators - and the Chinese made their alliance with them.

One subject of interest was the reported use of Sabah as a supply base by Moslem insurgents in Mindanao. Yes, the insurrection was going on back then, but of course without an Al Qaeda connection. I kept in touch with police and military officers in Sabah trying to get some impression of what was going on and what was Malaysia's attitude. Washington, however, did not display a high degree of interest in any of the subjects I covered. Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei were not high on the U.S. foreign policy agenda at that time. The desk officers at State, Commerce, and other agencies probably read my reports. Still, for the United States of America, it was a small post worth maintaining. Today, the U.S. Consulate no longer exists in Kuching, but we have an Embassy in Brunei.

Q: What were your views of the sway of the Malaysian government in Kuala Lumpur?

TAYLOR: As I noted, relations between KL and these states was a major subject of interest at least in Malaysia and in our embassy. The indigenous political leaders in Sarawak and Sabah were highly sensitive to what was going on in the capital. Eventually, the people in KL - the ruling UMNO party - supported the Muslim politicians in the two states. The Muslims, although not the most populous group in either state, did take over politically in both places in the process of open elections and a reasonably free but corrupt political process. Tensions between the indigenous people and the Malays have always existed under the surface. Some native intellectuals dreamed of an eventual separation from Malaysia out of fear of a Muslim take-over. But times were good and the police were effective. No one seriously talked of pursuing this goal during my time there.

Q: How about the Chinese community? The Chinese have been accused of causing the "emergency" in Malaysia. Was there tension between the Malay or the indigenous people and the Chinese?

TAYLOR: Almost all ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia are urban folk. But in Sarawak, a unique Chinese peasant community of pepper growers existed. This relatively poor population had been the main recruiting basis for the MCP guerrilla movement in the state. When the insurgency started in Sarawak, most of the fighters were ethnic Chinese as was true in other parts of Malaysia. As I observed, in all three states for which I was US Consul, ethnic-Chinese heavily dominated the timber industry and virtually all other commerce. But suppressed racial tensions were not nearly as high in Eastern Malaysia as on the Peninsula. The Chinese communities in these states saw their interests and security best served by cooperating politically with the Malays rather than the Iban and other native people. While, I was in Kuching, in 1969, the largest race riots in Malaysian history took place in Kuala Lumpur. An unexpectedly good showing in the national election by a leftist Chinese party not aligned to UMNO sparked the upheaval. The violence was seen as a message to the Chinese community not to challenge the unspoken social-political contract that assured Malays political dominance, including most government jobs and state university admittances, in return for allowing the Chinese to dominate the urban economy.

Q: Did you have problems with American visitors?

TAYLOR: No. We did have a large Peace Corps contingent in Sarawak and Sabah. The Peace Corps director was a welcome part of our small official American community. The volunteers were remarkable people. I would visit some of them in their far-flung posts. Some lived upriver in longhouses with the local Ibans. Incidentally, in certain longhouses, the residents would display shrunken skulls which, they said, their ancestors had acquired in the old days. Taking a head had been the final and necessary step into full manhood. This custom was hard on relations between neighboring clans and tribes.

As I said, I was the only State Department officer at the post. A declared CIA officer as well as a communicator and a USIA officer completed the American roster. In addition, I had a local secretary and a local driver. It was fun and we enjoyed it. Like a naval officer, I was in command of a small ship covering a huge area; I was the American representative. I didn't have to worry about

consular work. So, I spent my time reporting on political and economic developments of interest to US companies and the US government. I also of course sought to enlighten opinion makers, leaders, and the up-and-coming about US policies.

DAVID LAMBERTSON
Consular Officer
Medan (1968-1971)

Ambassador David Lambertson was born in Kansas. He received his BA from the University of Redlands in 1962 and entered the Foreign Service in 1963. His career has included positions in Vietnam, Indonesia, France, Australia, Korea, and Thailand. He was interviewed by David Reuther on August 31, 2004.

Q: Okay, how did you get your next assignment?

LAMBERTSON: I thought my next assignment was going to be the Paris Peace Talks which had begun in May of 1968. John Negroponte, who had left the embassy sometime earlier was working in the Paris delegation and I was slated to replace him. Then Cyrus Vance decided that John was too valuable to let go, and therefore I was out of a job temporarily. I'm not sure how my assignment to Indonesia came about, but in any event I went to Indonesia. I was interested in doing that.

Q: The system worked.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, the system worked. I spent two years in Medan.

Q: Via language?

LAMBERTSON: Yes, via language. Six months of Indonesian.

Q: In Washington.

LAMBERTSON: Right. I came back from Saigon in July of '68 and in August of '68 began Indonesian language training. It ended around February or March, and in late March or April, I was in Medan.

Q: Let me ask you this, when you left for the Saigon tour and now you've come back in '68, what does America look like to you? You've been out of the country now for four years during this very intense period.

LAMBERTSON: It was 1968 - a bad year, let's face it. Bobby Kennedy was shot, Martin Luther King was shot, the Democrats had their rollicking convention in Chicago shortly after I got back. Vietnam was very much a part of the political discourse, shall we say, and I had my own views on it and a perspective that I recognized was very different from most people I talked to because I had

been there. I saw it from a different angle and I still feel that's true today to some extent. I have yet to see "my" Vietnam movie or really read my Vietnam book. I was staying in an apartment near the State Department and Arch Calhoun came through. He had been sent back from Saigon to work within the administration on a plan to arrange a bombing halt and a start to formal negotiations in Paris – before the election. There had been the "shape of the table" negotiations essentially up to that point and the Administration wanted to push the peace talks onto a new level and do that through a bombing halt. In recent years there have been reports, I believe based on declassified documents, that the Nixon campaign was probably communicating with Nguyen Van Thieu to encourage him to hold out for something better. I read about it all in the newspapers in that summer and fall of '68 and felt very much on the sidelines, but I was intensely interested in it.

Q: Your Vietnam movie, what would that be about?

LAMBERTSON: My Vietnam movie wouldn't be a very good one. But I developed a great respect for a lot of the politicians that I got to know in South Vietnam. I thought them to be genuine nationalists. They were in no sense puppets of the United States. They had real standing in their local constituencies. Many of them had a good deal of moral courage. They disliked the authoritarian government structure that they were operating within. They wanted something better and they were trying to work toward that. They were completely independent of the communists and recognized that communism was even worse. Many of them were from time to time in physical danger or had been in the past. Some of the older ones had been jailed by the French, and then jailed by the communists. They'd paid their dues in a very considerable way. They were going about a serious business trying to save their country and give it a better future, so I had a lot of respect for them as a group. I think what we were trying to do with them was a worthwhile and honorable undertaking. That's what I was doing the last couple of years of my tour and so that's the perspective I took away when I left Vietnam. Wouldn't be a good movie.

Q: There was a political Vietnam.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, there was one and it was a real country and had some real strengths. Political constituencies corresponded generally with provincial boundaries. I believe in both the constituent assembly and the follow-on national assembly, each province had at least one representative and the larger provinces had more. The Buddhists certainly were represented. By 1966, however, the more activist Buddhist leaders had calmed down somewhat – they had originally risen up against Diem, of course. Thich Tri Quang was no longer a huge influence, but his group, centered on the An Quang Pagoda, was still important. There was a Catholic-Buddhist split politically in South Vietnam. The Catholics were a minority, but enjoyed disproportionate power in government, the military, etc. – not unlike the Sunni minority in Iraq under Saddam. After Diem's overthrow, however, that split became less important. The government was no longer Catholic – it was military, unfortunately; I don't even recall the religious persuasion of some of those generals. But it was a fractious, and to some degree fractured, society – and it had to cope with a well organized, externally supported insurgency.

If South Vietnam had been given a chance – that is to say if the North Vietnamese had not been fueling the insurgency, and then directly intervening with very large numbers of well equipped troops – I think democracy could have taken root. There was a political culture, and there were

some talented politicians, many of whom I knew. It could have worked. But under those circumstances, there was no real chance.

Q: You were talking about local leaders. Didn't Lacy Wright marry the wife of a Vietnamese nationalist who was assassinated in the early days?

LAMBERTSON: Possibly. Yes. I was particularly close to a couple of young politicians who were the chief organizers of a small faction within the Constituent Assembly called the National Renaissance Movement. I forget its Vietnamese name, but that's what it meant. They were about my age and attractive young guys with beautiful wives. Sort of courageous and brash and on the dissident side you would say in terms of their political leanings. They were very much against the military government. Their paths diverged completely, I later learned. When I was named ambassador one of them must have seen a reference to me in the newspapers and he wrote to me from Canada. He and I corresponded a little bit. He left for Canada in 1975 and will never return to Vietnam. He's a diehard opponent of the communists and could never imagine accommodating to them in any way. His friend and political ally stayed in Saigon and has made a life for himself. I had indirect contact with him in later years. I never got to see him or talk to him directly, but I heard of him through a third party. He has some sort of business now. His association with the South Vietnamese governing structure landed him in trouble for a few years when the communists took over, but he got through it and is doing okay. Both were, and are, fine men. Another who I did have at least a phone conversation with in 1993 - I was in Saigon in connection with a POW/MIA trip - had been the extremely youthful Minister of Labor when I was in Saigon in 1968. He wasn't much older than I was. Then he was the deputy representative for South Vietnam at the Paris Peace Talks for a time. After that he disappeared from view for years. Nobody knew what had happened to him. It turned out that he had at some point gone back to Vietnam and he, too, by 1993, was doing quite well as a businessman. We had a good conversation. He had managed to adapt himself to the new system, which was probably difficult, but nevertheless he did it.

Q: So, after Vietnam you're kind of off line in Indonesian language training. Was that a big class?

LAMBERTSON: No, we had four people studying Indonesian at that time. John Helble who was about to go out to KL as political counselor. David Kenney who was going to Surabaya and David's wife Helen. Helen was the best of us at the language. She would just cruise through it. I had met Helen in Saigon before David did. She was with the British Council as I recall. Helen was visiting Hue at Tet 1968 and was trapped behind NVA lines for a time. Anyway, that was our Indonesian language class. There was one other fellow, from the Agency. A total of five.

Q: Indonesian in comparison to Vietnamese is fairly easy I understand.

LAMBERTSON: Yes it is.

Q: Very regular.

LAMBERTSON: Non-tonal. Simple grammar. Western alphabet. It's a pretty good combination. I ended up with a 3+/4+.

Q: When did that language reform come through?

LAMBERTSON: It was developed by the Indonesian nationalist movement. It was one of the real achievements of that generation of Indonesian leaders. They basically settled on the easiest language in the archipelago. The default language, I guess you'd call it. They fostered it as a second language for all Indonesians. I think it's been a remarkably successful experiment. So, fortunately, generations of Foreign Service Officers have been able to study Malay rather than Javanese.

Q: Now, during your language class we do have the American elections and a new administration comes on. You're finishing your language class. In one sense you're so low down in the weeds, you're hardly noticed. What's it like to go from the hot house of Saigon to Medan?

LAMBERTSON: It's a little bit like falling off the edge of the earth, because Indonesia in that period was very quiet. The upheaval of September 1967, when Sukarno was essentially removed from the scene and Suharto took over, was far enough in the past that things had settled down and the so-called New Order was firmly in control. Politically I don't think anything was happening. If it was it was very far beneath the surface and probably only in the vicinity of Jakarta. The situation in Sumatra was really very quiet and the emphasis was on rebuilding, on possibilities for economic development, reinvestment in rubber plantations that had been allowed to run down, oil companies stepping up their operations in various places.

Q: What is the rationale for having a consulate in Medan?

LAMBERTSON: It was established there around 1903. It was one of our older Southeast Asian consulates. There was always an American presence up in the northern part of Sumatra because of rubber plantations - Goodyear and Uniroyal. Then eventually oil also became a factor. Oil production on Sumatra dates back a long way. It was what interested the Japanese in getting there in a hurry in World War II. So there was always a fair amount of American investment in Sumatra. There was also a Christian missionary aspect to it I suspect. In Sumatra, the coastal Malays were all Muslims, but in the mountains and in the interior, the Batak population in particular, people were less affected by the Arab merchants who had arrived by boat and spread Islam. So they were ripe for plucking by Christian missionaries. There are an awful lot of Lutherans in North Sumatra, and other denominations as well. That too probably was a reason for a consulate.

Q: How big a post was it? Who else was there with you?

LAMBERTSON: Roger Sullivan was the consul when I arrived. He was replaced a few months later by Mark Dion. Both were top notch. Coleman Parrot was our administrative officer, a fine fellow. I came to like him a lot, and his lovely wife, Julie, who had been a model in London. We had an agency fellow there, and he and his wife became very good friends of mine and are to this day. We had a couple of USIS guys rotate through, and a communicator.

Q: Four or five people? A fairly good sized mission.

LAMBERTSON: Yes. Six in fact.

Q: What were your specific duties?

LAMBERTSON: Oh, I kind of styled myself as a political and economic reporter and I would get in our Jeep and travel as far as the roads would allow me to travel. You could get all the way to central Sumatra, but it was rough going because the roads were just horrendous. They'd once been good, but they'd been neglected for 20 years and had fallen into complete disrepair. Although we had an admin Officer, I think I had some administrative responsibility, taking care of pouches, for example. Very occasionally there would be a consular issue. I dealt with a drunken seaman once, the only time I've had to do that in my Foreign Service career. I signed stuff that the locals prepared for my signature.

Q: If the post had been there for some time, the housing had probably been there for some time. Was it fairly decent housing?

LAMBERTSON: Housing was pretty good. My house was a Dutch bungalow, single story, small lawn, a long row of rooms in a kind of a wing extending off to the back which included my "godown" with my canned goods and all that in it, and rooms for innumerable staff back there. I never knew exactly how many people were living back there. In Saigon I had basically a cook and an old woman who would clean. I thought that was pretty nifty in a rather large house. This was a smaller house, and I had a cook. I had at least two cleaning ladies, one did laundry, the other cleaned. I had my own gate guard, a tubercular man who had been there forever I guess. The extended families of these people lived back there and I'm sure I was never really in control of the situation. But the living was pretty good. Medan was a city of about a million people, but it looked like a small town and a rather pleasant one. Lots of that kind of housing. A rather sizeable foreign community, with Dutch and other Europeans connected to the oil business or the rubber business, mostly the rubber business, or the palm oil business.

There were several other consulates. The British had a consulate there. The Japanese had a consulate. The Soviets had a very big consulate general. We had pretty good relations with them. One of the great triumphs of our time, my time in Medan, was the moon landing. Shortly after the moon landing USIA distributed to all posts those wonderful pictures of the lunar-lander parting from the mother ship and going down to the surface. I don't know if you've ever seen those, but they were spectacular. We invited the Russians over to Roger Sullivan's house for a showing, just to sort of rub it in a little.

Q: That must have meant that you actually had national day celebrations in that community there.

LAMBERTSON: We certainly did. I guess I did two Fourths of July in Medan. Yes, and I wonder how many of those consulates are still left. I'm quite sure the British have closed theirs, but the Japanese may still be there. It's too bad. I'm a proponent of constituent posts. I think closing them is always a loss to the embassy in question and I think it's a loss to the Foreign Service. I think they're great places, especially for younger officers, even though I was bored out of my mind in Medan just because of the contrast with Saigon. Nevertheless, it was a good post and I was very sorry to see that it was closed some years ago. The DCM in Jakarta at the time I was there, who was my reviewing officer, thought constituent posts were irrelevant.

Q: While you were in Medan as you were traveling around you probably talked to Indonesian civil servants, the governor, the local police, that was part of your reporting.

LAMBERTSON: The key person there was the commanding general, and I remember when I was there he was an Ambonese, also a Christian; those sorts of considerations were always borne in mind in the assignment to various areas of Indonesia of these generals. It was well known that North Sumatra was a place where big money could be made. Therefore, there was a rather frequent rotation of generals through Medan so that they could all partake and then move on. But it was also true that at that time, this may no longer be the case in the new democratic Indonesia, but at that time it was basically the army's responsibility to fend for itself, so by no means all the money that was extracted one way or another from rubber plantations and places like that became the personal property of the commanding general. Much of it went to build army barracks and feed the troops. That was the system, but the generals in charge always ended up with some themselves. I might add that I also got to know some military and police generals who were men of the highest integrity. I still keep in touch with one of them.

Q: Another time and place that you were talking about, personal goods in storage. You're living in a city of a million, but it doesn't have American supplies.

LAMBERTSON: That's right. There were stores where if you looked carefully you could find lots of things, but they were probably way outdated and very expensive. Almost everybody in our consulate, and I think this was true of the foreign community in Medan generally, ordered what they needed through mail-order places in Europe. I don't know if you've ever come across any of these. Remember their names? Justesen. That was one that we used.

Q: The Norwegian one has two names.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, it was always a big thing when the container arrived.

Q: Nowadays you see the younger officers aren't going to believe that there isn't a McDonalds on every corner in every city in the world and how we got our personal goods - your laundry, your canned goods, your whatever will come as a surprise. In fact you had to order them from Europe which meant ordering in advance.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, it certainly did and not necessarily ordering well, especially when you are a bachelor and you don't know anything about putting a house together or what makes it run or what you really need. I got a lot of advice from a couple of wives in the consulate.

Q: Let's go ahead and take a break. You were saying Galbraith was coming up for a visit.

LAMBERTSON: I was alone in Medan almost literally. I think Mark Dion was in Singapore for a weekend. Coleman Parrot, our administrative officer was away. I got a phone call from Jakarta saying that the ambassador was going to be coming up there in a matter of just a few days. It was on very short notice, an ambassadorial visit. A big deal for us in Medan. It was akin to the Secretary of State arriving at an embassy, relatively speaking. We had a good deal of preparation

to do - basically arranging a dinner and an overnight trip out to a rubber plantation and that kind of thing. I got most of that done by the time Mark returned. He was very grateful and we had a successful visit. The ambassador as I recall had a large entourage, in the neighborhood of a dozen people. I never did that to a consulate in Thailand

Q: Did he come commercial or did he come on a military attaché airplane?

LAMBERTSON: I think he came by commercial aircraft. There was a pretty regular connection between Medan and Jakarta. It's possible he came by attaché aircraft, but if so some of his people must have come commercial.

Q: Each tour you have you're increasing your own skills and you're observing the other officers around you. What was it like to work for Roger Sullivan?

LAMBERTSON: Very good. Roger Sullivan was a brilliant Foreign Service Officer I thought, a China specialist, a man very skeptical that anything good was going to come out of Vietnam and who thought we should have cut our losses there long before. Therefore, he and I had disagreements about that subject and he was always a very convincing advocate for his point of view. I seldom got the best of him in any discussion about Vietnam. He was a good boss, easy to get along with. I enjoyed traveling with him. He had a very nice family and I was sort of welcomed by them all. I liked him very much. He received his promotion to FSO-3 while he was there - this under the old system and he was a member - I guess not a member of the senior Foreign Service as an old FSO-3, but at least it was a good promotion. He thought it would open up lots of doors for him.

Q: That's your opening, mid-level, promotion. Three is now either a one or a five, I forgot which way the system went.

LAMBERTSON: Three is now a one.

Q: Okay. Yes, exactly. That would be '70 and that would be the start of some interesting things on the China side and he then later got involved in those things. All good things have to come to an end and the Medan tour is over.

LAMBERTSON: The spring of '71.

Q: Yes, how do you get, when does that cable come in that says here's your next job?

LAMBERTSON: I honestly don't remember what I did or exactly who I was in contact with to make sure that my next job was the Paris Peace Talks. I don't know that I actually went after that job with great fervor or whether it was offered to me, but I was happy to have it. I would have preferred to have gone there directly from Saigon in 1968, but going there in 1971 also interested me. I was surprised, I suppose, that the Talks were still going on in 1971. I left Medan in the spring of 1971, and traveled to Paris by way of Tunisia where I visited Arch Calhoun, my former boss in Saigon. I got to Paris, it must have been in April of '71, although I then went back to the United States and then turned around and returned to Paris.

ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT
Economic/Political Officer
Jakarta (1968-1971)

Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in Washington, DC in 1940. She received a bachelor's degree from Radcliff College. Ms. Swift entered the State Department in 1962 and the Foreign Service in 1963. Her career included positions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran, Greece, and Jamaica. Ms. Swift was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: You did that from '66 until...

SWIFT: '66 to '68 at which point I had been trying to get back into Asian studies. Now, of course, there I was on the Benelux desk, and Bob Anderson who was our Country Director...I was there just at the time they moved from the old WE, Western European big unit. They split everything up and went to these country directorships. It was the trivialization of the Foreign Service was just beginning. And Bob Anderson who had been deputy in WE, which was a big group of countries, became country director for France and Benelux which was a big and important unit. Since I was in the European bureau, I could probably have gone off to France or any place else but all I wanted to do was get back to East Asia. I was looking at going into Japanese language training, and actually got myself into the Japanese language training program. And then discovered that the role of women in Japan was minimal and that trying to be an officer in Japan was going to be real tricky. So I decided I would pull myself back out of the Japanese language, which was probably a wrong decision but I guess I don't know very many Japanese experts that are women. There still don't seem to be really...anyway I went and learned Indonesian, and went off to Indonesia and again, this is a period when you had very little to do with your assignments. You could wangle your area of the world if you were lucky. You could run around and look and see if there was...what I did was I got myself into language training, and then they were going to take me from language training and put me into some spot in Indonesia. They could put me anywhere.

My first assignment was to go to Surabaya as econ and consular officer in a dual-hatted. Now mind you, I knew very little about economics, but had been a consular officer in the Philippines. I thought, "Good, okay." Off I go to Surabaya. But the Consul in Surabaya was a political officer, a Foreign Service officer who was in charge of the consulate. He wrote a letter back to Personnel which I plainly was not supposed to see, that said while he had nothing against women in general, nor women Foreign Service officers in particular -- and then he went on for three pages why a woman could not possibly work in Surabaya. And Personnel, being craven, decided the way they would cure this slight problem was to send me up to Jakarta and put me first in the econ section, and then transfer me up to the political section, maybe.

My lower ranking personnel officer was a woman, and she was absolutely furious about this. She was just furious, and this was not going to take place. This was disgraceful, etc. And I sort of said to her, "Don't fuss too much. I'd much rather go to Jakarta than go to Surabaya." In the end I ended

up going to Jakarta, and ended up in the political section in Jakarta.

Q: This was...

SWIFT: This was now '68. I got out there in '68.

Q: You started in the econ section?

SWIFT: ...started in the econ section, and then moved up to political, up only because the econ section was downstairs, and the political section was upstairs.

Q: Well you still speak in Foreign Service terms of what's up and what's down. What were you doing in the econ section?

SWIFT: Mostly whatever anybody else didn't want to do which meant that I was doing...those were in the days...did we have a commercial attaché? I don't think we had a commercial attaché. At any rate I did a lot of the reports for the Department of Commerce, the yearly economic summary.

Q: What was the situation like in Indonesia at the time you were there?

SWIFT: '68 was two and a half years after the coup where the communists were thrown out and Suharto came in. The country was still somewhat unsettled, some demonstrations and things. It was calming way down. It was a very exciting period because the coup and the counter actions...there was a younger generation of students that had supported the anti-communist movement, and they were all very dynamic and a great deal of fun. They were also about my generation or a little bit younger. So it was just great fun. It was a very exciting time to be there.

Q: Was there any impact from the Vietnamese war? This was right at the height of our involvement.

SWIFT: We got into the Vietnamese war while I was in the Philippines. You are right, we were at the height of our involvement during that period. We were pretty well isolated from it, which I regarded as a great deal of luck because I had not been able to have a dinner conversation in Washington because I was in Washington, of course, at the height of it too. And my mother was ardently anti-war, and did such things as sitting out on the front doorstep with all the neighbors doing anti-war banners to go down and march. I was working in European affairs, but watching Vietnam out of the side of my eye, and I would get this tirade from my mother about, "Look at the TV set. Look at these horrible pictures." Indonesia was really off the beaten path for Vietnam.

Q: Was there any feeling that you were getting, particularly from these younger students, that we shouldn't be there, or too, that maybe it was helpful...

SWIFT: No. They had enough troubles of their own, and they were very strongly anti-communist, but uneasy about what we were doing in Vietnam. They didn't really support us in Vietnam, but it wasn't hostile at that point. The only hostility I can remember is from my colleagues in the Ford Foundation, and other places, when we went into Cambodia. I was there the night we went into

Cambodia, and there was a great deal of...

Q: The spring of 1970. Then you moved up to the political section, one flight up?

SWIFT: Well, here we go again. Mary Vance Trent had been in the political section, and I think she ended up as Political Counselor, or at least she was deputy. At any rate, there had been a tradition that a woman could serve in the political section because Mary Vance had done it before me. Otherwise, they would not have let me go.

Q: This is one of these things if somebody slipped in and then once...

SWIFT: ...if you got a foothold you were okay. In the Philippines they had always had a tradition of having...they had had several women go through there, and in the Philippine society women play a major role so there was no real question but that a woman could work in the Philippines, and the question never really arose. When I went to Indonesia you've got a Muslim country and the question immediately arose with the consul in Surabaya, and then they said, it's alright, we'll send her up to Jakarta and she can go up to the political section eventually because Mary Vance was up there and women have a big role in Indonesia, and she can handle women's affairs. My idea of women's affairs was not theirs. I thought I would handle something to do with regular political organizations, and if women had a part in it that was all good and fine.

At any rate, when I went up to the political section I was in charge of women's affairs...I ended up being in charge of communists, which, of course, had pretty well been knocked out by that point and the Chinese. I was assigned the students later. I also was assigned the government party which was just starting to get going because it was viewed as unimportant and something that a woman could do. However, the government party became very, very important. So all of a sudden I ended up handling what was really the most important piece of this action. And when I left a friend, Harriet Isom, who was also a woman, came to take my place, and I had been told I could not do the Muslim parties. There was no way I could do the Muslim parties because the Muslims wouldn't talk to me. I was a woman, and they wouldn't talk to me. Well, that's nonsense, it's absolutely crazy. So when Harriet took my place, guess what happened? She was given the Muslim parties, and somebody else took GOLKAR, which was the government party very important at that point so it got whiffled off immediately, and Harriet ended up with the Muslims. The funniest thing I ever did see.

Q: This obviously is the fast shuffle that happens. But it's not unknown in the Foreign Service where a junior officer, or one whom people don't pay much attention to, will be given something considered of no importance. I think of George Vest as a young officer in Canada being given the...but so often the officers at a lower level are given the position of being an opposition party, and the opposition party comes in the younger officers are sitting on top of all the best contacts, and how to disengage them. But there is this class structure within the Foreign Service. How did you find reporting on these various...the Chinese.

SWIFT: Oh, it was wonderful fun. It was like being at university or something because Indonesia has a long tradition, both in the United States and in Holland, of really good studies having been done on the country, sociological, anthropological and historical. I mean it has a tradition of

academic study that I thought was normal because the Philippines had a pretty good body of literature that is built up around it. But having now been in a lot of other countries, I find it's not quite as usual as you would think. But, at any rate, it was like being in a university being up in the political section and reporting all this stuff. It was good fun.

Q: For a new officer coming in, how does one go out and act as a political officer? Say you're given these assignments, what did you do?

SWIFT: Read a lot of newspapers as everybody says. You just march out and there's usually some structure somewhere. With the communists obviously you couldn't meet people because there weren't any. With the Chinese, the Chinese community was just there, and with the government party I just went out and met people. You just march up and say hello, I am from the American embassy and I'd like to hear about what you all are doing. It was very open, very above board, and it's good fun. You have parties, have people over to your house and get to know them.

Q: Who was the ambassador during this time?

SWIFT: Marshall Green was there, and then Frank Galbraith.

Q: How did you find them as far as their...

SWIFT: Oh, super. They're both highly respected professional Foreign Service officers. Indonesia has been very, very lucky in its ambassadors.

Q: With the exception of maybe Howard Jones early on who was a special case.

SWIFT: Jones was a special case but again Jones was somebody who knew Indonesia. These were officers who really knew what they were talking about, who knew the area, they were real professionals all of them. You could quarrel with Jones' ideas, he was a very dramatic, very strong-minded individual. He was wrong with his approach to Sukarno, but he knew what he was doing with him.

Q: He had a policy, and he knew what he was doing. It's just controversial.

SWIFT: I should say one more thing again. They put the cone system in place while I was in Indonesia.

Q: I might add for the record, the cone system was a classification into various specialties and all of a sudden you were stamped as a political officer, a consular officer, administrative officer, economic officer.

SWIFT: Yes, and because I was in political I was stamped as a political officer. Now, the interesting thing at that point is that all of us were in Indonesia moving through all of these different jobs with no particular problem. Harriet, who later took my job, came to Indonesia from Africa, came in as head of the consular section, then went up to Medan which was one of the consulates, served up there a year or so, and then came down and took my place in the political

section.

Q: She later became ambassador to Indonesia.

SWIFT: No, she later became ambassador to a couple of countries in Africa. She hasn't been back to Indonesia. Oh, Harriet may have been political counselor. And then Al Laporta, and a couple of other friends...one, Dick Laroche was a consul at that point and ended up as a consul in Indonesia at the time we got coned. So, of course, Dick got coned consular. I don't know what Harriet got coned because she was trading back and forth in jobs at that point. And Al Laporta was consul general in Indonesia at that point too, and Al ended up somehow in political. But all of us, at that point, we regarded consular as part of our work. I used to take full advantage of the consular section whenever I could because they had...and I was always very, very jealous of Harriet and Dick because the two of them did much more traveling, had a bigger travel budget than we did up in the political section. So if I could at all, I used to hitch on to their trips out into the countryside to give a reason to my travels because one of the things I reported on was what was happening among the Chinese communities up in Borneo, and it was very difficult for a political officer from the embassy to just chug on out there. And Dick had all sorts of missionary families and things out there that he needed to go see, American missionary families, so the two of us got together on one wonderful trip and went all up through that area by dugout canoe, and all sorts of things. Carrying the American flag going to visit our constituents out there. And I went along and learned a lot about how you take care of Americans that are out in the backwoods. Dick was going out and helping them with passport services, and reports of birth and all that sort of stuff, and basically making sure they were okay. I got to meet all the local dignitaries because at that point I think I ranked him, but when we traveled he was the consul, and I was just along on his coattails. At any rate, it was a very easy relationship, and I don't think either of us ever regarded anybody as superior or inferior. It just wasn't something you thought about at that point. Dick was a Foreign Service officer who happened to be doing consular work.

Q: Were there any major events that happened in Indonesia during that time you were there? Or was it a fairly calm spot.

SWIFT: It was pretty calm, pretty straight forward.

Q: Timor was not a major problem.

SWIFT: Timor didn't become a major problem until three or four years later.

Q: You came back in what? '71.

SWIFT: I came back in '71 and went to Cornell for a year in Southeast Asian Studies.

Q: Cornell is sort of the center of Indonesian studies. Did you find the academic world had a different view of Indonesia than, you might say, the Foreign Service? I do think there was a problem with Sukarno - Suharto at that time.

SWIFT: There had been a fairly hardline group of FSOs in Indonesia during the coup, and there

was a very strong dislike between the Cornell academics and the embassy in Indonesia in that '65 period. By the time I got out there, the group was turning over. It was very much an intellectual fight, right wing versus left wing. By the time I got out there those people were starting to leave, and the new group that came in was much more liberal. Bob Pringle came out, and Bob was a Ph.D. out of Cornell in Southeast Asian Studies. Mark Dion was there too, and Mark had been at Cornell doing a Ph.D. So basically the whole embassy got infiltrated by Cornell so there really wasn't the tension there. There was slight suspicion still, but there really wasn't the tension.

Q: As I recall the tension had been more or less that the Cornell group had plunked down for Sukarno. In our terms we'd call it a rather rigid left wing group. I don't know if that's a good characterization.

SWIFT: It's very hard to use those sorts of terms. They were anti the war in Vietnam. Anybody who studied Southeast Asia had a very hard time justifying anything that we were doing in Vietnam, which included me. Academically, the whole Vietnam war...I mean when you study Southeast Asian history, it is just not something you do. The French fouled up, the French should have gotten themselves out peacefully a long time before, and for us to go in behind and make the same mistakes the French did was just outrageous. So from an academic, or a historical point of view on Asia, it was really hard for anybody who had been brought up in Asian studies to be anything other than in opposition to our Vietnam policy. And to be much more conscious that Southeast Asian political movements were national movements rather than true communist movements. The Cornell crowd tended to look at the communists in Indonesia as an indigenous group that weren't controlled from the outside. The State Department tended to look at the communists as being controlled by the outside. I don't think either group was totally correct. I do happen to think that the communist group did try to overthrow the group that controlled the army. And I think they failed, and in the backlash the more conservative officers of the army used the PICI's involvement to turn against them. Poor George Kahin of Cornell was always accused during that period of being a radical left winger, and George is not a radical left winger. George is an intensely intellectual student of political and historical movements in Southeast Asia, who didn't happen to agree with the State Department. Ben Anderson tends to be a little bit more theological in his views.

CHARLOTTE LORIS
Executive Officer, USIS
Jakarta (1968-1972)

Charlotte Loris was born in Pennsylvania in 1916. She joined the State Department in 1950 and then joined the USIS. She held positions in Japan, Vietnam, Libya, the Congo, Korea, and Indonesia. Ms. Loris was interviewed by Max Kraus in 1989.

LORIS: Well, then, they eliminated the Executive Officer job and kept the Deputy PAO who had to take over the Executive Officer's job, but I won't mention his name as he was not very happy about it. So then, because I was supposed to be in a cold country for seven years, they immediately transferred me on a direct transfer to Indonesia, a land of malaria --

Q: That's a nice cold country.

LORIS: -- humidity and heat, where I was Executive Officer for four years. And I had a good time.

Q: For four years. That was from --

LORIS: '68 to '72. I came back to Washington. I wanted to come back to Washington, I asked for it, because it was again 10 years.

Q: Let's not go so fast. Tell me some of your stories about Indonesia. I know that you can put some of them on the record.

LORIS: They're not really as exciting as the Congo was.

Q: I know, but I mean -- I know that you have for a long time have always been a space nut --

LORIS: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And I think that you had several visits from astronauts in Jakarta.

LORIS: Oh, yes. Pete Conrad was in the first group to arrive. And that was fine. Interesting thing about their visit. First, I had asked for astronauts and the Embassy didn't think we should have them. I did, but I couldn't do anything. Anyway, we finally got the word they were coming and of course the Embassy wanted to take charge but I was made program officer, project officer. So the Marine gunnie came to me and said, "Char, we have a young Marine here who's to be decorated for Vietnam. Do you think that Pete Conrad -- who was also a Marine -- would present the decoration?" I said, "I'll send him a telegram." I think the astronauts were in Burma at the time. So I sent a telegram, which the PAO signed. Well, I didn't clear it with the Naval Attaché. So they get the read file.

Q: Who was the PAO at that time?

LORIS: I think it was Jack Getchell. I'm not sure whether it was Jack Getchell or Marshall Brement at that point. Anyway, they get the read file the next morning and it was like, who is this person who sent this telegram, how could she dare send it without clearing it with us? Well, in the meantime, an answer comes back from Pete Conrad, signed Pete Conrad, "Delighted. Arrange." I didn't get demoted for this little misdemeanor. We had the ceremony and I had a great time with the astronauts. We filmed the presentation and invited the Naval Attaché and the Marine colonel and everybody else. But it was strictly a show. The poor little Marine didn't know. We had to have Marine guards on duty with the astronauts and we put him on duty in civilian clothes. And he walks in and he's presented by the astronaut.

That was our first astronaut visit. Then we had another one, unofficial, where Wally Schirra was coming through with the then IMV (Motion Picture and TV Office) director, Stevens, George Stevens.

Wally Schirra and George Stevens and a couple of guys are arriving on a hunting trip. The boondocks of Indonesia are known for tiger hunting. They are arriving at 11:00 at night on a flight from Bombay, a hell of a long distance away. The PAO, they had this all planned. The Indonesian officials were going to meet them and they were going to go right off to this hunting lodge. I said, look, you arrive -- and I was in charge of customs clearance, and I got their guns through clearance, too, through customs. Oh, we have to get right in these cars and go off to this place because we have to be ready to go hunting at like 5:00 in the morning. I said, look, I'm going to tell you one thing. You get off a plane from a long trip, you're going to want a little rest stop. "Oh, no, we don't have time for that." I said, look -- . So I had several arguments over three days and I said, "All right, I'm going to tell you men something." And we were at a meeting. I said, "I've been on long flights more than any of you, let's face it. You get off a plane, it's been a long trip and you just want to go somewhere and sit and fart." Well, they sort of gasped and they said, Charlotte. I said, it's absolutely true. I said, just please make arrangements -- and you can stop by my place, it's on the way.

Okay, they agreed that if they had to they would stop at my place. So about midnight these cars pull up and in they come. I had gin and tonics ready, or anything else they wanted, and they come in and sit down and Wally Schirra goes in the bathroom. And he's in there for almost an hour. And when he finally left -- he came out and he thanked me and kissed me and said, "Charlotte, you don't know what this means." I said, "Yes, I do know what it means." And he drank his gin and tonic and they finally got off and got away. But when they left Indonesia, it was about four or five days later, he just grabbed me and he said, "Thanks again, Charlotte, you understand."

Anyway, I had a lot of fun on the space program. I really took care of a lot of it and became quite a space expert. I even had the moon rock in my little Volkswagen, with police escort, to take it back to the Embassy communications safe.

Q: I'm a veteran moon rock babysitter, myself.

LORIS: I know, it's in your book.

LLOYD JONNES
Economic Advisor, USAID
Jakarta (1969-1970)

Lloyd Jonnes was born in Ohio in 1924. He graduated from Antioch College in 1948 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1943-1945. Working for the Economic Cooperation Administration and USAID, he served in Switzerland, Austria, the United Kingdom, Libya, Turkey, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Mr. Jonnes was interviewed by W. Haven North on August 19, 1986.

JONNES: I was the senior economic advisor of the AID Mission, but it was a very small mission doing a lot of training through participant programs.

Q: What was the transition? What kind of transition are you talking about?

JONNES: Actually, I'm speaking of two transitions. The more significant one was that of the Indonesian transition from the Sukarno government that had been overthrown in 1965. There had been, I'm not sure what term I would use, a large coup d'etat by the military, and four years later the nation was still in the process of adjusting to that. The smaller transition was in the AID Mission that was changing virtually all of its senior personnel at once. There was no Mission Director at the time of my arrival, and what the function of the Mission beyond participant training was seemed unclear. Once again the focus of my operation was on general economic policy, but because the AID mission had not been a major player in economic policy matters since early on in the history of modern Indonesia, our role was muted. There was, however, a Harvard Development Advisory Service team working with the Indonesians.

Q: Was that financed by us?

JONNES: No. It was financed, I believe, by the Ford Foundation that also had a group there. Several of the economic policy makers of the new Indonesian government had been trained in the United States, and they were very sympathetic to American advisors.

Q: Were their training under our program?

JONNES: Some of it may have been, but I'm not sure. My time was passed getting the economic data in order. As in most less developed countries the economic data base was less than optimal, and trying to pull together all the information -- e.g. on rice production and rice consumption, in the case of Indonesia a critical economic determiner -- took time and energy.

Q: Was this preparatory to some reorientation of the program?

JONNES: No, it was simply trying to establish a basis for rational decisions on economic matters I also worked with the World Bank people on balance of payments data. We did have what seemed to me a very effective population program, that is to say, family planning program, run by an American public health doctor, a program ultimately taken up by the Indonesian army. They decided that this was something that had to be done and applied their energies to it long after I had gone.

Q: Any other programs that you want to note?

JONNES: With the advent to large oil production, the need for American financial aid was clearly going to be limited. It was also very clear that the oil business was going to be a very serious oil business and that foreign exchange shortages would not be a constraint on Indonesia's future economic growth.

Q: This was in 19 what?

JONNES: This was in 1969 and early 1970. One of the main economic problems for Indonesia was

one that of what policies should guide their use of these new resources, and I suspect that there was a great deal of tension between the policies that the Pertamina, the national oil producing company of Indonesia, would follow and what policies the government felt it should follow. How this was solved ultimately proved to be, as I understand it, one of the unhappy incidents of the international development process in the last 30-40 years. The national oil company was able to use a vast amount of these resources in some very bad investments. But this is hearsay.

Q: We really had no influence on this issue one way or another, meaning the US?

JONNES: I suspect that is correct. But this all happened long after my departure.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
Political Officer
Jakarta (1969-1970)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Today is April 23rd, 2004. Al, let's talk about Okinawa fishermen.

LA PORTA: Right. This was one of the rare opportunities where, as a very junior section head in the embassy, you actually had a chance to do something that kind of got close to negotiations and involved another government in addition to the Indonesian authorities. The issue turned out to be quite complex because the United States still had not given up control of Okinawa; the reversion agreement came along in the mid-1970's. Still in the late '60s the United States was responsible for protecting Okinawans and Okinawan fishing vessels who were fairly aggressive trawlers for shrimp and squid. They regularly found their way to Southeast Asia and to Indonesian waters as well as the Philippines and other places. Needless to say the Indonesians at that time tried to be very aggressive in protecting their economic zone. This was before the Law of the Sea treaty and they fairly regularly picked up Okinawan fishing vessels who they considered were poaching in their waters. The boats would be impounded and sometimes confiscated, but always in places that were relatively inaccessible like Halmahera Island in the Northern extremity of Indonesia, or Ambon in Maluku or Manado in North Sulawesi. The consul had to take care of the Okinawans as if we were taking care of a normal U.S. citizen. We had to respond several times by sending consular officers off to broker with the local authorities and secure the release of these vessels on some kind of bail arrangement. The Okinawans would put up a lot of money and we'd give it to the Indonesians and say oh, yes, we'll appear in court which they never did. We tried to pass the responsibility to the Okinawan administration but they would not discourage the fishermen from

illegally fishing in Southeast Asia. In these cases. We exercised a welfare and protection function that was exercised on behalf of a territory that we governed with the inevitable complications with the authorities in Japan because the Okinawan government immediately would complain to Tokyo about the beastly treatment their peaceful fishermen were being accorded in Indonesia

On one occasion I went to Okinawa to talk to the Okinawan government and the local authorities. Needless to say all of the mayors of the fishing towns along the coast were exercised that the Indonesians had objections about the illegal fishing. In one incident, two Okinawan fishermen who, as far as we could ascertain, were killed in a drunken brawl, or possibly fell off their boats while drunk. Their remains were never recovered. We had to make this little pilgrimage to Okinawa. In one case we had to repatriate the remains of a deceased Okinawan, see the families and other grieving people. It was a very good slice of life of what I would call the exercise of a consular function at its most creative.

I had a murder case when I was in Mongolia that was also creative in its own ways, but the Okinawan fishing vessels were certainly a challenge for everybody – one that doesn't make the headlines, but one that was important to the Okinawans and the Indonesians.

Q: The usual bail thing, we've all been doing consular work, been through this, get somebody to make bail and you know they're going to skip. Everybody knows they're going to skip. The local authorities would be damned annoyed if they got stuck with them because they had to feed them, but did you let them negotiate the amount or did you have to negotiate the amount of bail?

LA PORTA: Well, the shipping companies sometimes sent agents from Okinawa and sometimes we had to negotiate the bail based on ostensible standard practice, but more importantly, the Indonesians wanted U.S. sovereign assurances that these Japanese fishing people would not come to Indonesia, of course assurances that we could not give. We did negotiate a memorandum which did get the agreement of the Okinawan provincial officials and the Indonesian sea communications ministry, in which everybody agreed to act with restraint and to admit when vessels were trespassing. The Indonesian authorities undertook to notify us of any cases. It was a face saving formula in which the local authorities could say they had really gotten something in terms of better behavior. Interestingly the problem ceased to be an issue by the time of reversion and I suspect either the Japanese or Okinawan fishing industries were persuaded by their government or they just let the Filipinos do the fishing for them.

Q: How did you find the local officials? You know, this, look at Indonesia in a way as sort of a vast island empire and I was wondering whether you found a difference in how you dealt with the Ambonese as compared to Sumatrans or something like that.

LA PORTA: In fact we found the local officials easier to deal with than some of the ministry people that we had to deal with in Jakarta in the consular division of the foreign affairs ministry or others from the interior ministry or the sea communications ministry. Of course the fishermen were not stupid. They had plenty of money on board their ships to spread around so they were able to pay rather lavishly for whatever services, food and drink they needed. I think that when you do get to the outer islands, even up in Halmahera, way in the North which is a very staunch Muslim area, the local officials always were tempered with reality and they liked the United States. I think

that frankly they just wanted somebody to pay attention to them and say oh, yes, you do have a serious problem and yes, we will do something about it. Yes, we will take these Japanese off your hands. Yes, they will pay enough money. I think that they wanted to have that kind of attention instead of just sending reports to Jakarta.

Q: Did you get any feel about the aftermath, this is some years later, but when the Japanese occupied Indonesia about the feeling of local people? How did that go?

LA PORTA: The anti-Japanese feeling was actually quite strong, even in the mid '60s through the '80s. The local people, even younger ones, did not forget the Japanese occupation. In the Northern part of Indonesia, in the islands it was quite widespread. The Japanese established large ports for their capital ships up in the Northern part of Indonesia. In fact a lot of the ships that went to the Battle of the Coral Sea and other engagements were sheltered in Indonesian ports.

Q: The whole Leyte Gulf operation which is the biggest naval battle ever, was based because of the oil near Borneo off Borneo or from Cam Ran Bay or that whole area.

LA PORTA: The islands in western Indonesia are bigger and closer together. The Japanese based in Singapore committed all kinds of atrocities and abuse in the British territories. The dislike continues to this day. In Indonesia people didn't like to deal with Japanese, although they armed Indonesian nationalists and the precursor of the armed forces. They made fun of the Japanese physical characteristics and it is said that the Japanese normally behaved with restraint because they understood this phenomenon.

Through the '70s, '80s and even into the '90s we saw Japanese efforts to pay conscience money for the war. This phenomenon today is very much present in Vietnam which has now become more open to external and Japanese influence as well as Mongolia where I served. The Japanese will send peace delegations every year for memorial purposes, to pay homage and to give money. A lot of their assistance is justified in terms of overcoming the legacy of the past. Then of course, the whole Japanese-Chinese problem is still not only festering, but it is truly at a very raw stage. The whole issue of the occupation of Nanking, Shanghai and other areas where there were very serious depredations. I don't think that's going to go away. I think that is a very strong element today in the Chinese attitude toward economic competition with the Japanese.

Q: During this mid '60s period, how was the Indochinese war because the fighting of all three countries, how was that playing?

LA PORTA: Kike most things involving the United States, there is a certain double-edged characteristic. I think there was a significant part of the body politic that not only tolerated, but tacitly supported U.S. objectives in mainland Southeast Asia because they, too felt that they were a domino. In Indonesia, in the setting of the abortive coup by the PKI and the reaction that set in during the early Suharto years, the suppression of communism, the arrest of thousands of people who were PKI members or fellow travelers or intellectuals who supported the communists was justified by pointing to Vietnam and the dangers of letting the communists go too far. At the same time, the Indonesians had no particular liking for the Vietnamese whom they considered almost Chinese anyway, and they wanted to support the Thai against communism. ASEAN was in its very

nascent stage, so they wanted to be supportive of the Thai. As long as the Thai said, no, we need to defend ourselves against the tide of communism and we can't allow it to extend into the Thai heartland or whatever, they were inclined to support it. The Indonesians also supported the British anti-Communist campaign in Borneo where the communist guerrillas were particularly strong. There was a lot of unstated but significant cooperation between the Indonesian armed forces and the British on the ground in Borneo. When communist terrorist groups were discovered in Indonesian territory, very often they were dealt with summarily.

This was a change from Sukarno who was very much influenced by the PKI in his own government and was rabidly anti-British. But Suharto's inclination was to cooperate tacitly.

Regarding Vietnam, in the early years of the Suharto government there was still a lot of flux on the Indonesian side, but the fall of Vietnam came as a big shock to most Indonesians as it did to others in Southeast Asia because (A) they expected the United States to stay the course and (B) they did not think the United States would be militarily humiliated in the way that it was. That provoked a lot of very nervous thinking. On the governmental level they tacitly accepted and tolerated, the U.S. presence in mainland Southeast Asia. On the public level and among the intellectuals and media, the feeling was to keep U.S. power far, far away, somewhere over the horizon, somewhere around Guam. In other words they didn't want the U.S. flexing its muscles or pursuing its anti-Communist crusade so close to their doorstep. There was certainly a desire for distance. We also had our hands full with Arab-Israeli issues and the aftermath of the 1967 War.

Q: Do you want to talk about that? One doesn't think about the, what was it the Six Day War of 1967, Arab Israeli War as being a cause often in Indonesia.

LA PORTA: This is one of the factors that has not been understood in our public diplomacy or in our policy approaches to the region. Since the 1956 War and continuing through the 1967 War and any major eruption in the Middle East, there has been a significant reaction among Muslims as far away as Southeast Asia.

This is one of the constant phenomena in our relations with not only Indonesia, but also Malaysia where the Malaysian support of the Palestinians and the Arab mainstream is even greater than it is in Indonesia. Every time there was a major eruption, including U.S. management of the hostage taking in Iran, U.S. actions were perceived to be anti-Islamic and provoked a reaction against us diplomatically, in the media and in terms of public demonstrations and outbursts in Indonesia. So, every time a major incident occurred in the Middle East you could watch the clock, waiting for the crowds to appear in front of your gate in real protest. When I was the consular officer in 1967 my office was closest to the front gate and you were literally watching these protesters trying to come over the fence. It was not a comfortable feeling and always a challenge, whether I was in Jakarta or a decade later in Medan, to deal with the politically energized Muslim community which had real complaints with U.S. actions and U.S. policies in the Middle East. The impact on the majority of the world's Muslims living in Southeast Asia and elsewhere outside the Middle East heartland is still something our government doesn't comprehend.

Q: One of the things that keeps getting pointed out and that is the Muslim countries have been screaming and yelling, almost literally about the Palestinian cause, but you look from Saudi

Arabia, to Kuwait and Egypt and beyond, what the hell have they done about the Palestinians. It's as though the Palestinians were designated to be beaten up by the Israelis while all the Muslim countries sat on the sidelines because they certainly could have done something to make Palestine a stronger, more self-supporting state.

LA PORTA: I think that Southeast Asia interest largely devolves very much on two elements. First is the non-implementation of successive UN resolutions on the Middle East. It is perceived there, but also in this country, that Israel exceeded, ignored or abused various UN resolutions. The other big complaint that they have with us is our lack of evenhandedness. In other words, we wholeheartedly will do everything to support the Israeli government of the day, presently Mr. Sharon, whereas we're not really trying to do anything to implement the peace plan vis-à-vis the Muslim community or the Palestinian authority. The way we treat the Palestinian authority, Arafat and his people that they perceive to be legitimate right or wrongly, is a constant cause for complaint. Today this is exacerbated by the U.S.-European split where the EU and most European countries strongly are on the Palestinians' side, while we are one of the few countries supporting Israel.

Q: What was life like for you and your wife? Did you have children at the time?

LA PORTA: My daughter was born while we were serving in Jakarta. She was born in 1969. She actually was born in Penang, Malaysia, because the hospitals in Indonesia were not up to Western standards. People either go to Singapore to have babies or in our case we chose to go to Penang. There was a Seventh Day Adventist Hospital where my daughter was born there and after about a week we made our way back to Indonesia.

In Jakarta there were undoubted challenges in the late '60s and early '70s with the law and order situation as large numbers of Indonesian soldiers who had been involved in the Konfrontasi against Malaysia under Sukarno were being demobilized. Because you were Western and the Western community was quite small, you were a target for thievery and vandalism. This is not uncharacteristic for the Foreign Service and most people took that kind of thing in stride.

We were not, however, personally assaulted or denigrated because we were Americans or because we were Westerners. When you traveled outside of Jakarta, or the further you got from Jakarta, you were greeted as somewhat of a curiosity because there were not large numbers of foreigners living in Indonesia then. Very often the children would greet you by calling you Om which is Dutch for uncle. Most Indonesians and certainly the student movement, which had been politically active in installing the New Order government and cleaning out the old bureaucracy and PKI, were very friendly to us. We had a lot of very good associations in that time which survive today among student leaders from Muslim organizations or among University of Indonesia students. My wife and I, as young embassy officers, were urged to get out and talk to student organizations. My wife had a couple of conversation groups. She had a group of well-connected older ladies who wanted to improve their English. She had a French conversation group because she also speaks pretty good French. Then she had another group of students for English. We kind of grew up with those people. They were not much younger than we were and we do still have a lot of those associations.

Q: Well, because of the violence after the abort of the PKI coup, I take it that the universities were

essentially cleansed of what so often has happened around the world. That is a very Marxist faculty and a very leftist student organization which usually gets dissipated once they get out, but at the time this was not the case in Indonesia at the time?

LA PORTA: There was certainly some cleaning out of the universities and public organizations of staunch and identifiable pro-communist elements. Others just found it convenient just to keep quiet. The Suharto government in the early days took pains to appoint “reliable” people to head public bodies. Yes, there were purges of the media, but not wholesale purges as only some people who were banned from teaching in universities. Many thousands were arrested and put into reeducation camps or were imprisoned for long periods of time.

On the other hand, I think that, given the nature or the fairly low state of the university and public school systems, there was certainly a long way to go in terms of getting them up to any degree of acceptability. Responsible educators, faculty members and student organizations were very much open to accepting outside help. They knew they had to modernize. They had to reach out to send people to the United States and Western Europe and Japan and other places in order to improve their academic competence because they had lost so much, in the previous six, seven or eight years of the Sukarno regime. There was a profound opening up and the United States did a lot in terms of its public affairs outreach, much of which has atrophied today, sad to say, in terms of establishing or reopening libraries, establishing the Indonesian-American institutes in major cities, reconstituting the Fulbright boards and creating other kinds of binational programs. This is something that was very dynamic at that time and in fact my wife worked part time for USIS in order to locate students to form the first U.S. alumni groups. So, when we traveled out of Jakarta, which was fairly often as head of the consular section, we would look up students that we knew to be dispersed around the country, even in Papua.

Q: Well, then in '69 you moved over to the political section?

LA PORTA: I took the portfolio for Muslim and outer island affairs. That occasioned more travel. My Indonesian language skills were pretty good and I shifted almost seamlessly into that job. As a consular officer we sometimes did political reporting on our trips.

Q: At that time, was there a concern? I mean you look at the thing, Indonesia on the map and you think this is a place where there would be separatist tendencies, disintegration along the periphery, you know, you've got your center and you've got Java and you've got Sumatra and maybe Bali, you think that a lot of these islands begin to, hell with this, let's go. Was that, were we concerned about it, too, were there any signs of that happening?

LA PORTA: We were very much concerned and still are today. For example, in 1974, Hasan di Tiro founder of the Aceh Merdeka Movement, the Free Aceh Movement or GAM felt that he had been promised regional autonomy by Sukarno back in the early 1960s. When he didn't get it he organized a guerilla group against the Indonesian central authority. Partially as a Malaysian reaction against Sukarno's policy of Konfrontasi received support from across the Strait of Malacca. Some of this support was real and some of it just simply lip service, but the GAM movement continued with peaks and troughs over the years. There were separatist movements in Borneo that were aided and abetted by the communist insurgency that spilled over into the

Indonesian side.

There were also Christian dissidents in Manado nearest to the Southern Philippines city of Davao who were campaigning for autonomy. In Maluku you still have the Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS) group going back to the '50s who were agitating for a freedom for the Christian majority region. These Christian groups received support from the Netherlands and from human rights organizations. Moving around to Papua, you had a history of brokering deals, including by Ellsworth Bunker and others, for the Dutch withdrawal and handing Papua over to Indonesian authority under something in 1969 that we jokingly called the Act Free of Choice. The Act of Free Choice was a contrived process for consultations with hand-picked local leaders on the district level. District assemblies were convened and they said yes, we'd like to be part of Indonesia and we want to be rid of the evil Dutch. Whether that represented any kind of authentic expression of the people is open to debate, but we argued at the time that it was probably as good a popular expression as you were going to get because of the bad communications and the very low state of development of the indigenous society. Now 35 years later the Organisasi Papua Merdeka, the Free Papua Movement (OPM) is still agitating. There are calls from the human rights and civil society organizations for another exercise in self-determination in Papua. I firmly believe that, as in 1969, Papua is nowhere near capable of full self-government; if anything the political, social and economic situation there is more complex than it was in 1969 and there has been a great deal of integration with the rest of Indonesia. An independent Papua would only become a failed state like Papua-New Guinea (PNG) and increasingly East Timor.

Sukarno, I think, made two major contributions to Indonesia. One was the creation of a unitary state and the other was the creation of a national language. Today you have to distinguish carefully between the Aceh and Papua situations. These are very different things. In Papua today we see on TV, all of these well dressed very articulate Papuan representatives of one or another human rights or civil society organization arguing for freedom from the Indonesia government. Okay, what's wrong with this picture? Number one, 35 years ago they would not have been well dressed or hardly dressed at all. Number two, they were all educated in Indonesian institutions and they all speak perfect idiomatic Indonesian. In Papua there are 13 different major tribal groups, usually fighting with each other. They all achieved their status as a result of their affiliation inclusion in Indonesia. In Aceh these GAM leaders headquartered in Sweden are trying simply to gain control over natural resources, not for the greater benefit of Acehnese society, or to advance the cause of Islam, but simply to gain political power and money. I don't find a lot of merit in the Aceh freedom movement, having dealt with them closely when I was consul in Medan. I even had something to do with them when I was in Malaysia.

You will always have these separatist tendencies in parts of Indonesia in varying degrees. Even some Balinese want more recognition for themselves. It is Jakarta's job in this case to deal with those disaffections and to conciliate in a constructive way, not to suppress local sentiment but to make government decentralization, power sharing and resource sharing work. A lot of these things can be negotiated with some sensitivity and patience on the basis of what the local inhabitants want in terms of greater self-government. Since the fall of the Suharto regime, a decentralization law has been passed and special local autonomy laws have been approved for Aceh and Papua. It is within the power of the central government to lose the game, but with a little wisdom and skill most experts in the United States and other countries believe that they can certainly make things better

as regards to the separatist feelings. Nevertheless, in some parts of the country, such as Central Sulawesi and Maluku, local tensions are being exacerbated by extreme radical Muslims.

Q: At your time though I want to go back to the late '60s when you were dealing with it, how was the situation then?

LA PORTA: The situation in Aceh was fairly quiet. We knew that small bands of armed fighters, bandits we called them bandits, were there and the old Aceh nationalist leader, Daud Beureueh, was in exile in Malaysia. It was not an open armed insurrection then. In Papua you had the Act of Free Choice in 1969 but some armed groups operated in the border area with Papua-New Guinea (PNG). By and large there were minor hit-and-run banditry attacks on police posts every few months and flag raisings which they still do today. Hoisting the flag of the Free Papua Movement or the Free Aceh Movement is a symbol saying, we're here and don't forget us. The damage that could be inflicted was rather small, however.

Q: You mentioned three places. I wonder if you could talk about them again. Now, obviously particularly at this time there's still a sizeable native Dutch group as well as Indonesian refugees in the Netherlands. Were they playing much of a role? Was it positive or negative?

LA PORTA: The Dutch opted out completely. The Dutch interest when they saw that Suharto was going to oust the Sukarno completely, turned to getting back some of their economic assets that were nationalized under state socialism. They didn't try to reclaim all of their old properties, but they did come back into plantation management, banking and some industrial sectors. The Dutch trading companies came back, but at a fairly low level of activity. It wasn't until really the mid-'70's or even later that the Dutch established a cultural institute and began to teach Dutch again.

Q: The émigré group there was not one, I mean in the Netherlands was not one that sort of was raising hell, or was it?

LA PORTA: The people who were raising hell were the Ambonese from Maluku, the Moluccas, who migrated to Holland in the '50s because their outer island rebellion was put down early in the independence period. Many of those political activists were of mixed blood and in Holland they formed the Republic of the South Moluccas, the RSM, which conducted terrorist activities in Holland. They hijacked trains. They bombed banks. There were incidents directed at companies and organizations that they thought were collaborating either with Sukarno or Suharto. The Dutch welcomed these people with great tolerance, I might add, and have assimilated them in many ways. The Dutch and mixed blood Indos, as they're called in Indonesia, had very little impact. Some took pains to blend in although there were some of mixed blood who were active and became active in the Christian churches. They also preserved the old Dutch churches, transformed the Dutch Reform Church into a variety of local churches.

Q: What about the Swedes. The Swedes were attractive to socialist type governments like Sukarno's.

LA PORTA: The Swedes had no role in the Sukarno years but no one really knew. The nature of

the abortive communist coup was obscure really and it took a while for the Suharto government to get organized and strip the last remnants of power from Sukarno which it did in early March of 1967. I think that most foreign governments approach such situations carefully and concentrated on the humanitarian aspects. The economy under the last years of Sukarno had fallen into total disrepair. Things did not work, goods did not move, trains did not run, ships did not sail. The infrastructure, like Iraq, had degenerated into great disrepair. The European countries were willing to put a lot into humanitarian programs like feeding, health and so forth. The Swedes were strong in that area and they still are today. There weren't any particular antagonisms. The Dutch became very generous and became the conveners in 1968 of the first meeting of the donors consultative group for Indonesia called the IGGI, Intergovernmental Group for Indonesia. The Dutch went beyond their colonial legacy in order to do that and got Western European donors, the United States, Canada, Japan and the international organizations around the table every year for pledging sessions and to review the Suharto government's development plans.

Q: Do you have any response to accusations that the embassy had been the instigator of the killings after the abortive coup? I had a long interview with Bob Martens sometime ago. He supplied lists of people he thought were members of the communist party. The American press enjoyed saying we were behind the Suharto regime. Was this happening?

LA PORTA: Certainly the accusations were made and in fact they were largely stimulated by a number of academics. Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey and the group at Cornell, as well as some others that people that I knew who in fact that were associated with Indonesia from the mid '60s. One of them in fact was the chair of a rule of law panel that was hosted by USINDO a few days ago and he brought up the question of the 1966 abortive coup and he said things that he was saying at the time that the United States was responsible for aiding and abetting Suharto in repressing the people in an undemocratic fashion. Those accusations, in my view, will never completely go away as long as there is room for debate because I think that certainly the record and the pros and cons cannot be proven conclusively to anybody's satisfaction.

The mainstream belief, and certainly as far as the embassy was concerned, was that Ambassador Howard Jones was probably overly tolerant of Sukarno and his hijinks. Some in the embassy like Bob Martens, and Dick Howland and a few others had studied the PKI. There were Indonesians who were very well acquainted with this in the government and some outside the government. I think that the idea of U.S. collusion with Suharto just simply doesn't hold weight. There's also still room for debate as to the number and extent of revenge killings in East Java, Bali and other places where supposedly eye witnesses said that there were bodies of people killed and dumped into the rivers. I talked to a couple of embassy officers who went to East Java. They went to an area where a lot of killings were alleged to have occurred; this was in a missionary area of East Java where there were Americans living there. The Americans said, we didn't see anything like this.

Q: During the '50s the CIA had sort of blotted its copybook.

LA PORTA: No question.

Q: By including the plane shootout and I can't think of the guy's name now.

LA PORTA: Alan Pope.

Q: Alan Pope. Anyway, at the time you were there was the CIA active as a useful member of the team as a political officer, how did you find it at that time?

LA PORTA: The agency people at that time were few in number. We only had a few officers, maybe three or four and they essentially confined themselves at that time to liaison with the Indonesian intelligence bodies, both military intelligence and with the national intelligence agency. The fact that the head of the intelligence agency was put there by Suharto and was one of Suharto's right hand people of course offered opportunities for the intelligence folks.

Q: You were saying George Benson knew Suharto. Was he the new defense attaché at that point?

LA PORTA: George Benson was the army attaché in the late '50s and I believe up until 1961 or so and George was back here in the Pentagon. I believe that he had been seconded to a position in DIA at Bolling Air Force Base. George Benson and the coup is a legendary story among Indonesia hands. When Washington first knew that something was happening, well, they wanted to know who's this guy Suharto? What is his command, KOSTRAP (the Army's so-called strategic command)? Who were these commanders who were taking over the government in the new situation? Everybody put out the call to George Benson, brought him in and said George, who are these guys? He knew Suharto as a commander, as a lieutenant colonel and a colonel. He was able to forge a relationship. George came out to India, first on TDY and later served as an advisor to Ambassador Frank Galbraith. He didn't come back as an attaché.

Q: I think that, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but the CIA during the late '60s into early '70s were keeping a low profile. It didn't want to get out ahead of things.

LA PORTA: Absolutely. Ambassador Green and later Ambassador Galbraith made sure that the interests of the agency were circumscribed and harnessed quite tightly to the country team and the interests of the ambassador. There was a lot of discussion at that time – I was not privy obviously to the details – of whether the United States should or should not support the Suharto regime in a paramilitary way or whether we should extend overt military assistance and so forth. Both Ambassador Green and later Galbraith said, no, this has to be done in a transparent way and it can't be done under the table because of the CIA's kind of role and reputation during the 1957-1958 rebellions in the outer islands.

Q: I would think looking at the political structure and the geographic structure of Indonesia, if you left the CIA to its devices... I mean it could be the biggest sandbox for playing in you could think of, including Asia.

LA PORTA: Everybody who traveled in Indonesia was suspected of being a CIA agent. For example, I went to Papua as an embassy political officer; in fact I was still the consular officer and I was transitioning into the political job within months. I went out there and I had some consular duties to perform: (1) we had reports of some people who claimed that they had remains of Michael Rockefeller who had been lost off the South coast of Papua; (2) there were missionaries who were killed in the central highlands and who disappeared (we ascertained pretty reliably that

their bodies were dismembered and the remains were partially devoured as was the local tradition); and (3) we had some other interests, as well as to observe the act of free choice or self-determination under UN auspices. When I came back from that trip I was called into the foreign ministry. I didn't have a clue as to what was going on and they wanted to know what my activities in Papua were. The ambassador got a call from Foreign Minister Adam Malik saying that I was spying there and was dealing with enemies of the state. It may well have been that a driver of a vehicle that I hired in one town had been associated with the Free Papua Movement, but I don't know. My activities and everything I did were totally transparent.

I had to write an ex post facto account of where I went, who I talked to and so forth for the ambassador so that he could take it to the foreign minister. The accusations against me were brought by the intelligence people. Curiously, this incident cropped up again when I was in Sumatra a decade later. I was consul in Medan when an Indonesian military officer went berserk and wanted political asylum. The chief of national intelligence, who had been deputy chief during my Papua visit, accused me of having been a CIA on the basis of that 1969 visit. Things stick to you and I'm sure that people in Jakarta today say, "Oh, yeah, Al La Porta. We knew he was a CIA guy because of these incidents."

Q: You were in the political section from when to when?

LA PORTA: 1969 to 1970.

Q: Are there any other things we should cover during this period?

LA PORTA: I think we've covered quite enough and unfortunately I've strayed into modern history.

MARSHALL BREMENT
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Jakarta (1970-1973)

Ambassador Marshall Brement was born in New York in 1932. He received a bachelor's degree from Brooklyn College in 1952 and a master's degree from the University of Maryland in 1955. Ambassador Brement joined the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Hong Kong, the Soviet Union, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, and an ambassadorship to Iceland. Ambassador Brement was interviewed by Thomas S. Estes in 1989 and by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Then you had this unusual assignment which you have explained, of being brought over to Jakarta, as a public affairs officer, the Ambassador there was?

BREMENT: Frank Galbraith.

Q: Who had been in...

BREMENT: In Singapore.

Q: Here you were an outsider, what was your impression of USIA operations in Indonesia at the time when you got there?

BREMENT: I was there from '70 to '73, three years. I felt that there was an awful lot to be done; that we essentially had the tools to do it and that we weren't really as focused an operation as we could be. There was a lot of good work that could be done if it had the right sort of leadership. I found that a very rewarding tour.

Q: As you saw it and worked on it, what was the focus? There was the general ones of just going on and getting America mentioned favorably everywhere, and the other one is to focus on key people in key places and all; how did you feel in Indonesia?

BREMENT: Well, Indonesia is fairly unusual in that although it is a great country, with I think the fifth largest population in the world, there simply were not enough written materials in the Indonesian language. This was because the literate population of the Dutch East Indies was entirely Dutch speaking, and the only people who had education had it in Dutch. And so there was an enormous shortage of simple reading material in the native language, and the various educational institutions were fighting at that time a losing battle. I have lost track, I don't know where they are today, but at that point it was fairly shocking. The situation they were in made it almost a certainty that anything of interest in the Indonesian language would be read by all the important people in the country. And so the aim of my USIA program was first of all to try to reach all those that counted with the message of the United States.

If you are talking about a population of 100-130 million, obviously you can't reach everybody. You try and pick out the 500 or so people that you want to reach, and try and get to them with your story. And in a country where there is this shortage of reading material, we felt that if you get to them with the right kind of reading material, they will actually read it. That is not the kind of approach for a country, say, like the United States, where it would be foolish. The Soviet Embassy can turn out the most carefully crafted written materials, but it won't really do them much good because they are not going to get the majority leader of the Senate to actually read the stuff. But in Indonesia this is not true. The comparable figure to the majority leader of the Senate will read something if you get it to him in the right way, particularly if you are in a position to call him and tell him he should read it. You could really do something like that in Indonesia, and that was the focus. I started a magazine there, which was fun, which was really hands down the most attractive magazine in the Indonesian language, and which was certainly read by any Indonesian who got hold of it.

We also had an important educational exchange program, which in my view is a tremendously important program in every country I've been in. There is just no substitute for exposing people to an American educational institution if you want to get rid of typical anti-American stereotypes. Indeed what turned Indonesia around as a country were the military exchanges. Indonesia is a country that is run by the Indonesian army and that army had all been to Ft. Leavenworth. This made a big difference.

RICHARD M. CASHIN
USAID
Jakarta (1970-1975)

Richard M. Cashin was born in Massachusetts in 1924. Mr. Cashin received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1948 and a master's degree from Boston University in 1949. His career included positions in Libya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Italy. Mr. Cashin was interviewed by Paul D. McCusker in 1993.

Q: Then you went from Ghana to my favorite developing country, as well, to Jakarta, Indonesia, which had just barely begun to recover from the Sukarno era. What did you feel entering on that vast nation's scene?

CASHIN: Well, the first thing that struck me was that they used a lot more zeros than they did in Ghana.

Q: In the currency you mean?

CASHIN: In everything...population. Indonesia was probably in retrospect the single most satisfying assignment from professional terms. It was also very pleasant in personal terms and I am very fond of Indonesians.

Here was a government that was really serious, was staffed with people who were probably better educated technically than most of us in the AID mission were. They had been educated in the United States through a very farsighted initiative of the Ford Foundation years before.

Q: The famous Berkeley Mafia.

CASHIN: That is right. They were installed in the key economic management positions in the government...really only a dozen, a handful of them...and given strong political backing by the military government. It was a tremendous advantage to get technically competent people strongly supported politically.

Q: And a major resource once it got under control of the government was petroleum.

CASHIN: Yes. But that raises an issue, however, because the petroleum sector represented a kind of third force in the constellation of power and influence in Indonesia and did not for many years come under the influence of the Berkeley mafia, the technocrats. There was a kind of submerged tension between the technocrats on the one hand and the petroleum sector, which was run by Ibnu Sutowo, on the other.

Q: A general?

CASHIN: A pediatrician.

Q: A pediatrician who stumbled upon the unmanaged petroleum resources in Sumatra, as I recall, and became the czar of petroleum in Indonesia. As a matter of fact, he would not run the proceeds of the sales abroad through the Central Bank, if I recall.

CASHIN: Well, my friends in the Central Bank were appalled at many of the things that went on. They kept telling the foreign lenders, the banks, that the loans to Pertamina were not sovereign risk loans, that Pertamina should stand on its own credit worthiness. But there was a kind of feeding frenzy when it came to the banks. Ibnu was viewed as a man who was as good as his word, that all the loans got serviced promptly, until the house of cards collapsed, at which point the government of Indonesia decided that although not a sovereign risk, and they could have declined payment, that in terms of their overall reputation it was probably wise to swallow it. I must say to this day that I resent the fact that the Indonesian government had to make good on something like \$10 billion worth of bad loans contracted by a corrupt management in the oil industry.

Q: Well, with some assistance from outside pressures who put the contract over on Ibnu Sutowo and onto the Indonesian government.

CASHIN: I am not sure I understand what you just said.

Q: What I am saying is that I think there were people outside of Indonesia who were interested in a contract for tankers to be built and had strong financial interests. They exercised influence on Sutowo to go ahead with those contracts to the disadvantage, ultimately, of the Indonesian government. Wouldn't you agree there was a great deal of corruption both within and actively and passive bribery from outside the country?

CASHIN: Well, you know I don't know all of the details of how this money was made to flow. I have heard all sorts of stories, of course. My impression is that the foreign oil companies entered into what amounted to sweetheart contracts with Pertamina, which left plenty of room for them to kick back part of the proceeds. And Ibnu, himself, I know I have heard stories to the effect that he went into a private partnership with a ship broker in Switzerland.

Q: The gentleman was named Rappaport.

CASHIN: Yes, that is right. I can remember they chartered some Norwegian tankers one morning with something like \$7-8 million, went out to a good lunch, and then rechartered them to Pertamina in the afternoon for \$40 million. Things like that were reported to have gone on. They invested long and borrowed short and didn't get value for money when they spent the borrowings, and eventually it collapsed.

This created, you might imagine, a certain amount of, again largely submerged, tension between those of us who were interested in economic development and good management in the economy, and colleagues in the Embassy who took it as their job and mission to be friendly with and promote the interests of the oil companies in Indonesia.

What ambassador would want to have a major oil company call up the White House and say, "Your guy out there is causing us difficulty. We have perfectly workable arrangements with the Indonesian government which are favorable to our company and we think we should be supported."

Q: You are talking about the oil companies that were resident and doing business in Indonesia then.

CASHIN: Yes.

Q: I think the contract that got them into serious trouble was a contract purchase their own oil tankers and not rely thereafter upon oil tankers owned by foreign companies. That was at least the rational of the contract. But, of course, there was too much corruption involved.

CASHIN: The tankers were only one aspect of the problem.

Q: But that is where the \$10 billion figure comes from doesn't it?

CASHIN: That was not only tankers. But it was eventually sorted out.

Q: Because the government picked up the tab.

CASHIN: It picked up the tab but also brought Pertamina under control. Before I left Indonesia in 1975 the fellow who was with the rice marketing agency asked me if I would come with him for dinner. We went down to a restaurant in Tanjung Priok, the port, and during the course of the evening he said that the President had lost confidence in Ibnu Sutowo. I went back the next day and wrote a long message reporting this conversation. My informant was a close personal friend of the President. He told me that he had had this conversation with the President while they were both in their pajamas early in the morning on the porch of the President's palace in Bogor. So I went back and I must confess with some pleasure wrote and sent to Washington a report of this conversation indicating that finally, at long last, that the President had lost confidence in the management of Pertamina.

Q: It certainly was at long last considering the President had been in power since 1966 and had indeed relied upon Ibnu Sutowo for political and financial support.

CASHIN: That is correct.

Q: Dick, what was your greatest frustration in Jakarta? Was it, perhaps, our Embassy personnel or ambassador?

CASHIN: You know, I think that probably the Indonesian experience points up that as long as we divide our functions the way we do and assign one semi-autonomous agency of the State Department to deal with economic aid, and another to deal with political relations, there is built into this system the potential for tension. It revolves in my mind around time perspectives.

Development is a long term undertaking. The political climate can change in relatively short time. It seems to me that the people who watch political relationships watch United Nations votes, or support on particular issues, tend to have a much shorter time perspective. Whereas those of us in economic development tend to weight the longer term more heavily and would be willing to accept a far wider range of short term political outcomes in the interests of the overall progress of living standards of people.

Q: So you would say that the political side of the US government presence abroad, tends to be governed by the crisis mentality as opposed to economic assistance programs which deal in a longer term. Is that what you are saying?

CASHIN: That is right. My hope would be that in what must surely be a reorganization for international development in the present administration, that some way will be found to protect and buffer the longer term continuity of economic development programs and to protect them from undue short term political influence.

PAUL F. GARDNER
Country Director for Indonesia
Washington, DC (1970-1971)

Deputy Chief of Mission
Jakarta (1976-1981)

Director, Regional Affairs, East Asian Bureau
Washington, DC (1981 to 1984)

Ambassador Paul F. Gardner was born in Texas in 1930. He received both a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of. Mr. Gardner entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Madagascar, Laos, Indonesia, Cambodia, Turkey, and an ambassadorship to New Guinea. Ambassador Gardner was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Today is November 25, 1991. This is a continuing interview with Ambassador Paul Gardner. You had left Indonesia and served for two years in Personnel.

GARDNER: Actually it wasn't two year, it was only about six months. Marshall Green, who was Ambassador when I was in Indonesia, came back as Assistant Secretary, and he moved me to the Indonesian Desk, so I became the deputy of the Indonesian Country Directorate after six months in Personnel. So I spent the rest of the time on Indonesia again, but from the Washington angle.

Q: For somebody who is not familiar with how the Foreign Service works, could you give a feel about coming from a post, which was obviously high profile at that time, and going to Washington? Was there really a different perspective or not?

GARDNER: Oh yes, the perspective is really as different as night and day. There is a reversed cultural shock when you come back to your own bureaucracy and have to work where you are really much less a person than you were overseas, especially at the rank I was at that time. Although it affected all ranks. I had an ambassador once who said that in Washington everyone is somebody's lackey, so to speak.

The Department was a very impersonal place to work. I never really enjoyed working there, quite frankly. I wasn't all that pleased to go back, but it was time to do so, so it was just as well.

Q: What were the main concerns with Indonesia during this period, 1968-71?

GARDNER: This was when the new regime had just come in. We had to really determine our relationship to the Suharto regime. We had approached it extremely carefully. I may have mentioned earlier that we started off with a very small program of assistance and gave them no military assistance. Although, we had given them defense military assistance earlier in the Sukarno regime, that was broken off at the time of confrontation with Malaysia. We did not resume that type of relationship. We kept the low profile policy that Marshall Green is famous for installing in Indonesia. We had a very small program of civic action. At this time the Nixon administration had come in and Kissinger was sitting in the NSC. They had a much more active policy towards a number of countries, Cambodia being one of them. But also, I believe, they obviously wanted to take another look at Indonesia as well, as it was the largest country by far in Southeast Asia, and a country where all these dramatic changes had occurred.

Part of my first job was to draft a national security decision document on what we should do in Indonesia. I think there was a lot of feeling from the more activist people that we should take a more active role and support the government. Go fully in. Some of us who knew Indonesia felt this was not the proper role because of our history there and because of the need not to brand them as an American friend. And also to keep them on the track which they were on, which was really a very rational economic recovery program installed by the IMF, the World Bank, and their technocrats together. We helped this as well with our aid program.

It demanded a great amount of sacrifice and discipline on the part of the Indonesians, which they were able to do simply because they had an authoritarian regime. We, as a democratic country, tend to look down on authoritarian regimes as something that is not quite developed. However, authoritarianism is deeply embedded in the Asian culture, whether it is Confucianism as you find in Vietnam and China, or whether it is a type of Hinduized cultural base as you find in Indonesia. In Thailand and Cambodia, their traditions are very much paternalistic, authoritarian type of culture.

So Indonesia continued in an authoritarian culture which it had left only for about four years and some very catastrophic years, their democratic period, with the results we talked about earlier. The government split apart at numerous and very deep ethnic, religion and linguistic divisions.

In a way we felt that, while this was an authoritarian regime, there was no real alternative at the present time. The country had been organized politically, unfortunately, along these religious, linguistic and cultural divisions within the society. This meant you really had a politics of survival,

to a large degree, as one very bright Indonesian, who later became Ambassador here, Koko Soeojatmoko, pointed out. When you have survival politics you have the sort of thing that occurred after the coup when the Moslems, who believed that their existence had been put in jeopardy, reacted out of a very deep rooted fear, which had been installed by the Communist when they were assassinating a number of the Moslem religious leaders in eastern Java. We had this terrible massacre of the Abangan population by the Moslem population in Java. And similar events happened in both North Sumatra and Bali.

It seemed to most of us who watched it that they had to get beyond these parties and perhaps the only way was a military-led regime because the military, as most of the democratically inclined Indonesians recognized at that time, was the only body that transcended these deep traditions in the society. The army included all of the ethnic groups and was one group that was nationally oriented and had representatives of the Moslems, the Christians, the Abangan, Hindus, and peoples of every ethnic group. Of course it also had representatives of the Communists, as well. They were the ones who killed the generals and installed the revolutionary council. The Communists were, of course, then eliminated from the army and from many other organizations.

So we thought, and I think this was readily accepted by the Nixon administration as well, that the Suharto army-based regime was the only solution. This was also accepted by most of the democratic intellectuals in Indonesia at the time. Not just most, but virtually all of them felt that an army-based regime was their only opportunity to have stability and development. So I don't think it was ever a question as to whether or not we supported the Suharto army-based regime, the question was how much and I think there were some of us who felt that we would be doing them a disservice if we leaned over backward and looked upon them as an ally. They would resent it. There was still a strong anti-colonialist feeling within the military of and a strong feeling that they did not want to be too close to the United States because of our role in the 1958 rebellion in Sumatra.

Even though there were some people in the military who were trying to entice us into a larger assistance program, we thought it best to keep a low profile at that time...and to keep our "program" moderate and do most of the aid through multilateral programs. This means that our bilateral interests would be indirectly served rather than directly served through multilateral programs. We thought it would be best served by channeling most of our aid through the World Bank consortium and going very light on the military side. You did have a military-base machine which was putting all of its weight on economic development to the point of actually not buying any military equipment beyond the essentials. So we thought it best to keep them on this course.

As I recall, we ended up in our national security document recommending a \$25 million of military assistance and virtually all of it would be civic action. This was accepted by Kissinger.

Q: I would think there would be a problem on something like this. Those on the field know what is working, but if you are, say in the NSC, you want to be doing something, chalking up allies, and be able to paint Indonesia on the map white as opposed to the Communist instead of red. There must have been a lot of battles.

GARDNER: Yes. The NSC was overwhelming strong, especially if the White House was

interested. If the White House is interested, everybody wants to get into the act. And everybody for their own careers and for their own reasons all want to get programs going. Well Indonesia did attract some people in this way. Some of us believed that the reason they were able to have what turned out to be a rather good policy...the low profile policy was that the White House was completely absorbed with Vietnam at that time. So as long as you didn't tie something to Vietnam, and it was very difficult to tie the Indonesian situation to Vietnam at that time, you didn't have all that amount of interest throughout Washington. You were able to base policy a little bit more on the local imperative, without losing sight, of course, of your overall national aims. We felt our national aims were best served this way. Let the Indonesians take care of it themselves. Indonesia was too big for us for one thing and the second thing is that our hand was somewhat tainted by our past. Indonesia still didn't agree with us on Vietnam and we could better build up credit by taking a low profile and giving them adequate economic aid, which we did. We were forthcoming with that. But keeping military aid to a minimum. We did furnish one-third of their economic needs as determined by the World Bank consortium. Japan furnished a third and all other countries the last third.

Q: From Indonesia you got yourself very much involved in the Indochina thing, from 1972-74. You went to Phnom Penh.

GARDNER: Yes. This was just as we intervened in Cambodia by supporting the Lon Nol revolt against Sihanouk. There were a number of us in the Department then, especially among the younger people, who disagreed with this step by the Kissinger/Nixon White House. They felt we should not have taken this road in Cambodia. I was among this group.

Q: The initial one where we charged into Cambodia was in 1970 wasn't it?

GARDNER: Yes.

Q: I was in Saigon at the time.

GARDNER: There was a group of us younger people in the East Asian Bureau who opposed this. We even held a meeting to put the views forward, that it was wrong to have such a military role in Cambodia. Happily, we didn't get much press publicity.

Q: There was a group of young officers who made the press and Nixon was after their necks.

GARDNER: The group that I met with based their stance on moral grounds. I didn't feel that was the proper grounds because it was hard to determine morality in what was happening in Vietnam. Certainly the morality wasn't on the Communist side. I personally felt that the grounds should be that it doesn't serve our interests or the Cambodians interest because we would in fact be substituting ourself for Cambodia initiative.

This was the feeling I had and it was based on the Indonesian experience. Indonesia had handled things by itself and done so much better. The hardest thing for Americans to do is not to get in and fix things. We are very activist inclined. When something is going your way, just let it be, especially in an alien culture in which your hand shows so much. But Americans find that very

difficult to do because we are can-do people. I disagreed with the policy in Cambodia and felt that we should not have gone in. My personal feeling, one I maintained throughout, was that Cambodia was used to relying on other powers to shield them. They were used to being a protectorate. They had always been in a sense a protectorate and relied on a great power, be it France, China or another country. I didn't feel that the United States made a very good protecting power, particularly in Southeast Asia. The French didn't do too well either, except they were there for quite a long time.

We had meetings and said things orally, but none of the people that I was involved with in the East Asian Bureau got hurt. We were such a young group that I don't think we really mattered. We let our views be known, but they didn't go very far. We were very junior in rank.

Q: I think the real thing that disturbed Nixon, personally, was the fact that there were other groups that went public during the time.

GARDNER: I disagreed with those who eventually got in control of the meeting and based the opposition on moral grounds. I don't think any of them got into trouble. Certainly it got out, that we didn't approve of it, and the White House was angry, but I can't think of any individual career that suffered.

Q: All I recall, and this is vague, is that Nixon called Rogers and said, "Do something" and Rogers put on a stall in order to protect those opposing the position.

GARDNER: We were protected by both Green and Rogers, I think, to a large degree. I just have a feeling that Green may have agreed with us, although I don't know, I never asked him. He was closer to the power center and he didn't get along with Kissinger, and I think Indochina was one of the reasons. I don't know the details of that. I do know there was an estrangement between the East Asian Bureau and the NSC at that time over Cambodia. So I felt, it was really quite something for them to decide to send me to Cambodia in charge of political/military affairs. I had the responsibility and actually a role in the military intervention that I had disagreed with to begin with. So this called for discipline because you were implementing a policy you don't agree with but it was our job to do so. I tried to do my best to implement it.

Q: Then you went ... back to Indonesia?

GARDNER: I went back to Indonesia as political counselor under David Newsom.

Q: You were there for...

GARDNER: I was there for almost five years. For the last three years I was Deputy Chief of Mission under Ed Masters.

Q: What was the situation then? You had been in two other areas at time of stress and now you are back in Indonesia after the tremendous events of 1965. How did you find Indonesia? This was from 1976-81.

GARDNER: First I found it was a different country. It wasn't the country I left. I landed in an airport that I had never seen before. We went into town on a highway that I had never been on before. There were buildings around that I had never seen before. But the same old Embassy. I wondered if I was really in the right place when I landed. There had been so many changes. During the entire four years that I had been there earlier nothing had changed except the regime. No one had constructed anything for years, the economy was so horrible. There had been no new buildings for years, or new roads. And here was this great big highway that we were just zooming along to town. I was used to taking hours to get to an airport that was much closer to the Embassy. In any event, a lot of things had changed obviously. But I found when I really got down to it that a lot of things hadn't changed.

One of the things that struck me when I was taken with the Ambassador to see the Foreign Minister was the difference between the Turks and the Indonesians. I couldn't hear anything the Prime Minister was saying. I was so used to having the Turks shout at me I had lost my ear for the very soft voiced Indonesians who never raised their voices. That was one of my problems, getting my ear attuned to some people. The other thing is that the Indonesian language is so dynamic that it created all these new words.

But I found my old friends were the same, unlike Americans when you come back...they have gone off and done their own thing during the years you have been gone and you have to work to get back on the same wave length. With my Indonesian friends it was as if I had never left. We started off right where we had left off. But their situation had changed. Most of them were on the outs when I was there before. They were nobodies when I left and were somebodies when I returned.

A young man that I taught, who I may have mentioned earlier, when I was teaching a few months at the teachers college, who had helped with the Moslem demonstration against the Embassy...one of the first things I noticed was that he was on television giving English courses. This guy was really on the outs before.

There was my guide in Sulawesi in 1964, who I had helped by giving him \$10 a month from his American family. He was a director of Union Carbide -- this little kid. He was still in his twenties. He had gone back to the U.S. and gotten a MBA from Buffalo and had been appointed director of Union Carbide.

The agriculture professor who lost his job because he was a poet advocating freedom of speech, he was head of the fine arts faculty. That was great.

A young man that I had helped to get to Belgium by giving him money to buy a suit, was the editor of the nation's best magazine.

The heads of various families I had known, who had been jailed by Sukarno, were now all out. It was good to see them. Some of the big figures from the past like an acting president Sjafruddin Prawirawegara and one of the first prime ministers Mohammed Natsir, both jailed by Sukarno and because having had contact with the Moslem groups before, I got to know them. It was great knowing these great figures from the past even though they were not all together in with the regime. Mohammed Roem, a wonderful person who had been one of the first foreign ministers of

Indonesia, was out of jail. He was such a wonderful person. And Mechtar Lubis, I got to know. He was the country's top novelist, who had been jailed as well. To see all these people who had been in jail come back into prominence was just wonderful. They were all demonstrating their intellectual capabilities in one way or another.

It was a very exciting period for me. It was a very quiet period as far as American policy went because it was economically oriented really. They were still focussed on their economic program which so far had been really amazingly successful. But it still had a ways to go. It still has a ways to go now. There is still a lot of poverty there.

One of the things that we were concerned about was how much of this was reaching the countryside. Some of the things that I worked on as political counselor was to actually go out and look at all the various programs in the countryside and see if they were helping the people economically. And quite frankly I thought that they were. This was pleasing. There were a lot of lacuna obviously and it was still a pretty miserable existence for a lot of people, especially among the urban poor. But because of their emphasis on agriculture, and the green revolution, great strides had been made in the countryside. And that was pleasing to see.

I had come from places where the stress was quite high and things were changing. Stress was not high at all there because we had a good relationship with the government. We just had to worry about the things that you normally worry about.

One of the big things at the time was human rights. This was the time when Carter had come in with his human rights policy. We had a lot of visits on that subject because of the communist prisoners. I think there were 60,000 PKI prisoners. There was quite a bit of agitation to get them released. Our problem was serving, as you like, as a coupling device for some very active human rights campaigners who had led marches in Alabama. Pat Derian came out. We had to couple Pat Derian in Indonesia where people didn't make marches against the government or against anything else. And where you didn't show openly conflict. You didn't even show disagreement. These things were handled in a different manner. This was a trait of our society which is not at all appreciated by Javanese, who are very strong in preserving outward harmony in their relationships. Public criticism is not acceptable. Well, these human rights activists were critics from the beginning. That's all they were. Their whole career had been criticizing human rights violation. And they were campaigners, flag carriers. So we had a problem.

This upset the Indonesians, not only making our relationship difficult, but making the PKI problem more difficult as well, because they wouldn't go easy on the PKI just to please us. But on the other hand, this was a new Indonesian society. This was 1976 and they were eleven years away from the uprising and were much more comfortable with themselves. The Communist threat wasn't as big as it was before. I think they still had a fear of China and the Chinese using the Communists and this type of thing, but they were a little more confident with their ability to handle it. And they were more open then before and were concerned with their reputation, I think.

And most of the people that I've known were really freedom of speech lovers; they had risen in this society because of their Western training...not because of their democratic beliefs but because of their Western training. Most of them had degrees from abroad. And they had the technical

competence that the new regime needed with its emphasis on adaptation to a market economy. So, they were somebodies at that time and could get their views expressed a little bit better, I think. They were handling the media and some of the other things. Like I said my friend was an editor and he was also discriminated against by the Sukarno regime for having been for freedom of speech.

So obviously the type of atmosphere that one had then was more conducive to releasing the PKI prisoners. So we were able to...I am not saying that we persuaded them to release them, I think they persuaded themselves that this was the best thing for them to do.

They had release ceremonies and one of the more interesting things I did, I think I mentioned it earlier, was to go around to these ceremonies and see some of these people and see what had happened to them. I would like to go back and see what has happened to them now, but that is something you can't do. That would be really interfering in a society, something as a foreigner one shouldn't do. Once you start trying to take temperatures like this and go back and say, "What happened to that PKI person, let me go back and talk to him again?" it is like a physics experiment by measuring it you change it.

Q: Pat Derian was a very interesting person. She was the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. This was a brand new program. Her experience came from Mississippi where she came from in the civil rights movement. She arrives on the foreign affairs scene as did Andrew Young at the United Nations. They were still playing out their battles on the international scene, which is different. She arrives out there. How did you deal with her?

GARDNER: We had some trepidations about this because of what she might say publicly, etc. But we had a very good Ambassador, David Newsom, who was used to handling this type of problem. I think they realized that the best thing was to get these prisoners released, not to get headlines saying -- We told Suharto he should release these people and that they were doing everything wrong and they should do right like we say. Getting those headlines would mean they weren't getting released. They were concerned about their careers, there is no doubt about that...I think she generally thought of herself as a Joan of Arc sort of figure. She had her mission in life. But she went along with what we suggested.

At the same time because we had this high level attention, we got into prisons and saw people...I got to go through some of the prisons with her. Speaking Indonesian I could talk to some of the prisoners. I met Carmel Budiardjo's husband there. I am not a fan of Carmel Budiardjo, although she is very active in the Amnesty International, she was herself a very strong Communist and suspected of getting quite a few people fired from Indonesian universities because of their anti-Communist beliefs. I did feel sorry for her husband, however, who I feel was not really the Communist in the family. He seemed to be very much a Javanese type. I ran across him there and asked him if that was who he was and he said, "Yes." So I asked him a few questions. He was later released and has remained quiet while Carmel goes about her stuff blasting the Indonesian government whenever she gets a chance. So this was an opportunity for us also to get into the prisons. Newsom played it very well.

I can remember one particular case, not with her, but with a visiting congressional delegation from

the House. We were sitting in a meeting with General Murdavi, who was giving us a briefing. There were some questions afterwards and one of the staff members was asking questions that were really inquisitorial. David Newsom simply interrupted the meeting saying, "You are not putting Murdavi in a chair to testify in front of Congress here. We are here to hear his briefing." Immediately Congressman Wolfe, the head of the group, seized on this and turned the staffer off.

We had some people pursuing their own agenda, you know. Some were doing their own politicking and getting the Indonesian military angry, which Newsom could see, and he immediately interposed himself and got the thing back on the right track. He was a master at handling this type of thing.

So it all came out all right. They released all of the PKI prisoners. Our people got their plaudits for helping out and I think the Indonesians found that they could live with the ex-PKI people. Now they are going to let them vote, or at least most of them. So I think it has turned out okay.

Q: Was East Timor a problem at the time?

GARDNER: Yes, a very big problem.

Q: Could you explain what the problem was and then what happened while you were there?

GARDNER: It had happened just before I arrived there. Timor was a Portuguese colony and, as many of the other Portuguese colonies, it had some far leftist military there. There was a Marxist movement called Fretilin which was supported by some elements of the military. The Portuguese were leaving the colony and the Fretilin seemed to be taking over. These were pretty brutal people, the Fretilin were. Not as brutal as the Khmer Rouge, but they had already killed quite a few people. The Indonesians had already had a sort of puppet party there. A party they had promoted and were giving money to. It was a party of little significance.

Because the Portuguese colony shared the island of Timor, with Indonesia, the eastern part was Portuguese and the western part of Timor was Indonesian. So it was one of the few places where Indonesia shared a border with another country and this country seemed to be turning Communist. So Indonesia surreptitiously invaded it, basically to support the non-Communist side and put its own puppet party...although it was really a small minority party...in power.

This happened before I arrived, but we had to deal with the consequences of this in Congress and the bigger consequences in Australia because a number of Australian journalists had been killed by Indonesian military during this takeover. We will never know the complete story about this, but it was unfortunate, to say the least. But there was some bloodshed, of course, when the Indonesians went in and there had been bloodshed before of which the Fretilin were guilty. Then, of course, the Fretilin and the Indonesians engaged in combat. The Fretilin as guerilla troops mainly and the Indonesians controlled the cities.

So this was looked on by some as conquering another country. The United States didn't recognize that there had been free choice in Timor but recognized that Indonesia was the administrative power, because it was there. I don't think our policy condoned it, but it certainly accepted the

consequences of it. Many in Congress were very, very worried about the human rights aspects of it. And we felt that Indonesia had its own reputation to think of, a reputation which really could be blackened by Timor. Our policy was trying to get the Indonesians to open Timor up. In other words, let people in and see what's happening and they will understand.

The Portuguese had left the country in terrible shape. They had only 6 kilometers of paved road in the whole country. The Church really ran the place. They had the only schools. I don't think there was a high school. A lot of Timorese had their high schooling in the Indonesian high schools on the other side of the island. The Portuguese had not developed the economy at all. It was quite tribal to a large degree. Very much like in Irian Java or Papua New Guinea. People with spears, bow and arrows, and grass skirts, etc.

So it was a ticklish problem. For one, Indonesia was taking over an area in which there are problems already and they are going to be saddled with all of them. Not only that, but with an infrastructure that didn't exist. So it wasn't a place where you could live off the country because the country had very little livelihood. I think in the long term they actually put a lot more resources into Timor than the Portuguese did. Of course, the Indonesians also put a lot more of their people in there than the Portuguese did as well. And, of course, the Church was highly Portuguese in its orientation...the Catholic Church people there. They had all been educated in Portugal. So the Church was against the Indonesians to a large degree. So they had some bad problems there.

But, nevertheless, we thought it was best that they open up and let others in there. We were able to persuade them to let some congressional groups go in. One congressional group, at least while I was there. My first visit there was with a congressional group. It was really highly organized. We were taken by helicopter to various places, but we weren't allowed to go off and talk to people on our own. It was very highly structured. But at the same time, if you were a very astute observer you could see what was going on. I was allowed to talk to people without Indonesians overhearing me. So I think on the whole the Congressmen produced a good report. There were different views among the Congressmen on the trip. But they were making a trip through Indonesia as a whole and only two Congressmen went to Timor, I think. I think we had three days there and we traveled around from one place to another thanks to the Indonesian transportation.

Then I was able to go out again and this time much more freely. I saw a good deal more. There is a lot of talk about East Timor being not like the rest of Indonesia and it isn't to a certain degree because it has a Portuguese background. Their racial characteristics are more akin to Papua New Guinea. But the languages there are Austronesian, except for a very small minority which belongs to the non-Austronesia group of languages you find in the highland of Papua New Guinea. The lingua franca throughout the island is very close to Indonesian. I found that the children picked up Indonesian very, very rapidly, so that my second visit which was somewhat later, I found that most of the school kids spoke perfect Indonesian. Some of the adults had their education on the Indonesian side of the island. They are Melanesian to look at...they have the kinky hair and the dark skin. They also had the Melanesia sense of independence built around the clans. They are warriors. Small clans against other small clans. The Javanese on the other hand are a highly structured hierarchical society. So they are opposite types of societies to some degree. This causes some problems. The same problems that the Indonesians face in some of the other islands.

But Timor is going to be a bigger problem from now on because the Timorese were incorporated in a way that was extralegal. They have aspirations for independence. I think these are mistaken aspirations because it is such a small and isolated area and very difficult for it to be independent on its own. It is going to need another power to take care of it in some way or another in the modern world. But I think there is always going to be a very strong element for independence there.

I think now the Indonesian administration is a better. They have a local governor now. The governor at first was a Javanese general, or at least an Indonesian general. They have gotten more and more Timorese in the act. The present governor is not from the party they supported but from the larger, non-Communist, anti-Indonesian party. So it seems that they are letting more and more people in. But it is going to be a ticklish problem for some years to come.

Q: While you were there during this 1976-81 period were we making any representations on Timor?

GARDNER: Yes, principally, why don't you open it up? That is much better. The stories you get are going to be bad whether you let people in or not. Why don't you let them see what you are doing there? If you are doing good things there, and we think you are doing some good things there, why don't you let people see them? Let some of the press in there. Let our congressmen in there. This was what we said privately, not publicly. We tried to keep all of this private, because the Indonesians...especially the Javanese like the President...are very strongly adverse to criticism in the press. So we were very careful with the press. But privately, this is what we were telling them, with some success.

Q: Speaking of the press, you probably didn't have resident correspondents there, did you?

GARDNER: We did from time to time. Of course during the 1965 events there were resident correspondents. During the second time we were there, I think we had a Wall Street Journal person. We had some correspondents for the Far East Economics Review, who were Americans. But most of them traveled in and out.

Q: When they came did you have any problems since the Indonesians were so sensitive to the press?

GARDNER: We didn't tell them what demarches we were making to the government, no, of course not. We couldn't do that because then they wouldn't be demarches as we would have lost the confidentiality aspect. We tried to do this privately. I think it was reasonably successful. They did let some people in there. Once they got criticism, as was the case with Australians, they wouldn't let any Australian journalists near it. They wouldn't let Australian parliamentarians in. The Australian press was terribly combative and political, and once they took that line, the Indonesians cut the Australians off. So if you wanted to avoid that, you had to be very, very careful with the press.

Q: In a way you were somewhat protected by the lack of propinquity to Indonesia. The Australian press, I guess, is sort of reflective of the British press instead of...well, there was scandal mongering and...

GARDNER: There was more to it than that. There is a very emotional thing about the Timorese because the Australians had fought with the Timorese against the Japanese. So they had a little brown brother syndrome there. That is one factor. The other factor was the execution of those Australian journalists. You put those two things together...plus also the Irian Jaya thing...they had a feeling that the Indonesians might not be treating the Melanesians of Irian Jaya right.

Q: Irian Jaya being...

GARDNER: The Indonesian half of the island of New Guinea. Of course the Australians had been the administrator of the other half, Papua New Guinea, which was one of their territories, and felt very paternal towards Papua New Guinea which was having trouble with Indonesia over Irian Jaya. So all of these things coincided. The Indonesians, on the other hand, seemed to think of the Australians as racist. All of these things led to very bad relations. The Australian diplomats, they were the ones who had trouble. Fortunately Australia sent its best diplomats to Indonesia and they were very, very capable people.

Q: Looking at a map of Indonesia, one is overwhelmed by the immensity of it, particularly with all the islands. How as an Embassy were you able to cover it all?

GARDNER: This was the nice part of an Indonesian tour that you could justify a trip to just about all of the islands. We did have consulates in Medan and Surabaya with responsibilities for their area. Medan is in north Sumatra and has responsibility for all of Sumatra and part of Borneo. Surabaya had responsibility for the eastern islands as well as central and eastern Java. Sulawesi belonged to the Embassy directly. But the Embassy people, of course, visited all of these areas. All of them are quite fascinating. There were 250 different language groups to start with. They have most of the religions you can have...Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. You had all the religions and 250 different languages plus some of the most gorgeous scenery on earth. So it made travel terribly interesting. We tried to travel as much as we could, when funds permitted it.

There are many places I haven't seen that I would love to go back and visit. Indonesia is one of those countries that you never get to see it all so there is always something to go back and see. In each one of these areas you find different problems. It is an amazing country and has combined several linguistic groups together and quite successfully, probably in good part because of their choice of language. Indonesian is a lingua franca, originally a market language. It gave no ethnic and linguistic group an advantage over the others. They had a middle ground in Indonesian. It has turned out to be a very dynamic language, borrowing words from all these other languages as well as from us, Sanskrit, German, etc. So this language is a big element. They escaped the linguistic problems of India. No one, so to speak, is Indonesian-speaking by ethnic group. So you don't have that problem. That is one of the reasons that they have been able to develop...because of this amazingly, dynamic and plastic language that they have.

Q: From your vantage point, we were making all sorts of overtures to China and shoring up relations during this period and yet the Indonesians did not have a benevolent view towards the Peoples Republic of China...

GARDNER: No, and they worried about this. They worried about what China would gain from this, especially the military. They always had the feeling that Peking had something to do with the coup in Indonesia and was supporting the Communist Party. Many leaders of the Communist Party were in Peking at the time and the Peking leaders showed a certain knowledge of what went on when it happened.

This got around Indonesia. The Chinese denied this, of course. But they don't deny the fact that the PKI was very Chinese oriented. And it was helped by a great number of Chinese within Indonesia, who had about 80 percent of the non-agricultural capital in the country in their hands, although they comprised less than 3 percent of the population.

So they had a genuine fear of China which persists to some degree today. But amazingly it has now turned around because within the last 18 months they have established relations with China. Just when everybody else was having trouble with China over Tiananmen Square, their long period of trying to work out a relationship finally came to fruition and they established relations again.

But at that time they were very worried. We did receive some cautions from them. They did not want us saying that now was the time for them to open up. They didn't want us telling them what they should do about China. So we were very careful about that.

Q: It was great for you to be careful in Jakarta, but were there any problems about noises that would come out of Washington from various sources?

GARDNER: No. I don't think any of them really came out and said that Indonesia should do this too. But obviously there were a lot of things in the works that now was the time to change the relationship with China. Indonesia wasn't ready to listen, they let us know that. And they cautioned us on how much we let the Chinese have because they didn't want China to become a tremendous economic power or great military power. They didn't want to see China get a fleet, for example. Indonesia was invaded by Kublai Khan in the old days. They didn't want to see one of those fleets come down again.

Q: What was the feeling towards Vietnam? During this period, and it continues today, we didn't recognize Vietnam. Vietnam was certainly playing a major role in that area of the world. Did they consider it a problem, or did they feel that it was so involved in its own affairs that it really wasn't going to matter?

GARDNER: Vietnam was a very special case with them. Now Sukarno, as you know, was an ally of Vietnam...and Peking as well. The Indonesians were very strong nationalists and they had won their revolution through the shedding of blood and they felt that the Vietnamese did the same. The people who were really responsible for that were more in Hanoi than in the south. They seemed to feel that Hanoi had the nationalist backing and that the south was too much a puppet of the big world powers. On the other hand, they were in 1965 strongly anti-Communist.

So they were torn in two different directions there. They sort of retained relations with both sides. They always kept their embassy in Hanoi. There was always sort of a special relationship with Hanoi, especially when it had trouble with China. Vietnam was looked on by the Indonesians as a

buffer to China. Remember the Vietnamese don't have any population in Indonesia. They don't have any businessmen in Indonesia. Chinese businessmen do exist in Indonesia. Very few of those are Communists, by the way, but they are still Chinese. So Vietnam was a completely different kettle of fish. They never looked upon it as a strong threat, I think. On the other hand, I think they would have just as soon not have had them win in the south. They have tried to accommodate themselves with Vietnam to some degree, especially because of the Chinese feeling.

They were very anti-Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

Q: What about boat people? Were they a problem?

GARDNER: This was a big problem while I was there, but the Indonesians did cooperate quite a bit. We probably had less trouble than our Embassy in Malaysia did. There were a lot of boat people landing in Indonesia. Indonesia is a very poor country and can't handle this type of people. But they did set up a refugee camp and part of our role was, really, to support that refugee camp on the island of Galang.

Part of my role as DCM was getting out to the refugee camps. We had some high level visitors that I accompanied to the camps. The visitors included the singer, Joan Baez, who is a fabulous singer. I accompanied her on a helicopter trip way out in the South China Sea to a small island, where the refugees had first landed, to visit the camps up there. She is a fantastic person.

Q: I might just add for the record that Joan Baez is part of a group of the 60s who were strongly against American action in Vietnam. But after Vietnam fell, unlike so many of the other people who were opposed to our Vietnam policy, she was concerned about the aftermath.

GARDNER: Not only concerned, but really worked hard at it. She sang to these people without accompaniment. What a voice. I had always thought when I heard her on the radio that she was amplified, but she has a voice as loud as an operatic voice. She really worked hard and sang to these camps way out in the wilderness. We had to stay on a barge and on a helicopter for three hours without an island in sight, over the ocean. She was great.

Q: Were we able to take care of...?

GARDNER: Yes. There were a few push-offs in the Indonesian islands, but less than elsewhere. On the whole they got very good care. One of our problems was...you know it is highly populated in those areas and everybody is scraping out a living. If the refugees lived too much higher than the local population, you had a bit of a problem. In some cases they almost did. But on the whole it worked out well and the Indonesians were quite cooperative.

We had our problems, yes. The local military commander somewhere else might make a ruling and suddenly we had to cope...but on the whole at the higher levels we had good cooperation. We had our moments of tension, but on the whole both the Indonesians and the Americans can look back at a job well done.

Q: You left there in 1981 and came back to what?

GARDNER: I was director of regional affairs for the East Asian Bureau. I principally worked on policy matters of a country as a whole. On human rights and that sort of stuff.

Q: This was from 1981 to 1985?

GARDNER: It was from 1981 to 1984.

Q: Let's stop now and pick this up later.

Q: Today is June 16, 1992. This is a continuing interview with Ambassador Paul Gardner. Paul, in our last interview we got you out of Ankara in 1976 and then you went to Indonesia as political counselor and later DCM where you served from 1976-81. Who was the Ambassador then?

GARDNER: When I arrived it was David Newsom. He was replaced by Ed Masters. I became DCM under Ed who I had worked with before in Indonesia.

Q: What was the political situation during this period?

GARDNER: Well they were moving very slowly towards democracy in an Indonesian manner. It was a very managed democracy. It has always been an authoritarian society, except for four years when they had a parliamentary regime based on the Dutch regime. But it was a mess. It just didn't work at all because the parties were organized as in Holland along religious and ethnic divisions. Therefore they accentuated the most volatile and difficult cleavages in society. It ended up in revolt and authoritarianism under Sukarno. Their experience with democracy was very bad, especially for the military. It represented disorder and personal politicians using ethnic cleavages to advance their own ethnic and religious cleavages to advance their own political fortunes. This is how the military looked at it.

Therefore they were aiming for democracy, they had elections, but they were very, very controlled. But this would have been the case anyway because the Indonesian people culturally are very disciplined and hierarchal. Villages always listened to their village chief, village chiefs listened to the district chief, etc. One Indonesian sociologist that I know quite well said once that there was great difficulty in creating a middle class, an entrepreneurial class in Indonesia because the Indonesians are conditioned to do nothing without an order. In other words they don't really feel they have authority to do anything unless they have authority to do something from above. This is part of their culture. It gives you a very disciplined culture, it gives you a very orderly culture. But it is not very dynamic and their experiment with democracy obviously were hard for some Americans to understand.

I think our failure...this was the time that the Carter administration had come in along with Pat Derian and others on human rights, etc....was that we tended to judge it very superficially, not taking into account where they were coming from, what their culture was. Too often we try to put another country into the American mold and they are not a democracy unless they do things the way we do.

I think the Indonesians were going about it in the right way. They had to go gradually. It was from the top down, and that was how the Indonesians operated. Of course, when you have an authoritarian regime like this, you have some of the people in authority abusing it. This did occur in Indonesia. Not to the degree that some people would think, however. They had an election every five years and had a five year plan. The Suharto regime based its very existence on its ability to produce economic development, unlike the Sukarno regime which was based around the theory of nation building -- nationalism -- and therefore fighting external enemies, particularly imperialism, colonialism and the United States. This regime was based on producing something for the people, economic development. The elections were timed to coincide with the five year plan. So you had to produce something economically because, although you were virtually guaranteed the election, how much force you had to use and how much you had to rein in the opposition could be a sign of disorder in the realm. It was a sign that your government wasn't working. So they wanted to win the elections with the least coercion possible. The elections I have seen since that time all have been a little freer than the last ones.

Now we are getting into the last part of the regime and I don't want to comment on it because I think in many ways Suharto has been there too long and has not allowed political participation to go quite as fast as even the military would like. But, nevertheless, I don't think he can be faulted on the whole on how he led the country considering where they started and where they are now.

You have to have been there to see them under Sukarno to know how far better they are now, not only from the point of view of economic development, but also from the point of view of public expression...albeit, in formulas and not directly, but indirectly. But criticism when expressed indirectly is far more fun and far more attention getting than this confrontational thing we have here. In Indonesia they like subtleties. You can criticize the regime as long as you do it lightly and indirectly. Don't call people by their real names and don't call them bad names. But, nevertheless, talk about certain situations as they develop and let the reader put two and two together. And the reader in putting two and two together gets a tremendous amount of pleasure out of the criticism.

Q: As political counselor, with a one party system, what do you do?

GARDNER: Oh, there was a great deal of politics going on although there was one party running things. How this party was developing...there were two other parties by the way which were not considered opposition, one for the Moslems and one for the nationalists and Christians together. They were quite active and were really opposition in Indonesian fashion. But the Indonesians have a cultural thing against open expression of conflict. It exists in the individual relationship as well as in the larger relationship. The concept of opposition is wrong for them. Everybody has to be on the same side. There can't be any winners and losers, so to speak. Everybody has to be a winner.

But within that framework there are a lot of things going on. A lot of politics going on. A lot of politics as to how this new party would develop. What its emphasis was going to be? Who it was going to bring up? Happily it brought up a lot of young civilians and trained them. Some of the people that the military had put in jail were recognized as born leaders and once they were out of jail they co-opted them into the government party.

You could see some things going on in Golkar, as it was called at that time. They had a vision of

the PRI in Mexico, of a civilian party taking over from the military. This would be the transition. This organization would do it. It was the civilian shadow of the military. There have been some disappointments with it, but in many respects it has made a contribution to the growth of the country.

There were some Moslems in particular, who I knew from the old days. As a political officer I followed the Moslem groups. They were more or less in opposition to Suharto and I continued to follow them to see what they were up to. They were divided into many different groups. So that was interesting.

There were the old Sukarnoists that were left over and just waiting for the government to stumble. There was a certain romance to the Sukarno days. He, after all, was a George Washington to the Indonesians.

Well, let's talk in general terms about the Carter regime, a Democratic regime, therefore being an activist regime. Many of the young people brought in wanted to remake foreign policy and the world. Indonesia was one of the places that they centered on. I, quite frankly, found this at the time a bit presumptuous, especially this activist thing...the Indonesians should be doing this and that. They had made tremendous strides with not so much input from the United States. We hadn't been giving them a large amount of aid, yet they had made tremendous progress. So part of it was educating our own government to what they had done. They actually had a development program that was reaching out into the grass roots.

Q: What was your impression, for example, of the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, Richard Holbrooke, who was a Foreign Service Officer who had quit over the Vietnam war and then came back? He was very bright but quite young.

GARDNER: He was extremely bright, extremely articulate and extremely aggressive in this way that I have been talking about. He wanted to make his mark and this administration had to make its mark on policy.

Let me say the good things about him first. In drawing attention to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the importance of this organization he did a tremendous service. He was very articulate when in the government himself. He got us fully behind ASEAN and recognized the importance of ASEAN and had the government recognize the importance of ASEAN.

I think that was a big contribution. He was an intelligent person. He saw a lot of things that were going on. He was dealing with other people within the administration who were very, very difficult and had their own agenda...such as civil rights. He kept them fairly well in line.

He had his own problems in Washington because, as I remember the State Department at that time was chaos. Carter had appointed most of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries, who were mostly congressional aides with their own ideas of what should be done. So getting a coordinated policy out of the State Department was very difficult because we had people going off in all directions on their own, just as they did when they were congressional aides and had to answer only to their

congressman. They all had their little differences in Congress and had their little differences in the State Department too.

I think that Holbrooke managed that quite well in Washington, compared to others. I think he did a better job than Vance, for example. I think Vance, quite frankly, didn't run the State Department very well. He is a brilliant fellow as well. But I don't think anybody was running the State Department terribly well.

That being said, I should say that being aggressive and wanting to make his own mark, and tell the people what to do, Holbrooke upset a lot of people on the other side. He was not a diplomat. I have seen him on various trips and he, quite frankly, upset people. A lot of his personal relationships were not good with many of the countries. I think they were all right with the Philippines, and with Australia. I know personally because some of the remarks that were made to me.

Q: When you say relationships, was this with our Embassies or with the governments?

GARDNER: With the host governments. He was not a diplomat and didn't act like a diplomat in social functions. I don't know how to say it. I hate to be unkind, he is not my enemy. But he upset people. He knew Asia well in many respects. Understood the dynamics there. But he did not know how to deal with Asians very well. I know in particular he upset the Japanese, the Indonesians and the Thai.

Q: I was in South Korea when he arrived on his first trip there and there was a South Korean delegation to meet him at the plane. He walked off the plane and in the first place he was very young looking and was carrying a tennis racket. They were very concerned about the Carter policy of withdrawing our troops from there and here is the man with the word carrying a tennis racket. This isn't the way you deal with Asians.

GARDNER: No. Unfortunately there were other things. He had a new girl friend with him and spent most of his time smooching with her at official functions and on trips. He put his feet on coffee tables and you don't do that in Asia because it is a sign of tremendous disrespect to point the sole of your foot at anybody. You would think that he would have known that having served himself in Asia.

Q: It was one of the first things that I was told when I went to Vietnam.

GARDNER: Another thing is that he had answers for everybody on what he thought they should be doing, whether it was refugees in Thailand -- he wanted to tell them exactly how they should handle their refugee policy. So there was a tendency of our government to lecture to other governments, and they didn't enjoy this. Some people were very outspoken about Holbrooke to me from Thailand, Japan and Indonesia. I know he wasn't liked by the foreign ministries in those countries.

Q: Let's take Indonesia and your experience. This is not an unknown phenomena. A new administration comes in and a hotshot comes out and ruffles a lot of feathers. You are technically the spokespeople, the representatives of the administration, also the United States...sometimes this

gets to be are you a representative of the United States or a Carter representative, or whatever administration. How did you work essentially damage control at the Embassy after he came through?

GARDNER: You did it piecemeal. First you tried to educate the people back in Washington. Holbrooke was bright and he did read your cables. There was nothing you could do about his personality which clashed with Asians. But you could help to ameliorate things.

Q: Was there a Timores anti-Indonesian lobby in the United States?

GARDNER: It was the same group. There is a group, if you like, of civil rights minded, also leftist group, congressional aides, certain congressmen, and some academics who have periodic seminars and meeting on Indonesia, starting with PKI, the Indonesian Communist massacres in 1965 which ousted the Communists at that time. There is a group that continually wants to have hearings and believes that you are dealing with sort of a Fascist regime in Indonesia. This group I strongly disagree with. This group feels that the PKI was a great victim of the coup of 1965 and not a perpetrator. That is really rewriting history. No one who was there at the time, including the Chinese and the Russians, would have ever said that. Everybody knew that the PKI was up to their ears in this mess. They brought this catastrophe on themselves. But there is this group that feels that we have an oppressive military regime that killed the Communists and is now oppressing the Timores. That is not exactly the problem. But you do have an authoritarian regime and do have some instances of misuse of military force.

Most recently, and I am very pleased to say it was recognized by the Indonesian government, itself, and the people who were involved in it in Timor have been punished. This is the first time that the Indonesians have punished the military or at least done it openly and publicly. They have in the past, but it has always been privately. In this last instance, the generals were reassigned, their careers were brought to an end. The ones actually involved in the shooting of the demonstrators were court martialed. So I think this is a good sign of some change and some more controls over the military. There have been some rather striking evolution in a way on how the military operates in Indonesia over time I think.

Q: How did you find the staff of the Embassy the second time you were there?

GARDNER: On the whole we had a well functioning Embassy. We had some good people. I think we worked as a unit. Of course, during my first tour when we worked under the conditions that we did, you are very much a team because your life was at stake to a certain degree. But you also felt very close together. We didn't have that closeness because we became a much larger Embassy in many respects and we were dealing with a much more diverse society. So we all had our own things that we were doing. We weren't living with each other as closely as before. But nevertheless, I was blessed with two outstanding Ambassadors in Masters and Newsom. I think they ran things right.

You always had little bureaucratic problems...some with AID or the military, etc. But on the whole I don't think we had many. Things moved along pretty well. Our problems came from Washington on how they handled certain things such as human rights and the Timor problem. It was difficult

for the United States to take a back seat role. We always have had a front seat role in Southeast Asia. But when you looked at the fact that we were an aid giver on the level of Holland, we weren't giving this country anything so to speak any more. We might have been a world power, but none of that power was helping Indonesia very much. Our assistance program was tiny compared to what the Japanese were doing. So you can't push people around. Holbrooke and others were used to operating in the milieu of Vietnam. I also served in Laos and Cambodia when we ran everything. But in Indonesia we never ran anything, ever.

Marshall Green, when I was there, had great trouble with getting Washington to keep its hands off of it. I think the only reason Washington kept its hands off of Indonesia was that its hands were full with Vietnam. And because we did keep our hands off, things went quite well. Give them some pats on the back, give them some suggestions if you like, but let's not try to put them into some kind of mold and give them a report card and say that we expect them to shape up here and there. Especially when we weren't giving them anything else.

That was our primary problem. As usual, the Embassy's problems were in Washington and not in Jakarta.

Q: Well, then you left there in 1981. Was there much of a change in our attitude when the Reagan administration came in?

GARDNER: I don't think so. In both cases we were dealing with unknowns. I think there was a great deal of concern with Carter and much less with Reagan. I think the military was more comfortable with the Reagan administration than the Carter administration. But it really didn't impact at that time in Indonesia very much. There weren't any great changes as there was when Carter took over, when we tried to become much more involved in grass root stuff. The Carter administration wanted to make its image worldwide. I think that Reagan's real politic, if you like, with his emphasis on defense was more in line with what the Indonesians felt. They were always a little worried about China, but on the whole this has come out okay. Suharto has visited Peking. But in those days they were a little worried...this started back with Nixon...because of their imagined role of the Chinese Communist Party in the PKI uprising, they felt that we were getting a little too close to China.

ROBERT J. KOTT
Indonesian language study, Foreign Service Institute
Washington, DC (1971)

Consular Officer
Jakarta (1971-1973)

Mr. Kott was born and raised in New York City. He earned degrees from St. John's University in New York City and from the University of Oregon. After service with the Peace Corps in India, Mr. Kott joined the Foreign Service in 1971. An African specialist, Mr. Kott served in, Togo and Cameroon as Economic and Political

Officer and in Malawi and Senegal as Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served in Indonesia and Canada. Mr. Kott was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: You came to Washington and did the basic training program at the Foreign Service Institute, which we probably don't need to cover because that has been covered many times, but what happened to you then?

KOTT: I got assigned to Indonesia, which I was delighted with, in fact it was a bit of a competition because one or two other classmates in my junior officer class wanted to go there. I suppose because I had been studying not Southeastern Asian studies per se but South Asian studies at graduate school and had been in India and virtually begged to go to that part of the world, they did assign me there. So I felt rather fortunate. It was the standard vice-consul, two-year assignment, preceded by ten weeks of Indonesian language training.

Q: Had you have a foreign language through the Peace Corps or otherwise that at time became handy in Foreign Service?

KOTT: En principe [French: in principle], yes. We were trained in the local language of the area we were assigned in India, which was a language called Kannada, it's a Dravidian language, spoken probably by 30, 40, 50 million people today, but of really no use outside the Mysore state in India. So I did not have any world language. I had a little smattering of French from high-school, college, but not enough to say I could speak it.

Q: Ten weeks of Indonesian did not get you off language probation either, I would assume.

KOTT: Almost. Not quite, but Indonesian was called a hard language but in fact it is probably the world's easiest language.

Q: The easiest hard language?

KOTT: The easiest hard language. There are virtually no tenses, no conjugation of verbs, my kind of language. After ten weeks, I got a one plus and after I got to post I got a two, which got me off language probation, which is probably the best of all possible ways to get off language probation.

Q: You were assigned to the Embassy in Jakarta, strictly in the consulate, always doing basic officer work?

KOTT: Virtually, yes, under the auspices of a more senior consular officer, I was the vice-consul. Did my time in the trenches. But it was good fun.

Q: Indonesia in those days was not quite the economic dynamo and the political situation hadn't devolved to what it is now.

KOTT: Yes, I got there a few years after the coup in which Suharto replaced Sukarno and was consolidating power. It was certainly in the early days of their economic development program.

Oil was coming on stream but it was not the significant factor that it is today. Lot of American investment, lot of American business interest in the country. Again, as I said earlier I was basically strictly doing consular work and only marginally involved in anything else. I was a secretary of the American Men's Association, which was largely a business, almost quasi Chamber of Commerce kind of thing. I did a little bit of political work, in terms of travel I did some consular travel out to interesting places like New Guinea.

That was an interesting trip, in as much as it is a really quite a remote place. Those who have been there know what I am talking about. There are primitive people living up in the highlands, people down in the south, the Asmat people. We met for example probably the last people who saw Michael Rockefeller alive, before he perished, son of governor Nelson Rockefeller, who was down doing some anthropological work in that part of the world. We were taken around by missionaries in mangrove swamps where you would get lost in five minutes if you did not have a guide, places where cannibalism was practiced just two or three years earlier.

Q: What was the political status of New Guinea at that time?

KOTT: As it is today. The western half of the island of New Guinea is part of Indonesia. Irian Barat it is called. The eastern part is Papua. In those days it may have been still a part of Australia and Germany, I am not sure if it was independent.

Q: So you only went in the western part.

KOTT: Yes, it was just a one-week trip out there.

Q: You mentioned missionaries that were visited on that trip. Was the American missionary community overall in Indonesia an important element that you needed to keep in touch with, or not particularly?

KOTT: Well, as I recall, they seemed to be a good number of them throughout the archipelago. Indonesia is a country of thousands of islands, not all of which are populated of course. Indonesia was also the world's largest Muslim country, in terms of numbers of people who professed to be of the Islamic faith. In those days I think the population of Indonesia was about 120 million. Today it's probably more like 200 million. There were a considerable number of both Protestant and Catholic missionaries and in fact in New Guinea interestingly, they, by what historical antecedence I don't know, but they sort of divided the island up, if I can say that, amongst themselves. The highland areas in the central part of the island, and we are talking about the world's fourth largest island geographically, physically, belonged to the Protestants. They clearly got the better part of the deal because the climate was much better up there than in the low land. The low lands down south in the Asmat area belonged, so-called, to the Catholics, and respectively when we visited both areas our hosts were Protestant missionaries up in the north and center or the Catholics down south.

We flew in a Mission Aviation Fellowship single engine aircraft over the mountain range to get from north to south. As we were flying, my wife was sitting on an old wooden milk crate on the place, they did not have a seat for her, and we were up in the clouds at about 12,000-13,000 feet

and I started scratching my left ear and started talking to the pilot, "Do you know where you are?" and he said, "Well, not exactly. I know that there is a big mountain peak to the left, and there is a big one to the right, we can't see them, they are about 10,000, 11,000 feet. But they are the highest mountains between the Himalayas and the Andes."

Q: So that was rather impressive.

KOTT: We landed on a dirt runway and from there we transferred into a sea plane as I recall because in the south in this mangrove swamp the only way to get around is by sea plane or canoe, of course.

Q: And your wife was able to make that trip with you?

KOTT: Yes, it was wonderful, great fun.

Q: Anything else we should cover in connection with your first assignment in Jakarta?

KOTT: No, I think it was pretty uneventful.

JOHN A. BUSHNELL
Program Analysis, National Security Council
Washington, DC (1971-1974)

Mr. Bushnell was born in New York State and educated at Yale University and McMurray College. An Economic Specialist, he served primarily in senior level positions at Latin American posts, including Bogota, Santo Domingo, San Jose and Buenos Aires, dealing primarily with Economic and International Trade issues. An assignment to the Staff of the National Security Council was followed by tours as Deputy Chief of Mission at Buenos Aires, Chargé d'Affaires at Panama City, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Mr. Bushnell was the recipient of several awards for outstanding service. Mr. Bushnell was interviewed by John Harter in 1997.

Q: Did you have any idea of why they were in such a hurry? I recall that Pete Vaky was on the NSC staff in Washington at that time. Do you think that he recommended you?

BUSHNELL: No, I don't think so, although he may have been aware of this forthcoming assignment. I subsequently found there was a permanent job waiting for me. Actually, I replaced another FSO, Bob Ryan, on the NSC staff.

Q: You mean Bob Ryan, Jr.

BUSHNELL: Yes. I had no overlap with him. He had left some months earlier. This was a normal replacement. The NSC had asked for personnel files on a suitable replacement for him. Someone

in the Office of Personnel had sent the NSC a bunch of personnel files. K. Wayne Smith, one of the McNamara's wiz kids and then a Rand analyst, was the director of the program analysis office of the NSC where the vacancy was. He liked my file and recommended me to Kissinger. When I arrived in Washington late on Tuesday, I went first to the Office of Personnel in the Department of State, and I was told to go to the NSC. I went and met with Wayne Smith, who said: "Can you leave on Saturday?" I said: "Leave for where?" He said: "For Indonesia." I said: "I've just arrived in Washington on TDY and have not yet unpacked my bags." I wasn't expecting a tropical trip. I had packed my clothes for this trip expecting to be in Washington in the wintertime. However, I said I could manage.

I soon learned there had been a big, interagency battle about the need to do more for the Indonesian military, establish a better relationship with them, and allocate additional funds to them. This idea was resisted by both the US military and civilian agencies. However, Kissinger was very gung ho on improving relations with the Indonesian military. The State Department and the Pentagon put together a mission to Indonesia to determine what the Indonesians needed, what could be provided, and what recommendations should be made.

Q: Why did they want you to be a member of this mission? I would have thought that you would need a special background in this area.

BUSHNELL: Wayne Smith and Kissinger thought a good analytical officer could handle whatever he was assigned to do. As to the area expertise, the Department of State could provide that. We had two Department of State officers on this mission. I didn't know much about military equipment, but that's what the military members of the mission provided.

Q: Who briefed you before you left for Indonesia? Was there somebody else to tell you what you were supposed to be looking for?

BUSHNELL: I had a couple of interesting meetings with Henry Kissinger, who told me what he was trying to do in political terms. Wayne Smith filled in the background and gave me ideas to explore.

Q: That was the first time you met Kissinger, a day after you arrived in Washington from Geneva?

BUSHNELL: Right. I had a few meetings with him as we prepared for this mission to Indonesia.

Q: Well, tell me about the first meeting you had with Henry Kissinger. I assume that you had been told somewhat about the mission.

BUSHNELL: I was told a little. Kissinger explained to me what this mission was about and where it fit in his plans to strengthen nations in the neighborhood of Vietnam. He said the Indonesian military appeared to be disillusioned with its love affair with the Soviets and there was an opportunity for us to move the entire relationship in our direction provided we focused on our national interests and did not give too much weight to the terrible things the Indonesian military had done to the Chinese community there and such issues. I then went to the Pentagon and met an Admiral Flanigan who was leading this mission. I also met with Paul Gardner at State, who was

the Indonesian Country Desk Officer and was the senior State Department officer on this mission. I don't remember the sequence of what I did, but in addition to Kissinger and Smith I met with Dick Kennedy, who coordinated military assistance at the NSC, and John Holdridge, who headed the NSC East Asian office.

Q: Was this Ambassador Kennedy who was...

BUSHNELL: Dick Kennedy years later worked in the State Department on nuclear matters. However, at this point he had a job on the NSC staff coordinating the military assistance budget and many other matters. He was an Air Force Colonel, who may have been retired during part of his long NSC career. Kennedy's office was called the NSC Planning Group. It was a trouble-shooting operation and was very high powered. John Negroponte worked there on Vietnam negotiations; Chester Crocker and John Lehman Jr. were also in that office. Later, but all within a couple of days that week, we all met with Kissinger in the Situation Room in the White House basement where he outlined what he wanted from the mission. After that meeting, the other members of the Study Mission left, and I left the NSC area with them. Then I was called back, and I went to Kissinger's office, practically next to the President's, and he told me more about how the mission fitted his plans. He didn't want to tell anybody else on this mission. That's the way Kissinger worked. This was my intensive but fairly unspecific, and certainly unclear, introduction to what this mission to Indonesia was about.

Q: I'm still not clear as to what you were supposed to do.

BUSHNELL: I was not very clear either, but I understood Kissinger had decided we needed to support the Indonesian Government under General Suharto and his military in strategic terms, and this mission was to develop specific options for doing so.

Q: Refresh my memory on this. President Sukarno was overthrown in 1968? So this was three years later, and Suharto was firmly in control then.

BUSHNELL: Yes. He had been elected President of the country. Kissinger's sense was that Suharto was pulling Indonesia together and moving away from the USSR, and we needed to support him. Indonesia had a vast number of islands, with a tremendous number of communists still around. The Indonesian military were the only people that we could work with. All we had was some information from the US military that the Indonesian military didn't know anything about US equipment and didn't know how to use it. The USSR had been their main military equipment supplier for some years. They had requested some equipment from the State Department, which said that the Indonesian Government was made up of military people, who weren't democratic. However, the State Department didn't identify anybody else who could stop the communists. The State Department people, according to Kissinger, were not constructive. They were just destructive.

This was January, 1971. The US military assistance budget for Indonesia amounted to only about \$8.0 million, or something like that, mainly for spare parts for old equipment. Kissinger's view was that it should amount to \$50 million in the next budget presented to Congress. He wanted to have a program responsive to Indonesian needs. He wanted to change the military assistance

budget before it went forward to Congress in a few weeks. The time available to develop a larger military assistance budget was extremely short. Essentially, we had to re-do what had been done by the bureaucracy up to that point. The US military didn't see anything that they could provide the Indonesians because they believed the Indonesians didn't know how to fly and maintain US airplanes or drive tanks. All that the Indonesians had was old, worn-out Russian equipment, including heavy cruisers and Russian MIGs. There were all sorts of problems. The US military was in a "can't do" mood. The Department of State was in a "shouldn't do" mood. Kissinger was in a "we'd better do" mood. The President would have to decide what we would do; actually Kissinger told me the President thought it was essential to help Suharto..

In my private meetings with Kissinger he asked me about my own military experience. I told him. He said the military in a country like Indonesia was nothing like our military. He asked if I knew something about third world militaries. I said I knew something about them. There was at least one army, and maybe two or three armies, depending on how they are set up, as well as an air force and navy. They held the balance of power if they were united, but many forces divided them. He said: "You've got it! You took the words right out of my mouth! Your job is to see that we have an assistance package which maintains the balance of power in the way that Suharto needs it."

Q: Kissinger always saw everything in terms of a balance of power. Did you say that there was anyone else from the State Department on this mission?

BUSHNELL: Yes, there was someone from the State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, although I don't remember his name. There were about 12 people on this mission to Indonesia. Most were military with representatives from each service, from the Secretary of Defense's office, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and from the office that handles foreign military assistance. I was low on the rank totem pole, and it seemed ridiculous for me to make any judgments about sophisticated military matters or the logistical problems facing the Indonesians. I had no basis myself for judging whether this or that type of equipment was suitable for the Indonesians. I looked to the officer from PM to help me on questions like that, but it turned out that he didn't know much about such matters either. I found a Navy captain, basically a senior bag carrier for the Admiral, who was most helpful. An Army captain, Radez, from the Secretary of Defense's office knew a lot about logistics and programming. He helped me a good deal. He was also able to get me answers after we returned to Washington.

I had one major distraction during the brief three days I was in Washington preparing for this Indonesian trip. I was also trying to figure out when I would have to begin a permanent assignment and move from Geneva. My wife and I decided that, while I was in Washington, I would try to find and buy a house for us to live in. The second day I was back I had a call from Howard Mace, who was the Acting Director General of the Foreign Service.

Q: He was the Deputy Director General and the head of Personnel. John Steeves was the Director General of the Foreign Service.

BUSHNELL: Howard Mace called me at the office I had just occupied at the NSC [National Security Council]. He said: "Can you come over and see me right away?" I had Indonesia meetings all afternoon so I said: "I can come over to see you at 5:30 PM." I walked into his office, and he

said: "What the hell are you doing here?" I said: "I thought we arranged for an appointment." He said: "Oh, yes. I mean, what are you doing in Washington?" I said: "Well, Kissinger told me to come back for an assignment to the NSC." Then Mace said: "Where are your orders?" I had never seen any orders. The US Mission in Geneva had given me an airline ticket, but I didn't have any orders. In fact, there had already been some discussion as to whether the Department of State or the NSC was going to pay for my TDY in Washington. This was one of those turf fights that go on in Washington. I didn't pay too much attention, but, in fact, I didn't have any travel orders.

I said to Howard Mace: "I guess the orders must be in Geneva, because the Mission bought my ticket to Washington." Mace said: "You're AWOL [absent without official leave]. You're supposed to be in Geneva. Aren't you supposed to be over there? Isn't that where you're assigned? You should get on the next plane back to Geneva." I said: "Something strange is going on here. You must know something about my assignment I don't know." Finally Mace said: "Alright. I'm in a bad position, and you're in a very bad position. So I'm going to tell you what it is, and maybe you can find a solution." Then Howard Mace told me what had happened.

There had been steady friction between the NSC and the State Department during the entire Nixon Presidency. On January 19, the day I had arrived from Geneva, there had been a long article in the *New York Times* by Hedrick Smith which said that Kissinger was really running foreign policy and the Secretary of State, William P. Rogers, and the Department were reduced to a secondary role. Smith mentioned many cases in which Rogers had lost on major policy recommendations and, moreover, several cases where Kissinger had even taken over matters of routine diplomacy. Key Ambassadors met with Kissinger, not State. It was a fairly nasty article for State, although it also laid out the organization of the NSC structure, which was a big help to me. At the Secretary's morning staff meeting, somebody had made the rash remark that Kissinger was doing all these things at the expense of State and doing it largely with a staff of State Department officers. Rogers reportedly said: "Not one more officer from the State Department will be loaned or assigned to the NSC." Then someone at Rogers' staff meeting said: "There's an FSO who's just going over to the NSC today." Rogers said: "No, he's not." Then Howard Mace had the job of implementing the decision made by Secretary Rogers, and I was in the middle. Mace recognized I wasn't on anybody's side. I was a Foreign Service Officer. I went where I was told to go. I had been told to go to the NSC. Mace finally said: "You're going back to Geneva right away." I said: "Wait a minute, I'm already at the NSC and I'm scheduled to leave in two days on an inter-agency military assistance mission to Indonesia. I'm the NSC person on this NSC-mandated mission."

Q: It's sort of hard to see Secretary Rogers getting involved in this. William Macomber was the Deputy Secretary for Management. Macomber was probably in the middle of that one, not Mace.

BUSHNELL: Howard Mace was the person who talked with me; he did not mention anyone else except the Secretary. Mace said Secretary Rogers had said that there wouldn't be any more State Department people assigned to the NSC, and later other officers confirmed this to me.

Q: There must have been a piece of paper which Secretary Rogers signed.

BUSHNELL: Mace said: "Go over to the NSC and tell them you can't go to Indonesia? Tell them at the NSC that State says you have to go back to Geneva, and we'll see what happens."

Q: I imagine that by this time the juices were flowing, and the NSC must have looked a lot more attractive than UNCTAD.

BUSHNELL: The NSC looked attractive, and I was being given substantial responsibilities before I even got there. If I'd had my druthers, I would have gone to the NSC, but I was prepared to do whatever the State Department told me to do. I said: "Alright. I'll go back to the NSC, but there's going to be a hot reaction." Mace did not disagree.

I went back to the NSC that same evening and told Wayne Smith what the situation was. I wasn't able to see Kissinger that evening. The next morning Kissinger called me over to his office. Just the two of us were there. I described to him what had happened. He was wonderful about it. He said: "Well, what do you want? To be a GS-15 or GS-16 [senior Civil Service grades]? Tell me what you want." He obviously saw another competitive situation with State, and he wanted to win. He said that, if I quit the Foreign Service, he would arrange immediately to have me given a senior Civil Service grade. However, I said: "No, I want to continue being a Foreign Service Officer, although I am delighted to work for you for a couple of years." He went on about all of these patsy Foreign Service Officers, but he was reasonable about it. Then he said: "What you're telling me is that the State Department is being irrational." I said: "It doesn't look like that to me. It seems to me that trying to stop me moving into an assignment to the NSC is pretty rational." At one point he commented that the Foreign Service worked for the President, not any particular cabinet member. Finally he said: "You just go about your Indonesia mission and leave it to us to work out." He asked who was paying for my trip to Indonesia; I replied that Defense was; he said good, implying one less card for State.

Later that day Howard Mace called me. I told him about my conversation with Kissinger. I said Kissinger had advised me to go about my business and that he would work it out with the State Department. I said: "Now, what should I do?" By this point I had in hand my ticket to go to CINCPAC [Office of the Commander in Chief, Pacific] in Hawaii, then to Taiwan to see the process of rebuilding military equipment there, and then to Indonesia. Howard Mace said: "Go ahead on this trip; since Defense is paying, it technically is not a TDY to the NSC. Then you can go back to Geneva afterwards and stay there. Do that, and we'll see what happens."

I went to CINCPAC. While we were in Honolulu, an officer said they had a super secret communication in the Navy code room which only I could see. The code room gave me a message from Howard Mace, which said everything had been arranged, and I was being assigned soon to the NSC for a two-year tour. I never asked and was never told what happened at higher levels in the State Department. I proceeded on this two-week mission to Indonesia and then came back to Washington, where I spent a few weeks helping to write the report on this trip and a memo for Kissinger and the President.

Q: You wrote your own report?

BUSHNELL: There were two things. The mission prepared a report on the trip to Indonesia. I worked on that, but most of the drafting was done in Defense.

Q: This report was submitted by the US military?

BUSHNELL: Properly speaking, it was an interagency mission report. The mission report discussed what we had found in Indonesia, what the Indonesians seemed to want, the problems in supplying many things, and a listing of possible assistance; there were lots of attachments largely prepared by various parts of Defense. It was submitted to the NSC as well as to the various departments. Then I prepared an NSC memo, which was largely laying out alternative military assistance programs for Indonesia. This memo went into various increments of military assistance which we might provide and what would go to each service. There were various combinations available. This report went to Kissinger to decide which options he would presented to the President.

Before I was allowed to go back to Geneva to close out my UNCTAD work and collect my family, I also had to prepare a draft National Security Decision Memorandum which set out the President's decision. I asked Wayne Smith how I could prepare that without knowing which option was chosen. He said base it on what you recommended and prepare a second one based on the next best option. Even the mission report wasn't really finished at the time I left Washington. The matter was eventually decided in the NSC, and a decision memo along the lines of my draft issued.

Q: Was your recommendation really different from the overall report prepared by this special, NSC Mission to Indonesia?

BUSHNELL: The Mission didn't make any recommendation because the US military, I guess with the approval of the State Department, was opposed to increasing assistance sharply. All the Mission report said was that, if we were going to do more in the way of providing military assistance to Indonesia, there were various things we could do. The report didn't recommend doing any of them. I did get the mission to include a section on things which were counterproductive. Obviously, everyone would stay away from those things. I felt we had to do something for the Indonesian Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The Study Group worked on that point and included some things for each as possibilities. The final decision was, for example, to provide one C-130 [transport aircraft]. The US Air Force had suggested giving the Indonesian Air Force six such aircraft or none, because, if we provided less, it would be difficult to maintain an appropriate stock of spare parts. It was a sound military position, but it did not meet the political requirement of providing something to each service in a balanced way since six C-130 would have left little budget for the other services.

Q: So you went back to Geneva to pack your effects.

BUSHNELL: My wife had done most of the packing. She had sold a car, found a tenant to take over the lease on our house, and...

Q: How long had you been gone from Geneva? A month?

BUSHNELL: Nearly six weeks.

Q: But she had thought, when you originally left, that you would be gone for two or three days.

BUSHNELL: No, it was clear I would be gone from Geneva for at least two or three weeks.

Q: This is Monday, February 23, 1998. When we broke off, John, you were getting your family moved from Geneva to Washington and settled in a house in the Washington area.

BUSHNELL: I went back to Geneva but wasn't there for long. Of course, the people at the NSC [National Security Council] were eager to get me back. A replacement was designated for me in Geneva, and he arrived on TDY to attend a conference, but his visit gave me a chance to introduce him around. After two or three weeks I came back to Washington and went to work at the NSC.

Q: Whom did you check in with?

BUSHNELL: Wayne Smith headed an office in the NSC called Program Analysis. The NSC had a small staff, 50 or 60 officers and about an equal number of support people. There were three or four people for each region of the world. Then there were specialized people of various sorts. Finally, there was the Program Analysis Office which had been created by Kissinger. Its purpose was to handle major issues or problems in which Kissinger was directly involved and where he felt a need for independent and, as he put it, more advanced and more intellectual detailed staffing than what he was getting from the various bureaucracies in the government. We had eight officers in the "Program Analysis Staff." Its main task was SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks], the strategic weapons negotiations with the Russians and other negotiations with the USSR. Most of the staff was devoted to that. However, we also had the Pentagon budget and the various issues of US force structure. Wayne and one other staff member worked on that. Then, because Vietnam was a big issue, and especially a big issue with Kissinger, Wayne was tasked to provide analysis and intellectual guidance on Vietnam, not on political matters but analysis of how the war was going, what the accuracy of intelligence was, and such matters. He maintained high level contacts with the military and intelligence people. John Holdridge [Foreign Service Officer seconded to the NSC] was the chief East Asian person along with John Negroponte [another Foreign Service Officer on secondment to the NSC]. They handled the political aspects of the Vietnam situation. There were military intelligence people on the staff who did the briefing on Vietnam. Program Analysis basically had the military and intelligence analysis.

There was an economics office headed by Fred Bergsten; Bob Hormats was also in that office. Fred was more interested in general international economics than in Southeast Asia issues, and such issues were soon transferred to me. When I joined the NSC staff, the only White House coordination of international economic policies was through this NSC office, but, while I was there, a separate White House office outside the NSC was established to coordinate international economic matters. Of course the President's Council of Economic Advisors had considerable interest in international economic matters, but the Council was not given a coordination role. Kissinger would frequently say he did not understand economics and was glad to have others handle economic issues. But when there were major issues such as price controls, an embargo on soybean exports, and the 1973 oil crisis, Kissinger saw economic matters had great political impact, and he then became very active on these issues.

Q: I thought that Bob Hormats replaced Fred.

BUSHNELL: Fred was the senior person until sometime in 1972. I believe Ernie Johnston was still there and was then senior until Chuck Cooper took over the office in the spring of 1973.

Q: He left some time right about then.

BUSHNELL: Soon after Chuck Cooper replaced Fred Bergsten, I switched over to that office. When I started back to work at the NSC in April 1971, the Indonesian job was essentially completed. Although I had a watching brief to see that the President's decisions were implemented, that did not take much time. What took most of my time was the re-equipping of the Vietnamese military, so that they could do more, and eventually all, the fighting. I also dealt with intelligence; I set up an analytical system. We had maps showing each of the provinces of South Vietnam. Using various indicators, we did a monthly review of the situation which went to Kissinger and the President. We were basically trying to win the war, province by province. We developed a model of the South Vietnamese force structure and a list of the forces which were the most efficient, so that one could try to make the best use of them. Doing that job absorbed most of my time into 1972. Of course, during this time, unbeknownst to me, Kissinger was already involved in secret talks with the North Vietnamese. He would go to Paris to meet with them.

ERLAND HEGINBOTHAM
Head of Economic and Commercial Section
Jakarta (1971-1975)

Erland Heginbotham was born in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1931. He attended Stanford University and entered the Foreign Service in 1955. His career has included positions in Korea, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Indonesia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 3, 1996.

Q: In 1971, where did you go?

HEGINBOTHAM: I was then assigned as head of the economic and commercial section of our embassy in Indonesia.

Q: You were there from when to when?

HEGINBOTHAM: I was there from 1971 to 1975.

Q: Now this is six years after Sukarno had been eased out and was replaced by Suharto who is still in charge. Can you describe how you saw Indonesia in 1971 and any changes that occurred during your tour?

HEGINBOTHAM: Indonesia figured to be a very exciting place to go, because with the advent of Suharto, the U.S. was able to resume its economic aid. There was essentially a policy of doing away with the Indonesian policy to bullying its neighbors and pursuing a lot of selfish nationalistic

interests. It was assumed that Indonesia would resolve all frictions with its neighbors would develop a cooperative spirit in the area. Therefore not only was Indonesia working intensively on economic development, but there was also the beginnings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). I was very keenly interested in the prospect for regional development. When I began as economic counselor there, there were about 45 to 50 American companies working in Indonesia. When I left there four years later there had been over 250 American companies established in Indonesia. So, it was a period in which there was a great deal of U.S. investment interest and activity.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time? I imagine there were several.

HEGINBOTHAM: Frank Galbraith was the ambassador when we arrived there.

Q: What was your impression of how the Embassy was run? As a counselor of embassy you were part of the country team and you were part of the executive arm of the embassy. How was it run when you arrived and were there any changes during your tour?

HEGINBOTHAM: We had a pretty substantial operation. We were in still the glory days of AID; so there was a very large AID mission in Jakarta at that time. There was also quite substantial military assistance program run by our the military mission. USIA was fairly substantial. So, the embassy was not a small one; in fact it was quite large with varied activities. In a country of then 70 million people we were a major player. The ambassador seemed to run a good ship. He was interested in matters pretty much across the board. He was very business oriented; it was not difficult to arrange meetings with him for visiting significant business visitors. I really didn't have any I didn't have a solid benchmark for comparing how an embassy was run, but it seemed to be we had top drawer staff in all areas. It was just a very professional operation as far as I could see.

Q: What was the government of Suharto like from your economic and commercial perspective at that time?

HEGINBOTHAM: When I first arrived, I had to learn to appreciate how extensively and deeply ingrained the socialist mentality was in Indonesia. Suharto had something like 120 ministers and just an incredibly complex governmental structure. He ruled by decree, so the whole thing was pretty much of a nightmare when American companies arrived--often with their lawyers. The Indonesians were pretty sporadic and dyspeptic about which things to enforce and which things not to. It was very hard to sort of persuade people that lawyers were not necessarily. The issues were not legal, but companies had to out what how the game is played. Basically, there were the politics of Indonesia which Suharto was quite masterful at managing in terms of keeping the revolving door going in the military so that no one was able to establish a little fiefdom might challenge his political primacy. At the same time he had the wisdom to employ a group of outstanding technocrats mostly with U.S. PhD. training in Brooklyn and MIT and half dozen other outstanding US educational institutions. They were clearly fighting tough up-hill battle against the bureaucracy. When you have a bureaucracy as extensive as it was in Indonesia and when you had as much opportunity for discretionary decision- making as existed then, the corruption problems and the problems that Americans had to deal with were just horrific across the board. At the same time it was quite clear that the technocrats recognized these problems and were trying to nibble

away at them. Generally, they got support on the important issues from the president, even if it sometimes ran against his political interests. There was also sort of a second government if you will, in the hands of General Evenosuetoa who was the president or, director- general, of Permenena which was the state oil monopoly with the growing investment and activity in oil and later in natural gas. He had his hands on, not only on the oil taps, but on the money taps. So, he became increasingly a power in his own right.

Q: Did you find yourself getting whip-sawed between the two?

HEGINBOTHAM: Yes. I guess I should give a little flavor of what the economics section involved at that time. Of course, we had a substantial commercial component to it, but one of our officers was the petroleum reporting officer; another officer was covering minerals, other than petroleum and others were focused on more general and commercial matters. I had a particularly aggressive and dynamic petroleum officer. We were able to keep tabs on what was happening quite well, and to be quite influential, I think. We had some very aggressive American banks who were increasingly willing to lend to the government on a sovereign risk basis and Permanena in particular.

Q: Excuse me. Could you explain what a sovereign risk basis is?

HEGINBOTHAM: Yes. A loan on which you are not looking to the potential success of a particular project or necessarily even to the financial stability of the country as a whole, but to the expectation that the government would not permit default and tarnish its name and ability to borrow further in the market place. Basically the banks were counting on the government to bail out any problems if they happen to occur.

Gradually, as Permanena became more and more of a cash cow for the Indonesian economy, banks began to see the oil monopoly as a sovereign risk in of itself and began to loan to Permanena for various projects. At the same time, Suharto was quite happy to task General Ignew with carrying out certain projects that he didn't see any particular way to finance in other ways. He didn't worry and he didn't ask Ignew how he was going to get the money to do it, and so some of the banks began to finance some of this kind of project as well, figuring that eventually the oil money would be there to pay for it. The IMF and we in the embassy got very nervous about the levels of foreign debt that the combination of the Indonesian government and Permanena were beginning to amass.

I am going to get a little bit technical here for a few minutes because the story is fairly spectacular. We began to notice that some of the smaller regional banks got wind of this; they also began to see Indonesia as a gravy train; so some of them came in and made some rather generous loans. The margin of risk interest that Indonesia was paying over the lending inter-bank operating rate was very thin for a country as much uncertainty as it had. Some of the banks began to put in what were called "cross default provisions" on their loans so that their loan would be declared in default, not only if the government failed for some reason to make their payment to them on time, but if anybody else's loan in this cross default structure was not met on time. For example, the Republic National Bank of Dallas, if I recall correctly, had in its agreement with Indonesia a cross default provision which included loans to Permanena, which meant that - and other banks had similar provisions - if Republic were not paid, the whole structure could collapse and everybody could

come in with their chips.

Probably about 1974, Permanena's borrowing had just really got out of hand and rumors begin to circulate that Permanena had stopped sending its oil revenues to the government and that there was the danger that these loans would be in default. I went to see the governor of the Central Bank and we discussed what this situation was. I met with him several times; it finally became clear that Permanena was going to default or had defaulted on a payment to Republic National Bank of Dallas. I went to see the governor of the Central Bank again to determine what his position was on this. Was the government, in fact, going to see to it that this debt was repaid or were they going to bail out. If they were, what were the consequences for the Indonesian government, the AID programs and all other issues of this kind. The up-shot was that the Central Bank governor told me that the government, off the record, was not going to let the default take place. But, he also told me that he was not going to make any public statement to that effect. I told him that my understanding was that all banks were about to call in all of their chips, unless they were reassured by the governor that no default would be permitted. They didn't want to be last in the line; they wanted to be first so they didn't wind up short. Things got very dicey. I had a couple of very late night, early morning lengthy meetings with the Japanese embassy minister-counselor as they had a lot at stake in this as well. I went to see the governor again and I told the governor that, I understood clearly why he did not want to indicate that he was going to bail Permanena out of this or any other loans. I told him however that he were willing to give me his personal assurance that the Central Bank would not permit this default to occur, I was in a position to get the U.S. banks to accept his pledge, as transmitted to them through me, which would restrain them from declaring a default. Fortunately, he agreed to do that. I was able to report back to the banks that the governor had personally assured me that he was not going to allow any defaults and for some reason he took it upon himself to trust me to be the intermediary with that message. So, that was kind of an interesting experience. It was a huge amount of money involved in that.

Q: How did Indonesia get out of this fix?

HEGINBOTHAM: With a lot of encouragement and interest from the IMF. It really put the clamps on General Ignew and several of his projects were either postponed or canceled. Staff at Bopanas, which was the state planning agency, began to investigate some of the deals that General Ignew had undertaken and found out to no one's great surprise that there was a lot of water in these deals, particular with a couple of European countries. Companies had, made some pretty scandalous deals. They had to do some fast restructuring. Bopanas brought in some foreign experts to help reshape and restructure some of the projects. This event really scared the Indonesian government into recognizing that they had to get their fiscal house in order; from that point on President Suharto backed off of giving Ignew any more responsibilities. Eventually he was ousted, because of all the diversions.

Q: I believe that by 1970 the Chinese business community had been pretty well much decimated after Sukarno's earlier purge. What was the commercial side of the Indonesian economy?

HEGINBOTHAM: I don't know in terms of numbers what happened to the Chinese community during the riots and the military suppressions following the "night of the long knives." When I arrived, I found a substantial and extremely influential and basically dominant Chinese

entrepreneurial class in place, which was doing very well. In fact, it would be interesting to trace back just how early this happened, but already from my very first days there it was well known that the so-called TUKANS, who were the Chinese business leaders, were very cozy with Suharto. For example, LENS SUI YANG has been from that time to this very day his principle economic agent. All of the biggest businesses were run by the Chinese. There was a gradually emerging entrepreneurial class of native Indonesians, but so many were Chinese-Indonesian. Most of them had reinvented themselves with Indonesian names. This was not only true in business, but some of the major think tanks were headed by or had major leadership from Chinese- Indonesians.

Q: Did they intermarry?

HEGINBOTHAM: I never heard that described as a major means of integration. Certainly the assimilation was not remotely what it was in Thailand, nor was it quite the government supported conflict between the Chinese and the boomy pua trap in Malaysia. It was a rather more a below the surface acquiescence to their continued place n society even while the government was trying to do everything it could administratively and programmatically to try to encourage and build-up native businessmen. That has been a prolonged process.

Q: Was there concern on anybody's part between, that the Americans investors were essentially looking for cheap labor to do things that had been done in the United States before? Was this a problem when you were there?

HEGINBOTHAM: That concern carried on from the earlier years that I had talked about. The peak of that came in the mid 1960s when there were restrictions placed on what American companies. But, that sort of died down. These developing economies are so grossly inefficient and expensive to operate in that the only kinds of goods that were being produced in Indonesia at that time those that hadn't been produced in the States for quite a while. I refer to textiles, a very limited amount of footwear, some basic chemical processing. Indonesia was able to into raw material processing on a fairly large scale which also minimized the job export issue, because you can't really prevent a developing country from developing its own resources. I don't think that was a "job exports" was a particularly big issue in the 1970s. The U.S. investments that were being made - even to this day - predominantly for oil, natural gas and mineral development. That does not raise the "job export" issue.

OPIC (the overseas project investment corporation) had to do its own evaluation whether it would provide any guarantees to U.S. investment based in part on the issue of the potential adverse effect on U.S. balance of payments effect from any project and in part of the political risk of supporting that investment. That was about as much as there was. I don't recall that ever limited a U.S. investment.

There are a few more subjects that I would like to discuss in relations to my tour in Indonesia. For example, the problems of income equity. We were at various points very concerned about whether the regime would come unglued; whether there was enough concern about the exploitation by the Suharto family which had become quite apparent by that time; the importance of American investment; the competition with the Japanese in the economy; the gross ineffectiveness of U.S. support programs for U.S. economic interests in Indonesia. That was a key issue because we were

just completely out-classed by all of our competition in supporting U.S. firm in getting business in Indonesia.

Indonesia had began to grow fairly rapidly, as is so often the case, as an urban than a rural society; that is not unusual in Asia. Jakarta was the dominant force in Indonesia. As a result, a great deal of the development tended to concentrate at the west end of Java-- from Jakarta westward. The result was also that the Suharto family particularly the wife of the president became known as Madam Ten Percent . She was known to be in on all the best deals. There were land transactions and a number of other activities which tended to reenforce some of the equity and income problems. There was a tight bond between the Suharto regime and the Chinese. There were tensions that were in differing degrees evident throughout Asia with the Chinese tending to do much better than the pre boomy or the boomy picture as they were called in Malaysia. The more rural and more remote areas were a great problem. There were large sugar plantations which were severely exploitive of labor. As our tour wore on - toward the end of 1974 and getting in to 1975 - there were a lot of tensions building up and we were very concerned that the political situation could blow up.

Japanese Prime Minister Kanoka visited Djakarta which gave rise to very rabid anti Japanese riots. They were seen as such, but the riots were also interpreted as having a very strong anti regime, anti Suharto cast. That shook the power structure up somewhat. There was a real concern that the whole situation would blow up, because the Indonesians are much like their volcanoes, they pent up these pressures and then explode.

Q: Indonesia going amok.

HEGINBOTHAM: Amok, exactly. That was one aspect of what was going on. One thing that I neglected to point out earlier was that on the international scene there were some things happening that were very important to what was going on in Indonesia. As I have mentioned earlier I had developed in the Office of Monetary Affairs a very strong interest in U.S. foreign direct investment policy. I followed that up at Brookings and then I witnessed the investment boom in Indonesia where American businesses grew by five fold in their numbers and much more in terms of their impact on the economy. That really steeped me in the problems of foreign investment even while watching the struggle we were involved in in competition with the Japanese for a role in the Indonesian economy. We found that U.S. Export-Import Bank was a very reluctant dance partner. Usually it would join the process only after somebody else had proposed outrageous terms which had basically been already accepted. With all the rip-offs that were going on in Indonesia, it got very difficult for Americans to do business, even if they offered the best of deals. We discovered in the work I did with the Harvard Advisory group that Siemens, the German company, had offered outrageous terms for the big huge steel project. There were huge kick-backs involved in that deal.

Q: How did you find out?

HEGINBOTHAM: The Harvard group was very much inside. You know one of the advantages of being an American was that it is easy to develop very close working relationships with local academic groups. The Harvard group was there advising the Indonesian government. I mentioned the tension and the conflict between the bureaucrats and the Indonesian economic team that Suharto had brought in from Berkeley and other American universities. Suharto didn't really care

about the costs of a project if it gave Indonesia international prestige. There were these uneconomic deals that raised tremendous tension in the government. The Ibnews and the Ha bees were building up huge debts and undermining potentially the good work that the economists were doing. The Harvard advisory team did a lot of sleuthing for the economists to find out what was going on. After the financial crisis that I mentioned, they were about to pull one little financial card out that would cause the whole house of cards to collapse. The Harvard team went after these various deals with a vengeance, especially the ones that General Sutohe had been involved in.

Sutohe was a general, a colleague of Suharto. He had been appointed head of the oil monopoly of Pernanema. With the oil revenues he was able and with the companies and the command he had in international trade and international investment, he was able to suck up all kinds of money for big deals and all kinds of special deals on the assumption that anything he agreed to would be backed by the Indonesian government, which was a fair assumption until the financial crisis and then the bluff was called. So, these tensions were very strong and the Harvard advisory group found the Siemens and other corrupt practices that had gone on. Eventually, Ignew was kicked out and the government got in to looking at some of the deals, where the money had gone and all these good things. That was exciting. But, the upshot was that I became very interested in the major defects of the EX-IM Bank program, the problems we had with OPEC, the project insurance corporation and just our terrible inability to really support American companies in a very competitive way, which was really putting the Japanese in the catbird seat.

Q: Could you compare and contrast how we and the Japanese operated?

HEGINBOTHAM: By this time, the Japanese had begun to develop a fairly large assistance program. The Japanese didn't have an AID mission, so they would ask the government what kind of projects they wanted financed and the Japanese companies were there to be sure that the Indonesian government understood what kinds of projects they needed most. There was a very tight and growing relationship between the Japanese assistance program and the Japanese investors; then the Japanese Export-Import Bank could come in and undercut all competitors. Not only were the loan terms quite generous, but Japanese did not flinch from making loans of amounts our EX-IM wouldn't touch, because they were too great. The U.S. EX-IM insisted on sovereign risks, on government guarantees, which the Japanese didn't care about. There were just lots of terms that made a big difference. OPIC was okay, but it didn't cover the things that were most valuable in Indonesia, which was the political risks in mining and in petroleum; that is where probably 85 percent of American investment in Indonesia was going.

Q: Did you also find that you were inhibited by what I have seen so often, particularly in military aircraft, where we can't pick one and say, go with the Grumman fighter as opposed to the Northrop fighter whereas the French would come and say, go with the Desalt fighter and that was it. They could support that, whereas we had to be even handed, even though we knew one fighter plane was clearly better for that particular country.

HEGINBOTHAM: That was definitely one of the issues, but I wouldn't say it was the dominant feature. I think the financing was really a more important factor. American companies were beginning to work with European consortia on the theory that if you couldn't beat them, join them.

One other thing I wanted to be sure to mention as background, because it carries on over in to subsequent career moves, was that we had the OPEC oil crisis which took place in the early 1970s after the Israel war of 1973. That put Indonesia in a favored position with the United States, because although it supported OPEC, it didn't impose all of the restrictions that the Arab countries did; Indonesian terms were somewhat more favorable to us. The oil crisis then gave rise to the period where other commodity producers, mineral and tropical product producers, saw the advantage of what the OPEC countries had put together. The new economic policy of natural resource producers began to try to create little mini cartels and create international agreements to control supply and prices. That was important, because Indonesia was sitting not only on tremendous energy resources, but on incredible untold wealth in minerals as well. The new policy was really a big boost to the Indonesian economy. One could notice the development in the process of one of the characteristic that haunts Indonesia to this day. I have alluded to it previously; that they tend to be so nationalistic and want to be sure that they are getting the best of deals that they often miss the window of opportunity before they realize that they've imposed conditions that were too tough. Ignew Su Toe developed a very innovative, flexible and very effective contract with the oil companies which was unique at the time and set a pattern for oil contracts around the world after that. The mining ministry was not; it didn't show the necessary flexibility and therefore often didn't conclude deals. There was the one huge deal out in Airongia that did go through, but a lot of the others fell through and to this day minerals haven't really done a lot.

Q: Did you have any feeling at this time, because it became very important just in the last few months in the United States, that the Indonesians, particularly the major financial interest there began to know how to operate within the American system, not necessarily political contributions, but in other ways.

HEGINBOTHAM: They didn't have clue one at that point. I don't think it mattered all that much, because what was really important to them were the AID programs and the U.S. military assistance and those things were working reasonably well. U.S. was generally leading those processes and was still the significant donor. They didn't really have a whole lot of political problems they needed attention. Even the Chinese at that time were not the big players as they are now, even on a regional basis. I would say that the Indonesians were much more preoccupied with making a fast buck in the neighborhood. The big transactions with the Indonesian and Chinese at that time were more likely to be in Singapore and nearby neighboring countries.

Q: Were we excessively concerned about unrest might over-throw Suharto which might precipitate a return to Sukarno in some form or other? Was that a theme that no matter what we did, we always had to keep our eye on what might happen?

HEGINBOTHAM: Suharto had been extremely effective at getting rid of any meaningful opposition. The concern really was more of a throw back to the immediate post-Dutch period when the 3,000 islands might just simply go their separate way, creating a chaotic situation. The feeling was that the anger against the Suharto family was such that there just that events might spin out of control. The military, of course, was by far the most cohesive force, there wasn't really much prospect that it would implode; it was much more likely that Indonesia would wind up with another military regime, but probably not a Sukarno type of regime. I've already alluded to the terribly socialist, terribly corrupt mentality that made Indonesia such a difficult place. For

example, the East Timor problem had really come to a head during my time there and that was very tragic.

Q: Could you describe the East Timor problem at that time and how it affected what we were doing?

HEGINBOTHAM: The effect of the East Timor on what we were doing was very remote. Timor is a far out of the way place. It was a part of Indonesia that just not been developed; it was very neglected, very difficult to reach, very isolated. When the Portuguese decided to pull out, it gave the Indonesian military a golden opportunity annex it without benefit of a U.N.-supervised referendum. We were put in a very difficult position, because practically no one recognized Indonesia's annexation of Portuguese Timor; the blood bath was horrendous; it was just really brutal. It opened a lot of eyes to the real nature of some of the military leadership in Indonesia. It was more of an embarrassment; it didn't have any direct impact on our efforts, but it was so difficult to be supporting what was going on elsewhere in Indonesia when you had this kind of behavior which was repeated in other parts of Indonesia, where different cultures existed.

Q: Did we try to ameliorate government actions in East Timor through our assistance program?

HEGINBOTHAM: I'm not sure that we did. The situation was so horrific that AID just didn't want to be associated with anything that Indonesia tried to do in Timor. The issue was never settled. I mean, it was a constant state of warfare all during the time I was there. What we were doing was putting pressure on the Indonesians through canceling IMET, (the international military education program) which was one of the best programs we had for Indonesia. We tried to put the squeeze on them in terms of military supplies, rather than the AID program, because we didn't really want to put the pressure on through the AID program which might have undercut and discredited the technocrats That was the very group in Indonesia that you wanted to support and encourage; so I think it was a reasonably compartmentalized approach.

Q: Did we think about doing something for West New Guinea-- Irian Java?

HEGINBOTHAM: I think not. I was distressed by our policies. I felt we should take much tougher position toward the Indonesians on Irian Java. There was a rebel group that was border-crossers taking refugees in Papua New Guinea to keep them away from the Indonesian authorities. The also were doing hit and runs across the border and I felt that that was going to grow and become a more serious problem. The problem didn't reach proportions that I was expecting. There were a lot of American missionaries there working with the natives. I'm sure we tried to encourage the Indonesians to be more humanitarian. We were heavily into the basic human needs as the basic justification of AID program at that time.

Q: And you left there when and where did you go?

HEGINBOTHAM: Mid 1975, I think. During my last year in Djakarta , we had a visit from the president of the overseas private investment corporation (OPIC). As I indicated this was the U.S. organization that provides basic political risk insurance and some financing for American foreign investments. The president, Marshall Mays and I had hit it off very well and I was doing good

things for them out in Indonesia. At the end of his visit, he invited me to come back and take a position with OPIC as the vice president for development. I thought that would be great, because as I have said before, this was a continuation of my strong and abiding interest in foreign direct investment as a mechanism for development and many other things. So, I was very excited about that. That was one of many of my assignments that took place outside of the assignment process. I probably had fewer assignments that came through the assignment process than I did that outside the system. I came back to Washington and, I probably should check the record, but I think I went directly to OPIC and that was very exciting.

ROBERT E. FRITTS
Economic Officer
Jakarta (1971-1973)

Robert E. Fritts was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1934. He received his BA from the University of Michigan in 1956. He entered the Foreign Service in 1959, wherein he served in Luxembourg, Japan, Indonesia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Ghana. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 8, 1999.

Q: Well, the next post we'll talk about was where and when?

FRITTS: Jakarta, Indonesia. The summer of 1971.

Q: Why Indonesia?

FRITTS: Out of the blue. I was walking down the hall one day and Jules Katz, Trezise's principal deputy, said, "Hi, Bob. Congratulations. You're just been paneled (assigned) for Jakarta." That's how it was done in those days. So I was assigned as first secretary in the Economic Section

Q: In terms of assignment, did you know Francis Wilcox, who was the patron of so many economic officers?

FRITTS: I knew her, but naively never thought of her as having anything to do with me, as I had been in the East Asia bureau. She was the long-time executive director of the Economic Affairs bureau. She was very loyal to Trezise. Very capable, with something of a fierce reputation, which I sensed, but never saw. Since I didn't work in her bureau, I teased her a bit. Not many officers did.

Q: She had a lot of influence watching over her brood of economic officers. She saw that her chicks were well treated and really worked at it.

FRITTS: So I learned after the fact. She knew everyone's corridor reputation. She certainly knew I worked with Trezise a lot and that I admired him. Speaking of admiration, some years later a number of us recommended Trezise for a Rockefeller national award for integrity in the public service. He didn't win, but we tried.

Q: We're now in Indonesia in 1971. Sukarno is gone and Suharto is in power.

FRITTS: That's right. Suharto had been in office about six years or so. Our ambassador was Frank Galbraith, a fine person - he understood the country very well, spoke fluent Bahasa, knew everybody. He'd made a career out of one country. He'd been one of the first Americans to step ashore after the Japanese surrender in 1945. He was always very patient - in policy and management. It was a happy embassy with respect up and down.

I was a first secretary in the Economic Section. Peter Seip, briefly, and then Erland Higginbotham was the economic counselor. My focus was on government and commercial banks and the Indonesian financial system. As we sit here today (1999), the Indonesian financial system has collapsed. It had also collapsed before my arrival in Japan and came close to doing so again while I was there.

Q: What was the politico-economic situation in Indonesia when you arrived there?

FRITTS: Quite stable. The Suharto Government was well established, foreign investment was pouring in, some of it naive, almost all of it involved in payoffs. Indonesia was leading the creation of a new regional body - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Human rights were part of our policy, but not on top. Indonesian and embassy memories of the traumatic 1965 Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) coup attempt and its implications for Indonesia and our interests in Southeast Asia were still fresh. Our policy view was unambiguous: The U.S. and Indonesia had luckily escaped a strategic bullet and we should seek to ensure that it wouldn't happen again. We thus had large foreign aid projects, PL-40 commodity transfers, and a large military assistance and training (IMET) program. The economy was weak and fragile, although foreign investment, including American, was exploding.

The foreign aid program was headed by Dick Cashin - very sophisticated, smooth and capable. Possibly the best AID director I ever knew. His thrust was to support truly viable - the emphasis is on viable - self-sustaining development in Indonesia. I don't remember examples, but he thought "outside the box." He later became a senior official at a non-governmental organizations (NGO).

Despite corruption and an autocratic political system, Indonesia was beginning to make marked economic progress. It was shifting from a food importer to rice self-sufficiency, creating a domestic capital market, becoming a modern resource producer, (particularly in natural gas), hyperinflation was decreasing, and standards of living increasing. The previous description of Indonesia as "shared poverty," coined by the then well-known anthropologist Dennis Goertz, was almost gone in the urban areas. Instead, there were blatantly visible income differentials, corruption, banking manipulations and other dysfunctions, which now are lumped into the term of "crony capitalism."

Q: But our impression of the of the Suharto regime at that time was favorable?

FRITTS: We were very supportive of the Suharto Government. As I said, the 1965 abortive coup was still a very recent event. Our conceptual vision was of a strong, viable, stable and economically dynamic Indonesia stretching for 3,000 miles across the strategic supply and trade

lines of ourselves, our military forces, and our allies and friends, particularly Japan.

Q: Was there any sort of examination of Indonesia and its diverse nationalities? Right now we're talking about major problems as of today in East Timor, and then there's this Aceh group and all. Were we looking at this all being held together by force and possibly breaking up?

FRITTS: We believed in and supported Indonesian cohesion. Sukarno's great achievement was putting these hundreds of groups and islands into a conglomerate nation state with a commonly used national artificial language (Bahasa). Even so, there were some Indonesian suspicions about the depth of our commitment, because of an alleged CIA plot in the 1950s to support an insurrection in, I think, Sumatra and bring down former President Sukarno by breaking up the country. I've forgotten the historical details. But our policy could not have been firmer - the strategic necessity for a stable Indonesia. I believe our policy is the same today, because if Indonesia breaks apart into its many entities, it would create severe problems throughout Southeast Asia, plus Japan, China and India. Very destabilizing. As we've seen with the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, devolution is no solution. Instead, it spawns conflicts. As someone once said, we should not be lulled by the Indonesian culture and its emphasis on conflict avoidance. "Amok" is a Bahasa word.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Indonesians, the banks, and the economic instruments?

FRITTS: We had very easy access to most - not all - officialdom. My predecessor even sat in occasionally on internal meetings of the Indonesian central bank (Bank Indonesia). By the time I arrived, the immediate hyperinflationary crises were easing and I did not have such invitations. But appointments were easy; one could even wander around and drop in a bit to chit-chat. The banking system people appreciated our interest in what they were trying to achieve, both in terms of our direct support plus the influence the USG had with the World Bank, the IMF and other donor organizations. Although hyperinflation was declining, it was still high. The banks offered consumer rupiah deposit rates of a hundred percent per month. The rates were so lucrative that Ambassador Galbraith finally convened an embassy task force, including me, which concluded it was a conflict of interest for embassy employees to covert dollars into deposit rupiahs. Some AID folk had tens of thousands of dollars invested personally. The Indonesian Government regarded the U.S. embassy as critically important to its interests. Indonesia is an exotic place to begin with and it was also fun and challenging professionally.

However, Indonesian officials could be tough and ultra-sensitive. They had fought a long bloody war with the Dutch and could be quick to take serious offence at any hint of Western arrogance or challenge. As usual, we generally gave a lot of know-it-all economic advice and guidance, both directly via USAID and our economic section and by trying to influence the IBRD, IMF, NGOs and other donors, such as the Harvard Development Advisory Service, resident in Jakarta. But one had to be careful as Indonesian cultural sensitivities and sense of nationalism were very strong. Luckily for us and Indonesia, the chief Indonesian economic ministers and officials were American-trained, the "Berkeley Mafia," but even so, too high a profile could be distinctly counter-productive.

I also enjoyed Indonesian humor. When one of my best contacts, a senior Ministry of Finance

official retired, he took pride in the fact that he had actually exceeded the mandatory retirement age by three years. His Indonesian father had served in the Dutch colonial government and as his son my contact had access to special schools run by the Dutch Government. One day he had been called to the teacher's desk for some purpose and the teacher had asked how old he was? He had replied, "I'm twelve, sir". "No, you're not," the schoolmaster replied, "You're too small. You must be nine". My retiring friend commented "When the Dutchman said you were nine, you were nine. And that's colonialism!"

Actually, that was an understatement. I knew he had also been a senior guerilla combat officer in the independence war against the Dutch.

Q: What about corruption that seems to have been a major source of Suharto's recent (1998) downfall?

FRITTS: We were very aware of it. It was well known, for example, that for Indonesians to gain contracts with BULOG, the commodity import-export agency, which also handled our PL-480 shipments, that bribes were involved. Although Dick Cashin was quite effective in insulating our PL-480 programs, our efforts elsewhere had little impact.

The embassy standing view was that as Indonesia became more prosperous, corruption would become less. I thought that simplistic. Using economic principles, I wrote an analysis of Indonesian corruption which argued that as the prey became larger, so would the wolves. It earned some sort of Department award.

We counseled American business not to pay bribes, but what were their alternatives? A very aggressive and astute commercial attaché, Joseph Harary, was dead-set against bribery. He tried to find ways for businesses to work with groups and organizations that were not corrupt, but it was swimming upstream. American firms would agree with us, but then do what they deemed required. Many avoided the embassy, because of the U.S. law against bribery and the belief that the less we knew about them the better. Of course, Indonesia was not alone in crony capitalism. It was endemic throughout Asia. Some may even argue there's a bit of it in the United States from time to time...

And we sometimes didn't help our case. I recall when a congressional delegation came to Jakarta for annual PL-480 negotiations. At lunch, I sat next to an American businessman with the delegation. I asked him what he did. He said he was the "social chairman" and avoided further conversation. During the lunch, I sat next to a Development Ministry counterpart. I noticed an Indonesian minister at the head table confer with a junior-type who came to our table and whispered to my counterpart who got tense, jumped up, and left. After lunch, it was announced, to my surprise, that a PL-480 agreement had been reached and the afternoon session was canceled. On leaving, I saw my counterpart rushing about outside. I asked him what was going on? "Don't you know?", he said. "We've been told we can have the agreement as it stands, if we can put two prostitutes into every congressional hotel room by 3:00 p.m. I'm half-way there."

Q: So did American commercial interests continue to grow?

FRITTS: Sure. They were very large. There was a real surge of American investment, particularly in resource development and American bank loans. Suharto had been there long enough for Indonesia to look attractive and able to pay from oil and gas receipts. The economy really began to come along as hyperinflation declined. An Indonesia stock exchange began. The new foreign investment law was quite liberal, was codified, and petty corruption declined as the government consolidated multi-permits into a more-or-less one-stop investment promotion office. There was a huge inflow of American foreign investment in those years.

Indeed, American banks helped precipitate an Indonesian financial crisis in their lemming-like rush to extend short-term loans to Indonesian state-owned producers of raw materials, particularly the state oil firm, Pertamina. The Indonesians skillfully parlayed the financial lust far beyond the ability to repay and the house of cards collapsed. Eventually, an IMF-led consortium bailed the banks out. It was an object lesson that so-called sophisticated risk-analysis is ignored when CEO's want to assert image and egos. If my competitor has a \$50 million dollar loan to a client, I've got to have \$75 million, no matter what the data may show or, in the frequent case of Pertamina, did not show.

Q: And the oil business?

FRITTS: The oil business was going well, but as I recall, the really big major business was liquefied natural gas (LNG), which requires billions of dollars in investment. Major LNG facilities were built at that time.

Q: I interviewed Ambassador Roy Huffington, who invested quite a bit of time and effort in the oil and petroleum business. What about Japanese products? Were they sort of flooding the market, beating out American?

FRITTS: Not really. I recall serious issues over big-ticket items, like GE hydroelectric turbines pitted against Hitachi. We were also urging the Indonesians to press the Japanese to untie their reparations agreements from procurement in Japan. It was about that time that the Embassy was permitted to promote a single American firm rather than all American firms for a contract or sale. We were at least equally competitive toward Japanese foreign investment which, in a broader context, we welcomed. But we wanted a fair American shot.

Q: Were the Chinese, as a business community, pretty well out of it, or were they coming back?

FRITTS: The Chinese-Indonesian business community had never really been "out", despite discrimination, occasional anti-Chinese riots, and the efforts to link the aborted coup to the Peoples Republic of China. Most had adopted Indonesian names. The main financiers remained and prospered as personal bankers to Suharto, his family and others.

Q: It sounds as if we had good access and knew a great deal about the government.

FRITTS: That's true, but we also recognized our gaps. Later, as country director, I became very concerned that our excellent access at the top was too narrowly based.

Our contacts at the top stemmed from two people - Ambassador Frank Galbraith, who knew everybody worth knowing over two generations, and an exceptionally capable defense attaché, Colonel George Benson USA. I think Benson also had three or four tours in Indonesia. He was there during the PKI coup attempt and knew Suharto and the other mainly Javanese officers as majors. That group became the new power structure. While Benson and Galbraith had unique access, the Indonesians are very sensitive about foreigners. Galbraith and Benson were professionally prudent in how they went about it. I should add that Ed Masters, who succeeded Galbraith, also had good access, because he had been a well-regarded former Deputy Chief of Mission in Jakarta. For a decade or more, we had exceptional access and influence. More than any other foreign embassy in Indonesia.

But it was difficult to identify and cultivate middle-grade officers who were the future leaders. The senior Indonesia military severely restricted access to mid-level officers by foreigners, including diplomats and defense attachés. Their standing orders were that younger officers needed official permission to attend any embassy events or meet with foreign diplomats or officials, even socially. So how to keep in touch?

The answer, albeit partial, was most unexpected - through Harriet Isom, one of our consular officers. Harriet had been arguing long and strong that as a Bahasa Indonesia language officer, she should be in the Political Section, even in an Islamic country. Galbraith and the DCM, Skipper Purnell, believed she could do no useful work there and refused. Harriet finally created enough pressure from the Department that Galbraith agreed reluctantly to give her a three-month shot. The three months became two years plus.

She was six feet tall and, in those days, wore a blonde beehive hairdo that added another eight inches. Indonesians average about five foot-six. She was something else - imposing, smart, deft, assertive and language qualified. Indonesian officialdom had never seen her like. A real curiosity. She became our hostess with the mostest - multi- parties and open-houses per month at her modest house. And guess who mingled there? Indonesian majors, captains, lieutenant colonels - all came to Harriet's. Why? Because no permission needed. Why? Because she was a woman and thus, by definition, no threat. She didn't count either as a diplomat or a foreigner.

Naturally, we all made a bee-line to Harriet's. Col. Benson became a regular. It was an eye-opener for me. I learned how effectively astute woman officers can succeed in sexist societies by exploiting the biases to their and the U.S. advantage. I later saw it happen in South Africa and heard of it in Saudi Arabia. Harriet was terrific. She was ambassador twice - Laos and Mali.

In retrospect, my concern over the generational contact gap was misplaced. In the '70s and '80s, we thought Suharto would step down at the next or following election. As we know now, it didn't happen. Far better if it had.

Q: What in general were you picking up from the Indonesians about our Vietnam policy and the American role?

FRITTS: At that time, the Indonesians had sort of a two-prong policy that stemmed from economic and military weakness. They would not publicly gainsay the war in Viet Nam, but neither would

they contribute to its waging. In the short run, they didn't want to sever all ties with the Vietnamese with whom they felt some resonance in wars of independence. Somewhat as a paradox, in the longer run they looked upon Vietnam as a potential rival to what they regarded as Indonesian natural leadership in Southeast Asia. They wanted to retain the ability to be credible with Vietnam after the war.

Later, when the war was over and I was country director for Indonesia and its neighbors, we provided constant reassurance to Southeast Asia that while we'd lost the Vietnam War, it did not mean the withdrawal of the U.S. from the region. We sought to maintain confidence that the U.S. would remain a major regional player and be a counterweight to China. There was regional concern that we might pull back. Singapore PM Lee Kwan Yu, for example, became more amenable, and offered port calls and ship repair facilities. By the way, we didn't use the word "lost" then.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, you knew Japan. How about the role of Japan while you were there? Was Japan our rival economically, or were we seeing Japan as a partner?

FRITTS: We saw Japan as a partner which we wanted more engaged in order to bear more of the assistance "burden". It was during my tenure either then or later as country director that Japan's bilateral level of foreign aid surpassed ours. Up until that point, our mantras were about Japanese burden sharing, introducing them to a broader view of the world, and contributing to stability in Southeast Asia - all that good stuff. Once their aid exceeded ours, we began to realize that the Indonesians knew it, too. We had to begin to remind them that we were their political as well as well as economic key supporter. That Japanese firms should not be given priority over American firms. Japanese firms, of course, did the informal deals the Indonesian power structure wanted.

Q: Singapore? Lee Kwan Yu? Was he an influence at all?

FRITTS: The Singaporean-Indonesian relationship was prickly at best. Both sides suffered from superiority-inferiority complexes. Indonesia perceived Singapore as a small Chinese island state which thought itself too smart by half and which siphoned off trade and financial services which should have come to Indonesia. A good deal of Indonesian trade was smuggled into and out of Singapore. In retaliation, the Indonesians built a large port and trade entrepot on an island visible from Singapore. Batang, I think.

The history of *confrontasi*, the undeclared virtual war between Indonesia and Singapore during the Sukarno era, still reverberated. A major shock to the Singapore-Indonesian relationship when I was there was the Singaporean execution of several Indonesian marines who had been arrested in Singapore during *confrontasi* and had been in jail for years. Suharto made a personal appeal for clemency to PM Lee Kuan Yew to no avail. Working things out "the Asian way" failed. A great loss of face for Suharto. It was never forgotten.

Q: Did you get out much into, I guess, Irian Jaya, Borneo or East Timor?

FRITTS: Other than several trips to Sumatra, not much. My tour was cut in half to go to Khartoum.

Q: So you left Indonesia - we're talking about when, mid-'70s?

FRITTS: A bit earlier - early '73.

FREDERICK W. FLOTT
Political Counselor
Jakarta (1972-1974)

Frederick W. Flott was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1921. He entered the Foreign Service in 1946. His career included positions in France, Iran, West Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Mr. Flott was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: You were rewarded with an Honor Award, but you were also sent to Jakarta where you served from 1972 until 1974. How did you feel about that?

FLOTT: It was good to go out to a post as a Political Counselor. I did not have any previous experience in Indonesia; I did not speak the language. I was really sent for one purpose, which was to help the Indonesian military, the government establishment -- to get them to support our efforts in the winding down of the Vietnam War. There was the International Commission of Control and Supervision and there was a job of persuading the Indonesians to participate in this, which simply served American national interests as well as Indonesian and ASEAN interests. We wanted the withdrawal from Vietnam not to be perceived as an American defeat or abandonment, but rather as a broadly based Asian, winding down of things. It was helpful to get the Indonesians involved and because of my credibility on Vietnam, it was felt that I could be helpful in that respect. This effort was successful, and served Indonesian as well as American interests at the time.

Q: Were you talking to the Indonesian military or Suharto's government? Or were they one and the same things?

FLOTT: To the Foreign Office. The Assistant Secretary for EA in the Indonesian Foreign Office was a man from "Kop Kam Tib" the military intelligence part of the Indonesian Army, and he was in charge of national security affairs. I joked with him once that it might seem unusual for somebody with his professional background in security to become head of the East Asian Bureau of the Foreign Office. He replied that in Indonesia, anything that happens in East Asia is regarded as a national security question. I worked with him, and the Indonesians were willing to accept in some significant measure our advocacy about the importance of sending a team to Saigon. They had five hundred people in the ICCS, and sustained some casualties. They did their bit and earned our gratitude.

Q: What role did they play? We are talking about a period from 1972 to 1974.

FLOTT: The Poles were there and the Hungarians were there, as clearly in favor of the Socialist camp. The Indonesians were there as clearly pro-American, anti-Communist forces. Then, I think

the Canadians were accepted as being neutral, from the ICCS days. In our Embassy I handled the Jakarta end of the Indonesian participation in the winding down of the Vietnam War.

Q: Were you there at the fall of Saigon?

FLOTT: No, by then I was out and I was back in Geneva on the day President Ford went to play golf and Saigon fell. I was in Geneva as the Secretary of the U.S. Delegation to the Law of the Sea Conference. It was sort of a chief of staff job for coordinating the work of about one hundred lawyers and the Law of the Sea Delegation.

Q: Back to Jakarta. Francis Galbraith was the Ambassador at the time. How did he operate?

FLOTT: He was very conscious of the right division of labor. Galbraith was a man of great experience on Indonesia. He had been there for several tours. He had been there as a junior officer when Indonesia first got its independence. He and his wife were junior or mid-level officers who taught the Indonesian wives how to go to cocktail parties and how to entertain. As a result, he had friendships that went way back and he commanded great affection and loyalty from the Indonesians. He felt that was what he knew best and he tended to concentrate on that. He also knew that I didn't know much about Indonesia or have any kind of long-term Indonesian relationships. He did know about my European experience and he would delegate to me anything concerning the Soviets, NATO, anything concerning the Latin Americans. What happened was, I went out there as political counselor, as number three in the American mission, but then the DCM had a heart attack, so I spent a lot of my time as Acting DCM, which made me nominally number two in the mission. It was a big mission and a big diplomatic corps. Ambassador Galbraith conveyed to the European and Latin Americans that he rarely accepted invitations from them. He felt it was his job to concentrate on the Indonesians. He spoke the language well and could do that very well. As a result, whenever any Latin American chief of mission entertained, I was inevitably invited. As you know, a more junior person cannot leave a party before the more senior persons do, so typically there would be a lot of Latin American ambassadors sitting around until three in the morning drinking and telling stories, and I, as Acting DCM, had to stay until they started leaving. The only difference was that I had to be working at 8 o'clock in the morning, running a political section or part of an embassy. There was also the question of collegial briefings to our NATO allies, which in terms of our world-wide diplomacy, had to be done. Somebody had to do it; so that job fell to me. The care and feeding of the French, briefing them, keeping them on board with what we were doing, and being collegial and pro-Western Europe. So I did a lot of that kind of briefing. Ambassador Galbraith asked me to handle the relation, if any, with the Soviet Embassy. I spent a lot of time taking their temperature, having a channel to them if we should want a channel. I did not get into purely Indonesian things very much. My deputy, FSO John Monjo, spoke Japanese, Cambodian and pretty good Indonesian, and was up to speed on ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He tended to handle all that sort of thing. He later became Ambassador to Indonesia and now he is Ambassador to Pakistan. He is a first rate man. So the division of labor worked out well. No talents were wasted, and everyone did what he could do best.

Q: Had the Soviets written off Indonesia as a place to make any impact after the failed coup in 1965.?

FLOTT: The Soviets in the field would never dare to write off anything. They would never miss an opportunity to show their militancy in support of Soviet causes, partially for consumption back home. But I think that they felt that realistically Indonesia was certainly a hostile environment to them. I think they probably thought that because Indonesia was a poor country, with considerable social and economic injustices, that, who knows, maybe in time their day will come. They maintained a presence and access, but they had no illusions of quick, early profits, because a lot of the Communists had been bumped off. The Russians could conveniently blame that, not on the deficiencies of the Communist doctrine or system, but on the ineptitude of their Chinese enemies. They could, with considerable reason, say that the purge of the Communists in Indonesia was the result of the Chinese over reaching some years before. No Soviet was going to get into trouble at home by blaming the Chinese for everything bad, in his conversations with Americans.

Q: Was Timor an issue while you were there?

FLOTT: No, it hadn't yet become an issue. The Portuguese had just begun to pull out. The people who knew the Indonesian thing best probably would have predicted pretty well what the attitude of the Indonesian military would have been. The "Manifest Destiny" aspect, as they saw it, of Timor.

Q: What about the Australians? Were we and the Australians on the same wave length?

FLOTT: Very much so. They had a first rate embassy there. In Jakarta, in addition to ourselves, the big players were the Japanese, the Dutch, and the Australians. Ambassador Galbraith used to tell us at country team meetings and at staff meetings that our embassy was clearly the best, the best informed and the most knowledgeable. But that there were, nonetheless, other embassies in special situations that had something to offer. They were, the Japanese on economic matters; the Australians on how they were reacting to the long term Indonesian military equation, and the Dutch, because of the depth of their knowledge of Indonesia and of the access to the older established families, who still spoke Dutch and would often talk freely with the Dutch. If you spoke Dutch, even when I was there in 1972, it was like old money versus new money. There were these brash young men in the military who had learned English at Fort Benning, but the really old established families, who were even something in old colonial days, spoke Dutch and they were quite proud of that. But those three embassies we regarded as being first rate in their niches. We worked with a special warmth and collegiality with the Australians; with the Dutch as well. The Dutch perhaps had more underlying reservations about what we were doing in Vietnam, but they were a very loyal, NATO country. We shared anything we could learn about the Soviets with them, and they, in turn, shared with us what they learned.

Q: What was our general impression of Suharto at that time as the leader?

FLOTT: He was a moderately able leader of the country who got into the job because of the fortunes of war, the repression of communism, and the liquidation of the Sukarno legacy. He was cooperative with us, doing things we sought in many respects; obviously pursuing Indonesian interests, not wanting to be too irrevocably in the American camp, vis a vis the Vietnamese because, who knows, the Vietnamese may win and for long term reasons, he had to have access to them. Even we wouldn't have disputed his approach to that. We had good relations with him and cooperation on all the things that really mattered to us.

MARGARET V. TAYLOR
Director, Binational Center, USIS
Jakarta (1972-1975)

Margaret V. Taylor was born in San Diego, California in 1925. She received a bachelor's degree from San Diego State College in 1946 and a master's degree from Stanford University 1966. Her career in the Foreign Service included positions in Indonesia, Japan, Finland, and Burma. Ms. Taylor was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1990.

TAYLOR: In 1972, I was reassigned to Indonesia, but to Jakarta this time as director of the binational center in Jakarta. This turned out to be a very challenging job, because it was just at this time that USIS decided that the binational center should become self-supporting. However, in the Indonesian economic climate -- the lower economic grouping of nations -- people simply didn't have the money to operate without a subsidy from other sources.

We had a large English teaching school at the center which was supervised by an English-as-a-second-language specialist, Bob Brown, so my -- I was relieved of much of that detail, but trying to run the rest of the center was a challenge. The Center had a relatively large library, a whole program of lectures, art shows, lectures by American specialists on various subjects, musical presentations and a resident choir, (mostly Indonesian with a few American voices).

It was decided that we had to move into new quarters in order to make it a viable institution economically and there was pressure to accept American speakers at the center who were not as attractive to the binational board of directors as to the USIA scheme of things. So, while I was responsible to the agency for my work, I was also trying to work through the board to do what the agency wanted me to do.

In order to build a new building, we had to find property. The Indonesians were struggling to survive economically and, as many peoples in that economic category do, they were not as careful about corruption and payments under the table as they might have been. So it was very difficult to find a piece of property for legal sale, and then to try and raise the money to buy it and build a new center.

USIS promised some assistance but most of it had to come from a local fund-raising effort. I had proceeded on the basis of estimates from a Bank of America member of our Board, an American who felt that he could raise from the business community adequate funding to go ahead, buy the property, and build. But, in fact, just before we started paying for the property, that promise of monies fell apart and we found ourselves scraping bottom trying to raise money to pay for all of this.

Plans lurched forward, sort of stop and start. We had eventually found property near the university,

which seemed to be a very good location, but we had a little trouble with the then Chairman of the Board who it turned out was accepting payments under the table (the Indonesian director), so it was a very challenging and in some ways frustrating experience.

Nonetheless, at the end of that period of time, we had pretty well gotten the land issue settled and had blueprints drawn up for the building. Then I was reassigned in 1975 and my Deputy Director, Bob Brown, became Director, and proceeded with the building program. The center moved several years later into this new facility.

We had -- we were fortunate there to have good PAOs, Alex Klieforth was PAO first and then Bernie Lavin, both very warm, sympathetic, intelligent people, and by and large, a very good American staff. My Indonesian staff was very uneven because it was hard to get educated people who were sophisticated enough to work knowledgeably on the things that we were involved in.

But, by and large, the Center constituted a kind of Indonesian family. The Indonesians are a very family oriented people and so both Bob and I felt that we were working together with them to try and pull off this big change in the whole operation of the center.

I understand now from communications that I get occasionally from the center that it's running pretty well and they're now almost entirely separate from the USIS operation. They do receive some materials and I think they still are receiving some help in terms of getting American speakers, but it's more largely an Indonesian institution. The English language program continued to be successful. It was acknowledged, even while I was there, to be a prime center for the training of Indonesians in the English language.

At the present time, Indonesia is the focus of western and American business. There is a large population of now mostly literate and semi-skilled workers, but still with relatively low salaries, so a lot of American business is going there to do the kind of factory work that used to be done in Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia. Those English-speaking Indonesians are an important part of the present Indonesian economic climate.

PHILLIP C. WILCOX, Jr.
Political Officer
Jakarta (1972-1976)

Phillip C. Wilcox, Jr. was born in Colorado in 1937. He received his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1958 and then immediately after received his law degree from Stanford University in 1961. After graduation he went and taught in Sierra Leone from 1961-1963. During his Foreign Service career he had positions in Laos, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Washington D.C., and Jerusalem. Mr. Wilcox was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1998.

Q: You were in Indonesia from '72 to '76. When you went to Indonesia, did you take any Indonesian?

WILCOX: I spent six months learning Indonesian at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). Cynda and I had the great good fortune to continue our language study near Bandung, West Java, where we lived in a village and studied under tutors at the local teacher training. Formal language training at FSI and further study in the country of assignment, somewhere removed from the embassy, is an ideal combination.

Q: '72, Indonesia, what was it like?

WILCOX: The country had emerged from the turmoil of the Sukarno era, the challenge of the Indonesian communist party, and the overthrow the Sukarno regime by the military. It had developed a considerable degree of stability and prosperity under President Suharto and a group of talented, largely American trained, technocrats who were running the macro side of economic policy. The country was rich in oil and natural resources, but it was an underdeveloped country, burdened by fast growth of its large population, considerable poverty, a lack of modern legal and financial institutions. There was also deep corruption, in which Suharto and his family were much involved. As a political officer, I reported on corruption in detail and wrote some long dispatches of a kind that are no longer written.

Q: Was corruption a concern and why?

WILCOX: We viewed it as a constraint to economic development, public support for the government, and development of a market economy. At that time, it had not reached the crisis stage, since there was plenty of money to go around, oil and gas production and foreign investment were was growing, and the economy was expanding. There was some student disaffection, but it wasn't serious. Nothing like the '65 era or nothing like what is going on now.

Q: I think one of the problems of all of us who have served in countries where there is a lot of corruption are faced with is the fact that yes there is corruption, if you report on it, the reports taken out of context can get you into newspapers and into Congress, and end up by being a major focus and almost a detrimental effect to relations because Americans love scandal, and if there is scandal, when are you going to do something about the bums.

WILCOX: In those days there was less of a tendency to leak to the press. There were fewer people who had personal agendas, and Congress was not as involved in foreign policy. They had a greater respect for the leadership of the executive branch and the Department of State. We didn't protest to Indonesia about corruption. We were only beginning to discuss with them problems of human rights, and that was considered a departure from traditional diplomacy.

Q: Who was our ambassador?

WILCOX: Frank Galbraith was my first ambassador. He was an old Indonesian had who had served there for a good part of his career, spoke the language, and knew everybody in the country. He was succeeded by David Newsom, a truly distinguished person, a fine diplomat, and a scholar and writer who had previously served in the Middle East, Africa and the Subcontinent. He had been Assistant Secretary for African Affairs before he went to Jakarta. He had a great influence on

me because of his knowledge, wisdom and sense of integrity. He understood there were certain limits to what you could and what you couldn't do. He was a very good ambassador.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Indonesian government?

WILCOX: Invariably pleasant. They place a premium on good personal relations and courtesy. It was not easy to communicate with Indonesians without understanding their culture. They dislike confrontation and their politeness often masks their real views, so finding out what they were really thinking and what was going on was real challenge.

Q: What was your impression of how they viewed the United States?

WILCOX: They were friendly toward the United States and quite pro-western. We had large AID and military support programs, and we supported the Suharto government as a welcome change to the radicalism and instability of the former Sukarno era. We recognized Indonesia's strategic importance because of its size and geographic position, and because it was the fifth most populous country in the world. The Indonesians have a deep love for their country and their own culture. They also have a sense of nationalism forged during the colonial era and their armed struggle that ultimately ended the Dutch occupation. Although there was some latent xenophobia, it was far less pronounced than in some other former colonial countries. The Indonesians maintained their culture and traditions during the Dutch era, and Dutch respected this, although colonial rule was harsh in some respects. The Indonesians are a proud people, and their contact with the West has not created an identity complex.

Q: Was East Timor an issue while you were there?

WILCOX: Yes, East Timor was emerging as an issue. We began to be concerned about their heavy-handed approach toward the Timorese, after the Portuguese pulled out.

Q: What about the situation towards Malaysia?

WILCOX: Suharto restored good relations with Malaysia, and ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was beginning to prosper. The old days of "confrontasi" with the Malaysians were over. Relations with the Singaporeans were also correct. Their main problem was China. There was a fear of Chinese domination, in part because it was communist, and in part because of prejudice against the very large and prosperous Chinese community in Indonesia.

Q: It seems to be a community when things are bad there is a pogrom. They sort of turn on the Chinese.

WILCOX: The Chinese in Indonesia, like other expatriate Chinese were successful entrepreneurs. The Indonesians in general do not have a commercial, entrepreneurial tradition, and so there is quite a difference in the standard of living. In times of trouble, indigenous Indonesians tended to blame their economic problems on the Chinese. The problem was compounded by the penchant of the Indonesian military leadership to use Chinese as front men and extract funds from them as the price for allowing them to do business. Many Indonesian leaders, including Suharto, were

associated with wealthy Chinese who offered them a percentage of their gains in return for licenses and franchises. Through such associations, the Suharto family acquired an economic empire.

Q: What was your impression in reporting on things of the Suharto family and the circle around Suharto?

WILCOX: We did a lot of candid, careful reporting, and there were never any constraints or censorship. In those days we had rather large political and economic sections, and we had the luxury of being able to report on a wide range of topics. Bob Pringle, especially, was an unusually gifted analyst and reporting officer. I also served as an Economic/Commercial officer for two of my four years in Indonesia.

Q: Well as economic and commercial officer what were some of the things you were doing?

WILCOX: I have always thought the Foreign Service has made a mistake in creating separate cadres of economic and political officers. To understand politics and economics, you have to be well versed in both subjects. I also think that commercial work, trade promotion, and assistance to U.S. businessmen is an important part of diplomacy. In the early 1970s, American Foreign Service officers were beginning to take an interest in this and doing it quite well. Many young officers had abandoned the traditional prejudice against commercial work and found it quite interesting. In Indonesia, I found businessmen were often more accessible, more interesting and more forthcoming than government officials or ministry people. I was disappointed when the Department of State under Secretary Vance decided to abandon the commercial function and hand it over to the Department of Commerce.

Q: You were there during the Watergate period. How did that play in Indonesia?

WILCOX: The Indonesians were bemused by what we regarded as high crimes and corruption, since this sort of behavior was routine in Indonesia.

Q: I was in Greece, and it was the same thing. More importantly, this was the period, '71-'75, we reached a truce in South Vietnam, and then South Vietnam fell after a period of time. How was this playing in Indonesia?

WILCOX: The Indonesians were disappointed that we didn't stay and defeat the Vietnamese communists because they were deeply anti-Communist themselves, but it did not have a major impact on our relationship or their confidence in us.

Q: Well, when you were there, was it pretty well felt that the communists in Indonesia had not only been set back but pretty well taken out of the game?

WILCOX: There was no support for the old communist party, and harsh prison sentences against the older generation communist leaders was a signal that support for communism was unacceptable.

Q: So when you left there in '74, this is a solid country going well?

WILCOX: I was concerned about the race between poverty and fast growing population, although by then Indonesia, with U.S. help, had initiated a promising family planning program. I was also worried about the cost of corruption to stability and development. In retrospect, I was mistaken that these problems could create crisis in the near term. In fact, Indonesia boomed for another 20 years, before the problems of corruption, inequity, and lack of institutional development finally caused an economic and political upheaval. Now the country is in deep in trouble, and is searching for a way to move away from military rule to democracy, and from crony capitalism to market economics. The people now want more participation and more probity in government, although they also want stability.

Q: What about some time before, West Irian had been the great rallying cry. You were there when Indonesia had West Irian. What was happening there?

WILCOX: The Indonesians negotiated with the United Nations for a referendum called the "act of free choice" by the people of what was then Dutch New Guinea. The people opted to join Indonesia. The process was hardly democratic, and the Indonesians contrived to be certain they would inherit the area, which they named West Irian. The people of West Irian are among the most isolated, in the world, and had not developed unity or a sense a nationalism to counter the Indonesians.

Q: Stone Age is the term used in some...

WILCOX: They are profoundly non-modern. There was no prospect I think, of their creating their own government. At the time, the Indonesians saw that as part of their archipelago and took it over. Indonesian rule there has been rather harsh. But I doubt that there is any feasible alternative to Indonesian control of Irian Jaya for the foreseeable future. In the fullness of time, however, the Irianese will demand to govern themselves and get rid of their Indonesian colonial masters. Irian Jaya is a very wealthy area; the Indonesians recognized that. I think they saw themselves as the natural heir to it. It had been part of the Dutch empire. They have tried to settle Javanese there as part of their transmigration policy, but it is an alien atmosphere. Most Javanese would rather live in Java.

Q: Did you find much Japanese economic penetration?

WILCOX: The Japanese were becoming the dominant foreign investor. Indonesians were not happy about the style of the Japanese that was sometimes insensitive, but they understood the value of Japanese investment.

Q: Was this of concern to us?

WILCOX: We saw the Japanese as a competitor, and Japanese private investment eclipsed ours.

Q: Was there much in the way of Indonesian young people going to the United States for training and coming back?

WILCOX: There was some, but in contrast to many countries of the world, the Indonesians who went abroad and studied usually came home because they loved Indonesia. There was not an urge among young people to go abroad and stay, in contrast, for example, to the pattern in India.

Q: I think that here is one of the interesting things, I mean here is a country that until at least the last year or two has been really quite wealthy with a large population, and yet not much reflection of that within our international student body here in the United States.

WILCOX: It is a little known country with an extraordinarily rich and interesting culture with an artistic tradition that is infinitely sophisticated.

Q: Did you find the embassy was sort of at odds with the prime source of Indonesian studies in the United States, Cornell? Because I know that out of Cornell, I have gotten this in other interviews, Cornell was sort of the premier study place for Indonesia and yet they didn't like what happened when Sukarno was overthrown. At least I got this feeling.

WILCOX: George Kahan, Ben Anderson and others at Cornell were pioneers in the study of Indonesia and influenced the views of a generation of Foreign Service officers. They did a lot of their work during that period of ferment in the mid-'60s, and a lot of their contacts were with young Indonesian students and intellectuals. They disliked the military government of Suharto, and the feeling was mutual. There has been very fine scholarship on Indonesia in Australia as well. In those days there was lots of federal money in the U.S. to fund regional studies. I'm afraid we don't have that any more. American scholars did a lot to elucidate that country to Americans.

Q: Well, you left there in 1974.

WILCOX: 1976, I spent four years in Indonesia.

Q: Okay, then you were there during the fall of Vietnam. Again you say that had very little...

WILCOX: I don't recall that having a major impact in their confidence in us. They, I think, saw it as a setback. Indonesia is far from Vietnam. Their real preoccupation was China, and keeping the Chinese at bay was their most important strategic objective in Asia.

Q: Did boat people come in, refugees from Vietnam?

WILCOX: A handful came in. It was not a major issue.

Q: How about I can't remember when the first real oil shock, that was when, '73?

WILCOX: The first oil shock, I believe, came, the boycott came in '73 after the Yom Kippur War.

Q: That was October, '73. Did that do nice things as far as Indonesia was concerned?

WILCOX: I think it raised the price of oil, and Indonesia was producing a large volume of oil. A good deal was going to Japan. They had just discovered big natural gas reserves, so they were

beginning to produce LNG (liquefied natural gas) and to build big petrochemical and fertilizer plants. The head of Pertamina, the state oil company, was General Ibnu Sutowo, a major empire builder and a crook. He diverted so much money from the company to build satellite enterprises, and also to build golf courses and to enrich his friends and family that he began to be seen as a threat to the rest of the army and the leadership. The technocrats were worried too, since he was amassing foreign debt at untenable level. So he was finally sacked and Pertamina was cut down to size.

ALEXANDER A.L. KLIEFORTH
Public Affairs Officer, USIA
Jakarta (1973-1975)

Alexander A.L. Klieforth was born in Russia in 1918. He received a bachelor's degree from St. Norbert College in 1940 and a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1941. Mr. Klieforth joined the Foreign Service in 1941 and the USIA in 1955. He held positions in Colombia, Germany, Italy, and Indonesia. Mr. Klieforth was interviewed by Cliff Groce in 1988.

Q: From Rome you went to Jakarta. Tell me about that assignment.

KLIEFORTH: This again was totally different. Indonesia, as you know, is an autarchic country, extremely tightly controlled, unbelievably corrupt, terribly corrupt. Dealing with the problems of corruption on a daily level is a real pain. For example, we'd get a shipment of books from the Agency for our library. They would sit in the warehouse in the harbor until money was paid under the table to release them. Then there was the phone scam. It didn't cost that much money. A little man came around every month and collected a thousand five hundred rupiahs, which was not much. If you didn't pay the guy your phone ceased to work. When Ambassador Newsom came, he got rather upset about it and talked to the Foreign Minister about it. He said, "It's ridiculous, here I am the American ambassador and have to pay 1,500 rups out of my own pocket." And he says, "It'll be taken care of." The next month the little man didn't come -- and the phone went out. He was fulminating with me, and I said, "Look, you know, local customs are local customs, and if you want your phone to work, that's what you've got to do." So corruption was a problem.

While the government basically was pro-American -- they were tremendous admirers of Nixon, by the way, and when we pulled out of Vietnam they were really traumatized, for good reason -- still they were suspicious of foreigners. It was the kind of climate where the Soviet ambassador would come to me and ask me to help him get something done with the Indonesian government. I acceded because they were planning to bring the Bolshoi ballet to Jakarta and the Indonesians wouldn't give them visas. I practically had the whole diplomatic community after me, saying, "You know Malik and all these people." But they wouldn't budge. They didn't want any Soviets coming in. They'd make propaganda. It was very complicated, but that's the way it was.

So our program was very conservative, in the sense that everybody was afraid to stick out their neck because you'd get shot. So there again I decided on modernization as the peg to get things

through. One accomplishment that I'm very happy with is a symposium on energy and the environment, sparked by the first offshore drilling on the coast of Sumatra. At that time we'd had this horrible oil spill here in California and learned a lot from it.

I should add that in Jakarta, three months after I got there, my deputy became very ill and had to be shipped out, then the DCM had a very bad medical situation and had to be out for four months, so that I became acting DCM. And the ambassador was out a number of times, so I was also chargé. But again, this was an advantage, because having been charge and one of the players in the game, I went to the Minister of Minerals and Mines and Oil and sold him this idea that now was the time for Indonesia to have laws on oil exploitation and protecting the environment. He agreed, and said you have to talk to Adam Malik, and I did. He thought it was great. Then they talked to the President, Suharto, and he thought it was such a good idea that he gave his summer palace at Bogor as the place to have this symposium.

So we brought in -- the Agency being extremely helpful -- some of these oil spill people who'd been in California, and various other real good experts. And as a result of that, laws were enacted. Whether they were followed or not, I don't know. But again, here we were three days in Bogor, which is a beautiful place, originally the summer palace of the Dutch governor-general. You can get to talk about many other things, and you can have stuff around the table, so with that kind of approach we could bring in relevant American experience and then get to talk about our interests generally.

Then it turned out that the chiefs of staff and their center for strategic studies were absolutely fascinated with the CSCE, and what we were talking to the Russians about on strategic arms limitation, because one forgets that at that time the focus was of course on Europe and the Russians were also talking about the periphery. And Indonesia was on the periphery, with the Seventh Fleet, and Okinawa, and everything else, and that's what they were focussed on. I had worked on CSCE matters in Rome, and then cabled the Agency, which was rather surprised to get the request to send everything they could on CSCE to Indonesia. But they did it, bless 'em. That gave me an entree, along with the fact that I spoke Italian and German -- not all of them spoke English -- and I even knew some Flemish and Dutch, which a lot of them did. You can get things in. You say, "Well, I'll send you the Wireless File," which is innocuous and very good, and so the Wireless File distribution was increased.

The other part of the tightrope walk was that part of our natural constituency were the intellectuals, the educators and the artists, all of whom were in the opposition. We developed a very close relationship with them. Their leader, so to speak, was a former ambassador in Washington, Sujatmoko, who towered, and they couldn't arrest him because he was so popular. We had to do it without offending the government. We always had something on geography or something else innocuous. I traveled around Indonesia, went to the universities, and there was a great exchange. The thing was, at least in Indonesia, that we were not considered political officers or intelligence officers, and we were safe to be seen with. That was a big thing. And they would talk like a blue streak, and we were very well informed. It worked out, but it was deservedly called a hardship post. I was personally very enthusiastic as these things began opening up. They finally got rid of Sujatmoko, who is now president or dean of the UN International University in Tokyo.

Q: It sounds to me like things opened up because you were able, by taking a step at a time, to open them up.

KLIEFORTH: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: How long were you there?

KLIEFORTH: Two years.

Q: Any other memories you'd like to recount?

KLIEFORTH: No, not really. It sort of gets into practically a travelogue. I hate this cliché word, challenging, but it was. There again, the advantage of having been chargé and running the whole embassy. And I did it at times which were dicey, for example, when OPEC went into its first big price hike and I was ordered to tell the Indonesians to keep their price down. There had been a lot of preparatory messages, and I found the ambassador hadn't delivered one of them. So I went in cold into the thing, and the Indonesians were so worried they had their ambassador in London inquire whether there was a radical shift in U.S. policy because this guy Klieforth was coming up with all kinds of things. But the advantage of that was, again, that I could get the full cooperation of the economic part of the embassy, which had a petroleum fellow who was awfully good.

It enriched the program, as I did in Italy and as I would later do in Germany, by getting these people out, who in some cases were able to speak the local language, as part of the program enrichment, like working out a program with the AID people in the field of education in Indonesia. Then there was a Navy operation there, which was fantastic; they did research in tropical diseases, and they were always out in the bush. We worked out a public health program with them on prevention against various things such as liver fluke, and all this, that, and the other thing. Again, it didn't cost the Agency a nickel. So what am I doing in the liver fluke business? It opens doors. You're not only unfluking the livers, you're getting other things in the side, and you're broadening and enriching the program.

WILLIAM PIERCE
Administrative Officer
Surabaya (1973-1975)

Mr. Pierce was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Davidson College and the University of Georgia Law School. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, he was first posted to Surabaya, Indonesia, followed by a tour at Damascus, Syria. After completing Arabic language studies in Washington and Tunis, Mr. Pierce was assigned as Political Officer to a number of Arabic speaking posts, including Khartoum, Jeddah and Riyadh. In Washington, Mr. Pierce dealt primarily with Middle East Affairs. His final post was Surabaya, where he was Consul General. Mr. Pierce was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

PIERCE: I got Surabaya, Indonesia, which I didn't even put it on my so-called "wish list," and I had had to go find out where it was. And when I called my mother up and told her I'd been assigned to Surabaya, she asked if it were farther away than Thailand was. It was the one place in the world that I could've gone to that was. *(laughs)*

Q: Did you get any training before you went there?

PIERCE: Yes. Very good training. Got 10 months of Indonesian and one or two administrative courses that went into a little bit more detail. But again, not very useful for a junior officer who is going to do admin work in a – what was it at the time? – six American officer post. Indonesian was very good. The Area Studies was very good. I was able to get to a 3+/3+ in Indonesian.

Q: With Indonesian's language there's an affinity, isn't there, between it and English? Or at least people seem to find Indonesian easier to learn than something like Thai.

PIERCE: I imagine it is. What I would say is that within 10 months you could easily get to a 3/3; getting beyond that into the 4 level – and I'm talking about not an FSI (Foreign Service Institute) 4, but a 4 in the field, a 4 in the way you feel that facility or relaxation of the language – there's a major jump. A jump in use of vocabulary, a jump in appreciation of dialect, and a jump in simply formulating your words, which makes it not easy at all. There's also, when you start getting into this type of dialect which is frowned on – I understand that, but it's what you use when you're there – you get into major pronunciation problems. It is in some ways, but at the same time I find it at a level of subtlety that's not easy to master.

Q: Well then you went to Surabaya and you were there from when to when?

PIERCE: I was there from August or September of 1973 until about July of 1975.

Q: In the first place, in general, how were American-Indonesian relations at that time?

PIERCE: You're going to ask me questions about the political situation which I'm not going to know much about. I can give you answers based on what I experienced.

Q: Well, I mean, just sort of the feel that you were getting.

PIERCE: Okay, well, the relationship was decent. Suharto at that time was close to us in various ways. How close, I don't know. Relationships were good. Pretty good. I think good economic times and good political ones. The conventional reason of course being Suharto was a welcome development as opposed to his predecessor, Sukarno, just in terms of sheer stability and continuity he brought. And in streamlining the country's political process, which by all accounts, was a chaotic one in the '50s; one that Sukarno began to master, but in wrong ways in the '60s. Suharto was able to first bow to it a bit, just barely, and slowly basically castrate it. And the streamlined approach of Golkar, which is the so-called non-party of all the diverse groups underneath the umbrella of an organization which, by the way, Suharto happened to head, and made the political system more streamlined. It wasn't chaotic. And there was a certain hope that it would produce genuine reform; it would produce ultimately democracy. Not to be, but that was what the hope

was.

Q: Where is Surabaya and how did it fit into the Indonesian set-up?

PIERCE: Surabaya is the second largest city of Indonesia. Currently there are about four million people. At least in the daytime, four or five. It's in East Java; it's an hours plane ride from Jakarta – maybe 800 kilometers, but I think it's more than that. It was the major city in the Dutch colony, the major commercial port, the largest city, which had the first overt resistance to the return of the Dutch; actually the British came in their stead when they first came back in 1945. And this is the place where the Indonesian Revolution occurred against the returning Dutch. Therefore it's called "the City of Heroes." After the war, as Jakarta gained more preeminence, and centralization took more power, bit by bit, from elsewhere in the country, Surabaya suffered for it. In the early '70s it was beginning to see a small spark of resurgence of its commercial vitality. It was there anyway, and it had the beginnings of some of the light industry that ultimately turned out to be pretty substantial. Today the Surabaya area produces probably 15 percent of the country's economic growth.

Q: Was it a Consulate General?

PIERCE: At the time it was not.

Q: Who was the consul then?

PIERCE: The first guy when I was there was Bob Randolph. After a year, a-year-and-a-half, he was replaced by Dick Howland. After that Dick was consul. We had a consulate in Surabaya since 1880, maybe a little later. We had a continuous presence, only interrupted during the war. We returned in 1949. It was upgraded to a consulate general in 1988 perhaps, maybe a little later.

Q: What was our consulate doing when you were there?

PIERCE: It was a sleepy post. There seemed to be a pretty brisk sort of interest in commerce, trying to promote commerce, to provide information to American businesses, to facilitate information for the few American businessmen who were there, the larger number of American companies there. And interest in political reporting on developments throughout eastern Indonesia. The consular district at the time had a simple job in East Java, Bali, and Lesser Sunda, east and west. In other words, from Central Java all the way out to West Timor. Lesser Sunda are the islands between Bali and East Timor; the two provinces, rather impoverished, rather poor places.

Administrative officer was my primary duty, but I also did about 40 percent consular work. We tended to have a lot of people die in Bali. It required a lot of effort on the part of the consulate to work deaths. Going down to Bali, carrying through on the decedent's next of kin's wishes in terms of the disposition of the remains. In many cases that meant shipping them back to the States. One specific case for me was a cremation. I also did one of these deaths where she was buried locally in Yogyakarta, which is a special district surrounded by Central Java.

Q: How did you find working as administrative officer there?

PIERCE: For someone who had a little experience it wasn't too taxing. I'm trying to think how many houses did we have – five, six? Three were U.S. government-owned or leased; I don't think any leases were renewed during that period of time. The office was leased. Maintenance was minimal. Furnishings were already there. We had a sub-cashier. Then you had accountability that you had to do. We had one construction project which was significant. We built a classified vault which today is the one in Surabaya we would use as our basic holding area. With the supervision of a Seabee and a local contractor it took about six to eight weeks to do that. Probably even today it's the most secure, strongest, best-built building in the whole country.

Q: One has looked at Indonesia and so many things sort of ran down. How did you find it? I mean, the Indonesians as workers – because you were involved with them.

PIERCE: I got the same thing when working with Thais in Northeast Thailand. The conventional – and stereotypical – way to approach it was to cite slipshod work and a tendency towards them not having a good work ethic. I think, firstly, you explain, number one, the caloric intake is so much smaller, and therefore they don't have the energy that one would expect coming from the West. The second thing, I think, is that you specify very clearly what you want. In any case, you have to watch very carefully what people are doing. In that particular construction, when we were doing reinforced rebar and a certain quality of concrete, the engineering did help in my understanding of what was going on. And you would do that anywhere. You had to stick to strict standards and you had to look very carefully at what was going on. We had a very good Chinese for a contractor and he employed indigenous Indonesians, and he knew what we were trying to go for and he did it. He did it quite well.

I found this to be the case over and over again. I never felt any great sort of disparity between what I expected and what I got in terms of a contract. We were just being careful which is what you should do anyplace.

Q: Yes.

PIERCE: My second tour was in Damascus as GSO (General Service Officer) had more of an unsatisfying aspect to contractors than had been the case in Surabaya.

A couple of things about Surabaya I do need to underline. I did consular work and also was allowed to do some political reporting, with a junior officer slot, with three State Department officers at the time. One, the consul gave me East and Central Java, the econ/commercial officer, who did the other part of consular work, did the same type of thing in East and Central Java. We frequently went to Bali, which wasn't looked upon as a reporting situation. Two things that stand out were the travel that I did, and the plane crash.

The plane crash was a PAN/AM (Pan-American) plane, and I forget exactly the flight number; it was coming from Hong Kong to Sydney, as I recall. There used to be two flights a week through Bali and they were the only non-Indonesian flights allowed outside of Jakarta at the time. I got a call one night about 1:00 a.m. from Jakarta about the plane was missing and was told that I and my

colleague, the econ/commercial officer, should get down to the site of this crash and begin to investigate as soon as possible. Which meant that we drove. We took our FSN (Foreign Service National) consular clerk with us. We had been aware of how many people were on the aircraft, 121; 28, I think, were Americans. Around about 10:00 a.m. we found ourselves in northwest Bali looking up at a mountain perhaps two or three miles away, and with binoculars, at the very top of it you could see sort of a black char. And this began my experience for about the next two weeks of trying to manage American interests in a situation like that. Trying to deal with the host of bureaucrats and organizations that were interested in this, and the occasional contacts with family members who came to the island or who were on the island waiting for the people on the plane. It was an extremely trying time. It was a period – one 36-, 48-hour period – with six hours sleep. We had participants in the investigation trying to save people, but of course all were fatalities.

Q: What had happened?

PIERCE: Apparently the PAN/AM plane, as I understand it – and this is from reading some transcript of the black box several years later –navigationally strayed and was not where it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be coming into an approach at the airport to the south of the island and instead found this 10,000 foot mountain in its path on the northwest side. I cannot remember if this navigation error was described in the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) report on it. The plane hit some of the mountain, broke probably into the portion that dropped over the mountain. As I found out, it was only then that the aircraft fuel engulfed the plane and combustion occurred and anybody who would've been alive at that time, would've been annihilated. We had the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) there as an identification team. They had the NTSB there because it was a PAN/AM plane. We had a gaggle of PAN/AM vice presidents. This had been the third PAN/AM crash in the South Pacific in 18 months. We had the FILA – flight engineers something, I forgot. We had representatives from the French, the British, the Australians, the Japanese, all the consulates. We had a crust of Indonesian bureaucracy and I'm trying to think if we had anyone else.

The site of the air crash was a six or seven-hour drive north of Denpasar, the capital of Bali. No one was alive. I never visited the crash site, which apparently took three days ultimately for a U.S. military team to get to – and they tried, although the Balinese could get there in about 12 hours. It was, and still is, in a really quite undeveloped area of Bali; very much jungle. Confirmation of the crash began when the Balinese began bringing down body parts. There were no full bodies, but some torsos. They were brought down and put in bags. The FBI team was there to try to help with identification although to me it didn't seem possible that this could happen. They set up a workshop in the hangar down in Denpasar and were convinced that they would be in a position to identify some of the remains. Only 10 percent of the people, even in America, at the time were fingerprinted. Their effort was stopped by the Indonesian government at the behest, as I understand it, of PAM/AM a day or two after it started. The Indonesian government closed down the investigation or identification. That was very upsetting to me.

The one thing I was able to extract was a promise that the Indonesian government would produce death certificates, which we could use to process the report of American citizens' death. The problem with the remains that we did have, and they were substantial – several body bags – was that the Japanese side, the Shinto Japanese, wanted to see Japanese citizens cremated. On the

French side, it was anathema to think that a French Catholic would be cremated. So the body bags were divided, and obviously not everyone in one body bag being burned was a Shinto, and everybody in the ones that were being buried was a French Catholic. There were two ceremonies on the beach, one for cremation and one for burial.

Q: How about relatives?

PIERCE: Yes. There was one I knew well who was waiting at the airport in Denpasar and she wanted to visit the site. She never did. You couldn't get to the site. Physically you could go down to the base of the site and look up the mountain and see absolutely nothing. But she stayed for quite a long time. It was very hard to go out and go up to the site and spend six hours on the road and two or three hours talking to people at the base next to the mountain. At the end of that day you would come back and you'd talk to one another. Nothing much to say, but you'd have to.

Q: Sometimes you get repercussions from those who expect you to do more than maybe is physically possible; they complain to their congress people and congressmen.

PIERCE: Not at that time. Not in 1974. I think it was in April of '74. I'm not sure. Not at that time. The major victory that I think my colleague and I got was the death certificates which enabled us to write an honest report on death of American citizens – an actual one as opposed to a presumptive one – which certainly facilitated inheritance issues, insurance issues, which I think at least was able to help some of the families. It was not a pleasant time.

Q: No, of course not. You said there was another thing.

PIERCE: Well the other thing was the travel. Two parts to the travel. My boss loved to travel in Java, which was nice. So my colleague and I, the econ/commercial officer, spent a lot of time traveling on the small islands jetting out toward West Timor: Lombok, the next island over from Bali which has turned into sort of a tourist destination now; Sumba, which is an island somewhat remote southwest of Timor; and Timor itself. And then I took two other types of trips – one with Howland, who was the other consul, to then Portuguese Timor.

Q: What was that like at the time?

PIERCE: Portuguese Timor at the time – this was just after Caetano fell, which you may recall was Salazar's successor. He didn't last that long. Then when the whole colonial empire began to fall apart, with the Portuguese giving its blessing and basically they were ending up going into some self-determination mode. So in Timor you had sort of the beginning of an emergence of, number one, not chaos in a physical sense, but certainly a political chaos. The emergence of political parties. And you had three: FRETILIN, which has become the ultimate successor today; something called a UDT which was primarily a bunch of Portuguese and Timorese, sort of conservative with ties to the military; and then another party which was for integration with Indonesia. I don't want to say that it was simply straight absolutely a tool of Indonesia; there might have been some Timorese who actually wanted to integrate with Indonesia. I talked to them all. Firstly with my econ/commercial colleague, and secondly when I went with Dick Howland the second time.

The most reassuring at the time, in the sense of politics – saying we want a stable relationship with Portugal, we want to maintain our ties, we want constitutional democracy – very vague and not very substantive, but just reassuring – was the UDT. FRETILIN, at the time was led by Ramos Horta who won the Nobel Prize three years ago. In my day he was thinner, much younger obviously. The first time I met him he was in a sarong on a porch in the outskirts of Dili. There was a Marxist twinge to the language. I don't recall exactly – again it was vague and very, very un-substantive, but a lot of accent on what the people desire and what the people need and the people need to own. But not much beyond that. And the guy who was in charge of the other party seemed just to be reading a script. I think it was just sort of like – it would be very naïve to say – very naïve potential leaders who were suddenly given an option, “You can do anything you want. This country is yours; it's not ours.” After 400 and however many years the Portuguese basically just walked away. And they didn't have a lot to work with. I'm not very familiar with just how much education and whether they were members of the group who had any great amount of scholastic study of politics. Practically, it seemed that there was none. We saw them twice. It was after the last trip which was probably about May of 1975 maybe, and then November of 1975 was when the whole thing collapsed. A lot of struggle. The Indonesian invasion in November and the events that just deteriorated after that.

Q: Was there any precursor to the Indonesians moving in? Was this when you were down there?

PIERCE: When I went down there, there were none. I do not know. I guess if you started analyzing it – I haven't – the events that occurred, the coups, the counter-coups that occurred amongst these political groupings, with the Portuguese governor still there, and before the Indonesian invasion, you may have seen the precursors. As I recall from the historical record, the UDTers, or whatever their reincarnation was, first tried to take over. FRETILIN was in a position to counter that and the UDT types with some – I'm not sure, I wasn't there when this occurred – the UDT types, a large number of them, ran to the border of Indonesia and were not allowed in until they agreed to seek an alliance with the Indonesian military. That's a conventional reading of it beyond where I was. And this was the pretext under which the military along with the Indonesians – I am under the impression – were able to first go in. Again, I don't know the answer to that.

Q: As you were traveling around and looking at things, were you looking at how the system worked? There had been these allegations of these tremendous slaughters of Chinese and all. I'm talking about earlier on.

PIERCE: I'm not aware of that.

Q: This was back in the '60s. I'm talking about in Surabaya and were you looking at how the government was settling in?

PIERCE: Again, I didn't have a brief or any direct information. In fact, had I done it I don't think it would've been well-received. This is the Java area, which was where most of this started. As I understand it, the slaughtering of Communists began in Surabaya. In fact, one of my contacts in Surabaya told me about the bodies piling up in Surabaya for weeks. Dick Howland, who was political officer in Jakarta at the time this occurred, did exhaustive reporting on it. So I think the

issue was a current one in the Surabaya portfolio. As I recall, the types of things he wrote were more looking at development. One of the things he impressed upon me is that when he first made the trip from Jakarta to Surabaya as political officer in the mid '60s before Sukarno was out, he'd count dead bodies on the road – dead from starvation – two or three, just abandoned corpses lying in the road. You could see naked people walking everywhere. People were dirt poor. He told me in '74, '75, it doesn't happen anymore. The progress was immense since the people were not starving to death, and people did have clothes.

Q: Did the collapse...there was half being kind of while you were towards the end of your time in Surabaya in South Vietnam. Did it have any repercussions?

PIERCE: Obviously it did, but nothing had any grave effect on us. I think one of the things which I can go back to, my last tour in Surabaya and also a few nuggets of my first tour, is this ingrained suspicion, mistrustfulness, deep – like a battle to the death – with communism that occupied Indonesia and it had been ascribed in one way for their occupation of East Timor because of the FRETILIN coup. Although they may say that they had no intention of Marxism as a doctrine, I think the Indonesians rightfully could fear that was a possibility. You had Wetar which was the last sort of stronghold of the Indonesian Communist Party, where there was still some anti-government activity and I think it was aggressive, perhaps as late as the late '60s. Wetar was in East Java. It's also where President Sukarno is buried. So the collapse in Vietnam was of immense interest to them, but from my vantage point I didn't see it in any concrete, direct way. It just wasn't what I was studying and it did not come up in the political reporting that I did when I traveled outside of Java.

I also traveled outside the consular district. I just went to isolated, remote places in the country. The one that's worth noting is I went to the island of Ambon. I'm trying to think, I did this just as a tourist and it would've been perhaps in '74. Ambon has a very interesting history in the sense of its differentness from the rest of the country. The Ambonese were far more inclined toward the Dutch in the revolution and were in fact used by the Dutch, which is not unusual, during the period of colonialization. Also in the revolution as auxiliaries.

Q: There are always favorite tribes you might say that may be picked upon by others. You know, Montagnards (in Vietnam) and certain troops in Algeria.

PIERCE: It's a very beautiful place. I stayed there about 48 hours. It was just casual visiting. Within five hours I had made three contacts. Their explanations of the disgust and hatred of the Ambonese against the Javanese was just palpable – very visible, very prominent. They said several things about them. The first one is that transmigration was bringing in the beginnings of Javanese colonies. The Javanese eat rice, we don't eat rice. So they begin to build rice paddies which our terrain doesn't accommodate, and import immense amounts of rice. Where does the money for that rice come from? It comes from our budget so we end up subsidizing these Javanese. And there was the Golkar indoctrination. It was an overall tone of being anti-Javanese. At the time, and you could see this later, Ambon and that part of the Maluku always prided itself on religious harmony. Ambonese were in part Muslim and part Christian, irrespective of Javanese or other trans-migrants. They had superimposed on their society, because apparently much earlier in the past there was antagonism of a religious nature, something called "pela". Pela was the relationship

between one village and another village. As I recall, and I could be mistaken. The pela was a special relationship that they had of cooperation, where at specific times the villages from one group would go and assist villages of another group in a communal project and the bond was increased. And they would have, from time to time, pela warming ceremonies. I'm not sure if per force the villages were of different religions, but by and large they were. And this synopsis increased the inter-religious harmony. People, whenever you talked to them, talked about the island, and this is what they would raise about the harmony in Amba. And it was true up until two years ago.

BERNARD LAVIN
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Jakarta (1973-1977)

Bernard Lavin was born in New York in 1924. He received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Boston College. Mr. Lavin entered the Foreign Service in 1952 and the USIA in 1953. His career included positions in the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Nigeria, Indonesia, and South Africa. Mr. Lavin was interviewed by Mike Brown in 1988.

Q: Bernie, I think your next stop after the Senior Seminar was Jakarta. Do you want to tell us about that?

LAVIN: Yes, first I went to the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington to have the nine months of Indonesian language training. I remember a very embarrassing incident before I went there. On my own, while I was at the Board of Examiners, I decided that I was going to learn French at the FSI in the early morning French classes. So for two years I did that. And I will never forget those wintry mornings when I had to get up at five o'clock, have breakfast and dash over to the FSI for the class that started at 7:30 in the morning while it was still dark out. At the end of the two years I managed to get a "3-3" in French. I felt pretty good about that.

Then I was assigned to the Indonesian language class. We had wonderful teachers. During the first week the program was nothing but Indonesian. You didn't speak a word of English if at all possible. Well, at the end of one week, it had been drilled into me and I was thinking in Indonesian. One afternoon I got on a bus going from Arlington over to the State Department and whom did I meet on the bus but one of my former French language instructors, and he started speaking to me in French. I had talked very easily with him in French a couple of weeks before. But all that would come out of me was Indonesian. And I was very embarrassed. I said, "Oh, Professor Mornu, excusez moi." I could hardly say anything to him in French. He laughed and he said, "Oh, it's very understandable; that happens often when you switch from studying one language to the other."

But anyway, the one year of language training at FSI was wonderful. And I was fortunate to score "3+-3+" in Indonesian. And my wife who took the course with me scored a "3-3". I was told by the teachers that at that time no wife who had taken the course had scored a "3-3". So I was very proud of her. The language was so utterly important in our work in Indonesia.

And it's one reason why I loved the assignment as Deputy and the PAO there. Two weeks after I arrived in Jakarta, I had a staff meeting of all the Indonesian staff. I said, "We've all had a chance to get to know each other and you know what I'm like and I have some idea of what you're like. The U. S. government invested a lot of money in me and the study of the Indonesian language. And so beginning from today until the day I leave Indonesia, you and I will conduct all of our business in Indonesian only." Well, this surprised the staff. After the meeting the radio assistant came up to me and said, "Mr. Lavin, this is very unfair of you to insist on Indonesian being spoken." And I said, "Why?" He answered, "Well, we are trying to improve our English." I said, "How many Americans are there on the USIS staff here besides myself?" And he replied, "Eleven." I asked, "How many Americans are there in the Embassy?" And he said, "Oh, I guess 90 or so." And I said, "That's right; you have all of those people to practice your English with. With me it's Indonesian." And so in fact we conducted most of our business in Indonesian. And I will never forget that. That's why Indonesia has very special meaning for me because I feel that we received insights into the Indonesian culture that not many foreigners were able to get because they didn't have the language. I made a "contact project" out of the Institute of Technology at Bandung which was and is a tradition-al source of leadership. I went there quite frequently. I especially worked with student leaders. I would go up there about every six weeks or so and meet with them. And that turned out to be one of the very worth while tasks I accomplished in Indonesia.

Q: Do you remember any special situations in which you had to use Indonesian?

LAVIN: Indeed, I will never forget one night. I had attended the language school in Bandung for a kind of a summer brush-up course. One of the teachers was one of the most radical of the Muslim leaders in the Muslim community in Bandung which is a center of the Muslim leadership community. We would often get into discussions of U.S. policy.

One night my teacher invited me to go to the home of one of the Muslim leaders and I will never forget that. I was placed in a chair in the center of the room. And five of the Muslim leaders sat like a board of examiners.

Q: Facing you.

LAVIN: Like a panel, facing me. For three hours, in Indonesian, we discussed American foreign policy. Well, I tell you I was sweating at the end of that session. And I said to --

Q: That's a good way to get your language honed up though, huh?

LAVIN: Whew! Well, after that session I invited my teacher for a drink. Even though he was a very rabid Muslim leader who had to observe all of the rules of the Muslim religion, he loved beer. He found a way around the rule against alcohol by calling the bottle of beer an Islamic bottle -- that is no alcohol! A real "hozy bottle."

Q: Yeah.

LAVIN: I used to invite him to the Queen's Restaurant. It's a Chinese Restaurant up in Bandung.

We would usually have a few beers. One problem is that whenever he had a glass of beer his face would just light up like fire.

Q: Yeah.

LAVIN: That night after we had had that three hour session with Muslim leaders, I invited him to the restaurant. And I said, "Boy, I sure need a beer after that. That's the toughest thing I ever went through in my life particularly in a foreign language."

Well, while we were having a couple of these big bottles of beer, who should come into the restaurant but these same five Muslim leaders with their wives.

Q: Muslim leaders, huh?

LAVIN: Yes, the ones that had "examined" me for those three hours of that session. My teacher almost fell off his chair. He quickly pushed his bottle over to me. And he said, "you're drinking two bottles." So he couldn't have any beer until they left. He and I often had a hearty laugh over that whenever we met in later years.

There was another memorable test of my Indonesian. Pat Derian, Assistant Secretary for East Asia, visited Indonesia. She wanted to interview an Indonesian journalist who had been imprisoned by the government on Buru island for ten years. He agreed to be interviewed but would not agree to having an Indonesian interpreter. As she and the Ambassador sat in my office, I served as interpreter as Ms. Derian asked her questions. I perspired quite a bit because it was so important that I reflect questions and answers accurately.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the program in Indonesia.

LAVIN: In Indonesia we concentrated very heavily on American studies with the University of Indonesia and other universities also. And we also had a unique institution there called the Lembaga Indonesia. It's the binational center. We had a very difficult time trying to --

Q: You had two branch posts at that time, didn't you?

LAVIN: Yes. We had Medan and Surabaya.

Q: Medan is right across from Penang practically.

LAVIN: That's right. With regard to the Lembaga Indonesia, it was in effect a binational center. But how to fit a binational center into a country plan was always the big problem. Well, it turns out that the Lembaga went its own way as I understand it. And today the Lembaga has practically nothing to do in any direct contact with USIS in Indonesia. Its main activity became English language training.

Q: And you had an American probably as director of it, didn't you?

LAVIN: Yes, we did.

Q: In the beginning. But that job was done away with.

LAVIN: There is no USIS American director now as far as I know.

DAVID D. NEWSOM
Ambassador
Indonesia (1974-1977)

Ambassador David D. Newsom was born in California in 1918. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1938 and a master's degree from the Columbia University in 1940. He served overseas in the U.S. Navy from 1942-1946 and entered the Foreign Service in 1947. Ambassador Newsom's career included positions in Pakistan, Iraq, the United Kingdom, Libya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 17, 1991.

Q: So we're now in Indonesia from 1974 to '77. How did that appointment come about? You'd been sort of an African hand, and all of a sudden Indonesia.

NEWSOM: Well, I was flying across the Atlantic with Henry Kissinger who had just become Secretary of State, and was making his first trip abroad as Secretary to North Africa. He asked me whether I wanted to stay on as Assistant Secretary or go somewhere overseas. And I said I thought four years was enough as Assistant Secretary, and I would be interested in an overseas post. And he said, what about Indonesia? I said that sounded very interesting, so Indonesia it was.

Q: Before you went out to Indonesia, you had been immersed in African affairs. How did you bring yourself up to snuff?

NEWSOM: In a sense sub-Saharan Africa was a diversion from the areas that I had been active in before. I had been active largely in Muslim countries, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, desk officer for the Arabian Peninsula, and I thought it would be interesting to go to the other extremity of the Muslim world, the largest Muslim country. I tried to learn as much as I could about Indonesia. I'd been there as a young man when it was still the Dutch East Indies so I was not entirely unfamiliar with it.

Q: This is part of your pre-World War II trip that you made.

NEWSOM: Yes. What I encountered was a feeling on the part of the East Asian hands -- skeptical that anyone who had not been immersed in East Asia could understand Indonesia? I have had a general philosophy that, although certainly countries are very different, there are certain approaches you can take to understanding the power structure in a country, understanding where decisions are made, and by whom. This an essential element of a diplomat's task, and I found some very interesting material about the power structure in Indonesia, particularly after the 1965 abortive coup in Indonesia. It was in many ways one of the most interesting assignments that I had.

Q: When you went out there in 1974 I would imagine that you probably had a little check list, these are things I want to do, or problems to resolve. What were these?

NEWSOM: The United States had a very good relationship with Indonesia. We had a substantial aid program, both economic and military. Another thing that was not unfamiliar to me was that Indonesia was an oil producing country and I had been associated with several oil producing countries. I wanted obviously to maintain the momentum of the relationship and to understand as much of the politics as I could. As I prepared for the position, in Washington pressures grew on the human rights question. Legislation passed in the Congress about the time I went out to Indonesia required that human rights considerations be taken into account in aid programs. It was clear that something had to be done about the perceptions of the human rights situation in Indonesia. That became one of my principal tasks. When I went out there, there were still about 30,000 people held in detention following the abortive coup in 1965, many of them on an island called Buru. They were charged with being members of communist organizations. The Suharto regime, then and now in power, blamed the 1965 events on the communists, particularly the Chinese communists. These people had never been formally charged with anything, and Amnesty International and others had picked up their cause. In 1975, there was a threat of some very specific legislation in the Congress that would have cut off military assistance to Indonesia if something weren't done about these detainees. I had developed a good relationship with a man who was then the head of Army intelligence, General Benny Murdani, and I went to him for advice. I pointed out that there was a move in the Congress to enact country-specific legislation directed at Indonesia which would obviously create problems. Should I go to President Suharto and explain this, and explain why, I asked. General Murdani said, "No, don't do that. He will only see that as a threat. Let me think about it." Murdani came back in about a week and suggested that he and another man, Ali Murtopo, who was then head of the Army-backed political party, visit Washington to talk with the members of Congress about the situation in Indonesia. If they found that the situation was as I described it, they could then tell President Suharto and he would not see it as a threat coming from me. And this is what they did. The President made the decision to release these people. The first effort at release was not a great success because they invited the diplomats of the countries that had been pressing them on the issue to a ceremony in an army barracks in Sumatra. They brought in about 300 detainees, off-loaded them from army trucks, had them come in and swear an oath of allegiance to the nation's philosophy, and then put them back on trucks and drove them away. So I went to Benny Murdani and said, "You know, this isn't going to work. You've got to release them, let them mingle with their family, with the press, with the diplomats." Well, they got the picture and over the time I was there all but about 180 detainees who were considered to be the ring leaders of the communist effort were released.

Q: Let's talk a little about the human rights thing because this was something new on the horizon. You had Henry Kissinger who didn't disguise his disdain for this departure from power politics...I don't want to put it in a pejorative term, but this was where his interests lay and he felt this was a sideshow. In the first place, when you say Congress, it usually means there are a couple of people in Congress who are willing to make a fuss about this, and where did this come from?

NEWSOM: It came from Donald Fraser, a Congressman from Minnesota, who was the chairman of a subcommittee on international organizations with the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He

and a small staff, unhappy with Kissinger's attitude, unhappy with what they saw as the US identification with a lot of military regimes in Latin America, began introducing legislation. I think, all in all, there were eleven different pieces of legislation that tied human rights to a variety of US government actions. This is important because everybody thinks that human rights started with Jimmy Carter's administration, and it didn't. Jimmy Carter brought some of the staff people that had worked with Donald Fraser into the State Department Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, and much of the momentum was maintained. But the real impetus was in the Congress.

Q: When you went out there this was something new. I know even a little later I was in South Korea when human rights came up and we always said, it's all very nice, but we've got another problem, and that is North Korea is only 30 miles away. When this first came up you were really at the leading edge in a country where it was really important. How did you find that the State Department and the Foreign Service responded to this legislation at the very beginning?

NEWSOM: As I recall, this was now in the Ford administration and Kissinger was Secretary of State, I think there was an effort to head it off but then that didn't work. So they had to adapt to it. I don't recall ever having received a formal instruction on this. In most of my career I acted on what I felt needed to be done and minimized the need to send me instructions. This was obviously something that needed to be done, and I had a lot of help. The Dutch ambassador was also getting pressures from the Netherlands. The Papal Nuncio was very important. The British ambassador, and to some extent, the Australian, worked with us and together we concluded that the possibility was there of making some progress.

Q: Within the embassy human rights all of a sudden became a subject. Did you find you had the problem that often would happen with an embassy. Say junior political officers who would take this cause on for their own, you had almost to control them. At least this is my experience in other places. Because they saw everything as youth will, in one color, one focus. Obviously we had a lot of other things going in Indonesia rather than just human rights. Was this a problem within the embassy?

NEWSOM: No, I don't think so because I didn't have to be prodded into it by anybody. I was taking the lead on it because I felt it was something that needed to be done.

I did something in Indonesia which was very interesting, speaking of the younger officers. I always found it important, but at the same time difficult as ambassador, to get the views of younger officers who often had different contacts, different perspectives. If you called in all the junior officers and asked them what they thought, you could sometimes get a dialogue going, but sometimes not. So I had a series of seminars during which I asked junior officers on a panel of four to present an issue as they saw it in Indonesia. I tried to get all of the agency heads to realize this was an academic exercise just within the embassy and I wanted these officers to speak their minds, tell me how they saw things. That worked very well with every agency but USIA. USIA officers all felt they had to spout the official line. One young Military Assistance Group officer got into difficulty with his chief because he was very candid, and I think quite accurate, about some of the problems with the Military Assistance program. I found that exercise useful.

Q: How did this work? Did you sit to one side while they conducted it, or were you a participant?

NEWSOM: No, I was part of the audience. I think we had three or four of them. The younger officers thought it was great -- those that had the freedom to speak out.

Q: I was wondering, within the embassy...Indonesia is one of those countries that officers, particularly the younger officers, seem to love because the language is manageable. Indonesians are an interesting people, it's an interesting culture and it's a big country. Did you find this gave you more contacts, and more information flowing in than you might have gotten in some other places?

NEWSOM: Yes. Indonesia represented a great change from the Middle East and to some extent Africa where I had spent much of my time. The Indonesians did not lay all their problems at our door. The Indonesians, somewhat like the Chinese, have a very strong sense of their own identity. You can talk to them about sensitive subjects without having them erupt in rhetoric of one kind and another. They are interesting and generally pleasant people to deal with. They, like many people in the Asian world, often deal indirectly and you have to learn that. You have to build contacts so that when you go in to solve a problem you can find out what the problem is that you're trying to solve.

One example. We had a large American community there, about three or four thousand working in oil fields. Indonesia was just beginning the oil boom phase, and there were a lot of people in collateral businesses. We had a very good international school. It had been created on the basis of the foreign technicians that were working there at the time, so it had the curious board of sponsorship of four embassies, the American, Australians, Canadian and Yugoslav embassies. It was a school for both diplomatic and non-diplomatic children. One day I got wind of the fact that the Indonesian government was about to issue a decree that would forbid non-diplomatic children from attending this school. Non-diplomatic children were the bulk of the students. It would have meant a serious change in the school. I tried to find out why this issue, this decree, was being issued. I had no success in approaching the matter frontally. One night at a dinner I saw a retired foreign minister, a man who had been ambassador in Washington whom I knew well, and I explained the situation and told him I was puzzled: "If I knew what the problem was maybe I could do something about this." He answered, "It's the Chinese." I said, "what do you mean it's the Chinese?" Although the government didn't do it at that time, it had been considering opening relations with the People's Republic, and it did not want a precedent that would permit ethnic Chinese in Indonesia to attend Chinese schools. I was able to go to the appropriate minister and propose that there be a grandfather clause for all schools developed after this date that new rules would apply. That solved that problem.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Indonesian government? Was it effective? Could it deliver?

NEWSOM: Oh, yes. There was a group of American educated technocrats, called the Berkeley Mafia because many of them had been to the University of California at Berkeley, who did an amazing job of bringing the economy out of the sad state that Sukarno had left it in. They were a very competent group. The most dramatic evidence of this was related to the financial problems of the Indonesian National Oil Company, called Pertamina. Pertamina had been developed under the enthusiastic leadership of a friend of President Suharto by the name of Ibnu Sutowo. Ibnu Sutowo had really built up an empire within an empire around Pertamina. This was a time in the mid-'70s

when American banks, as well as European banks, were flooded with Euro dollars, and they were trying to get rid of them by lending them to what they thought were oil rich countries. The bankers used to flow through Indonesia. I used to tell them, "I hope you're taking a good look at this country because its got 10% of OPEC's production, and 80% of OPEC's population. It's not Saudi Arabia." But as one banker once said to me, "everybody else is lending them money, we should lend money too." One day a representative of a small bank in Dallas came in to see me. He'd been in to see the economic counselor and had said his bank was a part of a syndicate of banks that had made a big loan to Indonesia. Indonesia had just defaulted on the interest payment and his bank was going to call the loan; that is, they were going to require that Indonesia repay the whole thing. This could have created a serious crisis of confidence. I got in touch with this man and asked that he give me 48 hours to see if I could resolve the problem without his calling the loan. He agreed. I got hold of one of the technocrats and explained the situation. One of the things that had happened was that these banks had been lending money to Indonesia on the assumption that the Indonesian government stood behind the loans to Pertamina. They didn't. But the Indonesian official recognized the significance of this development and within the 48 hours got the Indonesian government to stand behind this loan. That triggered a revelation that Pertamina was some three billion dollars in debt. And Widjojo, who was the leader of the technocrats, went to President Suharto. This was quite remarkable given the fact that a non-military technocrat was going to President Suharto and to tell him that the enterprise of Suharto's close friend, Sutowo, was in deep financial difficulty. He did that and to Suharto's great credit, he accepted that fact. He pushed Ibnu Sutowo aside, put another very capable army officer in charge and named a committee to unravel the debt problem. Indonesia saved its credit status and worked its way out of what could have been a serious problem. But the point is that these very competent and alert technocrats had both the courage and the prestige to get the President to dismantle a very fragile commercial empire.

Q: But it also points up the role of the American ambassador. Often it's said the American ambassador does not pay attention to the commercial-economic side. Obviously you played the appropriate role. What was your impression when you went there, and while you were there, of Suharto?

NEWSOM: Suharto is a Javanese with strong beliefs in mysticism and the syncretic religious foundation of Indonesia -- a combination of Islam with Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian influences. He is reported periodically to consult a Javanese seer, or dukun. He lacks charisma and is a somewhat private man. I haven't seen him now for many, many years, but when I knew him he was never totally comfortable with foreigners. This was partly a language problem. He had a kind of set routine when he was meeting visitors and would launch into a long monologue on "national resilience (katehanan nasional) I used to suggest to visitors who had some topic to discuss with the president that, after his greeting, they state immediately their reason for being there. If a visitor did not do that immediately, any hopes of a useful exchange were dashed. He was intelligent, shrewd, and certainly led Indonesia out of a difficult period. He had the good sense to rely on a lot of talent that was around him.

Q: You were there during a period when not only human rights, but also efforts to impose international morality on business and payoffs, corruption, etc. were present. Acts were coming out of Congress, but essentially we're talking about the problems of Lockheed, Hughes and EXXON, major scandals that were going on. How did you deal with these?

NEWSOM: My general conclusion was that if an American company came in with a unique product, or unique technology, and came in first to deal with the technocrats -- the officials ostensibly in charge of the economy -- they should come in without any side payments or attempts to incorporate Suharto's relatives into their corporate structure. If they were coming in with a product that was in competition with a local product, then playing by our rules was much more difficult. But not impossible. One of the problems was that some American companies concluded that they had to make some special arrangements before they ever went to Indonesia. They came through Hong Kong and they'd be approached by somebody in Hong Kong who said that they were the third cousin of the president, and the only way they could get business there was by taking them on board. Some American companies got badly taken by people like that. I always urged them not to make any side deals. Come first to Jakarta and see the people who are ostensibly in charge; they might succeed. If they were in competition with a local firm, or someone else who got there first, they might be approached, and that's their problem. I told them I did not encourage any special arrangements, but I did encourage business executives to try to come in without them.

Q: What about Hughes, Lockheed? These were companies that had a reputation in the Far East, and elsewhere, of coming in with big money to be handed about.

NEWSOM: I don't remember any. There were no problems in Indonesia. Maybe I was just ignorant of them.

Q: With corruption, how did you find corruption in Indonesia?

NEWSOM: It was present. I gather it's much worse now. The problem with corruption is that, if you're an ambassador, you never really get to the bottom of it. Everybody denies that they're involved in any shady practices, "it's those other people, it's not us." The American embassy has no formal investigative or other jurisdiction under the Corrupt Practices Act.

Q: How did the Vietnam war play while you were there? This was 1975 when we left Saigon. I mean the whole thing fell apart, and Indonesia was considered one of the dominoes at the time earlier on. At that point how did it play?

NEWSOM: The Indonesians at the time that I was there were members of the International Control Commission, ICC, along with the Poles, the Canadians, and Iranians. They had a very different view of how the war was doing than we did. Although Sukarno was overthrown, his policy of neutrality, non-alignment, remained. I've forgotten now whether Indonesia had formal diplomatic relations with Vietnam, but they were in touch with Hanoi all through the war. The most dramatic evidence of the Indonesian attitude was clear when Graham Martin came to Indonesia. He was US ambassador in Vietnam at the time. He came to Indonesia in January of 1975, and talked to the Indonesians about how "we really don't have any problems in Vietnam, it's all the little old ladies in tennis shoes that are stirring up all this." And afterwards one of the Indonesians in their quiet way said to me that they were very much interested in hearing Ambassador Martin, but he "must be in a different country than we are." There were Indonesians that would say they were grateful that the US was there because Indonesia could have been next. But that was relatively rare. The Indonesians were proud of the fact that they had themselves blocked a communist take-over, and

they didn't want to perpetuate the idea that it was the United States or anyone else that had prevented the communist advance.

Q: There is a theory that the United States sort of created the climate...we're talking about '65, so the Indonesians could resist the Russians.

NEWSOM: There weren't many Indonesians whom I knew of that wanted to give us credit for that.

Q: How about Henry Kissinger? He was renowned for having his eye on several countries like China, Soviet Union, maybe Germany, but other places there was almost no interest. Did you find this was true of Henry Kissinger in Indonesia?

NEWSOM: He came with President Ford to Indonesia once while I was there, and they were largely interested in China. I didn't have a feeling that he had any great interest in Indonesia.

Q: How did the Ford visit go? A presidential visit is always rather traumatic.

NEWSOM: It went reasonably well. The Indonesians went into East Timor right afterward which cast something of a pall over it, but there were no untoward incidents during the visit.

Q: Vietnam fell in the spring of '75 and our pulling out of there in Cambodia was ignominious. Did that do anything to the way the Indonesians looked at us?

NEWSOM: No, I don't remember that. I remember they were glad it was over. I think they kind of felt we were fighting the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time. And our withdrawal removed some of the burden on them of explaining close relationships with the United States and the Vietnam problems.

Q: What about with China? We were going through this rather heady period where we were opening up relations with China at that time. In a way, it was a little bit of a honeymoon period, but the Indonesians had their own Chinese problems. How did that work out as far as you saw it?

NEWSOM: They didn't have any problem with US relations with China. I think they felt that move was long overdue. The Indonesian military were convinced that the Chinese were behind the abortive coup of 1965 and the murder of seven key military officers. That, combined with their general suspicion of the three million Chinese in Indonesia whose citizenship allegiances they questioned, led them to strongly oppose normalizing with China. They feared the influence of a Chinese diplomatic mission on their own Chinese. It was a domestic Indonesian matter, and didn't reflect a general opposition to the Chinese leadership. They had a lot of dealings with China through Hong Kong, but they also had some dealings with Taiwan. But the feeling against a Chinese official presence in Indonesia was very strong.

Q: What about the Soviets? The Soviets at one time had gotten very heavy-handedly into Indonesia giving them cruisers, and other things.

NEWSOM: The Soviet vessels were given to a previous regime and were barely activated when I

was there. They had normal relations with the Soviet Union. That was not a problem for us.

Q: The Soviets weren't a major player at that time?

NEWSOM: Not in Indonesia, no.

Q: You mentioned Timor. This became a long running sore, I think, between relations, particularly with Australia, but also with the United States and other countries because of the perceived heavy hand of the Indonesians in occupying...was it East Timor?

NEWSOM: The Portuguese revolution took place in 1974. I think Suharto genuinely tried to negotiate something with the Portuguese for a year at least, but he couldn't find any interlocutors from Lisbon who really could make a decision. It is my impression that he restrained the military from going in for quite a while. To understand the Timor question you get back to the Chinese. The Indonesian military were convinced that the independence movement on Timor was Chinese backed, and they were not about to permit one-half of one of their islands to be an independent entity backed by the Chinese. They didn't handle it very well, but I don't think there was ever any doubt that Indonesian government, and maybe any Indonesian government, would oppose an independence in one-half of an Indonesian island.

Q: Did we get involved? Or was this sort of a watching brief at the time this was going on?

NEWSOM: We were not involved. After the Indonesians moved in we tried, largely unsuccessfully, to get the Indonesians to admit international relief agencies, international observers. We did get the Catholic Relief Agency in there, but as long as I was there it was a pretty closed territory.

Q: Was there much pressure from Congress, or elsewhere, to do something about the situation at the time you were there?

NEWSOM: There were some voices in the United States but the main fervor was in Australia.

Q: What about Japanese economic influence? Was this becoming a worrisome problem as far as we were concerned?

NEWSOM: The Japanese were very active. I arrived there just after the riots of January 1974 when Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka had visited Indonesia and there had been riots against his visit. The attitude toward the Japanese was a somewhat ambivalent one. The Indonesians were grateful to the Japanese for creating the atmosphere in which their independence movement grew during the war. They shared the view of other Asians about Japanese brutality, but they were prepared to do business with the Japanese. Suharto had a Japanese military instructor during the war, during the Japanese occupation. He used to invite him back annually for a visit. As I say, it was complicated.

Q: Were we passive by-standers as far as watching the Japanese economic penetration?

NEWSOM: We worked hard to promote American interests there. The biggest competition was in major infrastructure projects. The Japanese had the advantage of a little less rigidity as far as special arrangements were concerned. But they also were highly competitive in terms of tying aid packages into commercial deals. But American business did reasonably well while we were there. One of the big contracts was for the first Indonesian satellite, which went to an American company. This really established modern communications among all the islands.

Q: This is the 31st of October, Halloween, 1995. While you were in Indonesia, were you still having the boat people problem from Vietnam?

NEWSOM: I left there in '77. My association with the boat people problem was after I returned to Washington and was Under Secretary and involved in the coordination of refugee assistance. I had only a little bit in my brief time in the Philippines. The boat people problem didn't really arise until '77-'78.

Q: In Indonesia, was there a Peace Corps?

NEWSOM: No. The Indonesians never accepted the Peace Corps. They had a kind of youth corps of their own. I think there was a Peace Corps at one time, but Sukarno threw it out. The Suharto government was always very careful not to go too far from the non-aligned path on policies that had been established by Sukarno. On economic policies they were prepared to make major changes, but where there was a political aspect to it, they were more reluctant.

Q: Aid was multilateral, wasn't it?

NEWSOM: Yes, there was a consultative group on Indonesia, originally chaired by the Dutch, and that's the way it was for most of the time that I was there. Later the Indonesians got mad at the Dutch, if I remember, over the Dutch reaction to East Timor. But the Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) was a very effective mechanism for the coordination of international relief. The general aid picture in Indonesia while I was there was a positive one. International coordination was reasonably good. Our program over the years had considerable impact, primarily in the training of people for positions in both government and the private sector.

Q: Were many going to the United States for advanced studies?

NEWSOM: Yes. I remember the figure of 6,000 representing the participant trainees who had come from Indonesia to the United States over the life of the aid program up to my time there, up to '77.

Q: Some countries will send their people out, but then the establishment doesn't like to see these new kids on the block.

NEWSOM: When Suharto came in, he took advantage of a relatively small group of mostly American educated Indonesians. Many of them who had gone to the University of California at Berkeley came to be known as the Berkeley Mafia. They were instrumental in turning around Indonesia's economy after the Sukarno period, and they were very positive about sending people

abroad for education because they had benefitted from it themselves. One of the remarkable things about Indonesia, at least when I was there, is that the Indonesians that were sent abroad came home. A very large number of them went into the jobs for which they were trained, unlike some other countries in Asia where students tried to stay in the U.S.

L. MICHAEL RIVES
Deputy Chief of Mission
Jakarta (1975-1978)

L. Michael Rives was born in New York in 1921. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1947. Mr. Rives joined the Foreign Service in 1950. His career included positions in Germany, Vietnam, Laos, Guatemala, France, the Congo, Burundi, Cambodia, and Indonesia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Q: You were in Indonesia when?

RIVES: Three years, '75 to '78.

Q: Let's talk about Indonesia, '75 to '78. Who was the Ambassador?

RIVES: David Newsom to begin with, then Ed Masters became Ambassador at the end, just the last two months.

Q: How did we view Indonesia at that time?

RIVES: We viewed it very favorably, as an important country in the region, and as concerned the United States. Our only problem in Indonesia, really, was the human rights one. We always were applying pressure on the Indonesians to release prisoners who had been held since the Suharto overthrow.

Q: By this time, did we view the communist influence as having been pretty well purged?

RIVES: Oh, yes.

Q: How did we view, and did you have any relations with, Suharto?

RIVES: Well, the Ambassador dealt with him most of the time, although I did sometimes, too, when I was Chargé. I think he's quite an impressive man. The whole government there was very impressive. Of course, the important parts, the economic parts, were all run by what was called the "Chicago Mafia" -- Indonesians who had all been educated at either the University of Chicago or the University of California, in economics. They followed a very rigid program according to what they had been taught. And it worked.

Q: This was true in Chile, too. The same...

RIVES: Yes, and they did brilliantly. From that point of view, it had gone very well

Q: What was the economic thrust of the "Chicago Mafia?"

RIVES: It was bringing in foreign investment, some privatization, but much more textbook management of the economy and finances. They had a balanced budget and all that kind of thing, and they did very well.

Q: Were there any major things that you got involved with while you were in Indonesia?

RIVES: Personally, no. The Embassy, as I say, was involved in human rights things, in East Timor, things like that. The only time I had problems in Indonesia was a Congressional visit.

Q: It sounds like you have problems. You think it's an attitude problem?

RIVES: Well, I think it's one of my things, I don't back off. This group arrived, and we, as is usual, prepared a program for them, on their instruction, and they never approved it. It wasn't until they left Bangkok on their way to Indonesia that they got on the radio to me, from the plane, saying, "We're coming to Indonesia as a rest stop." This was on a weekend, of course. The entire government of Indonesia... Indonesians took their weekend seriously. They didn't have any receptions or anything on weekends. I had gotten the Government of Indonesia to work on this weekend to meet with these people. And I was told they weren't interested, they were going shopping. So I'm afraid I was a little annoyed, and I said that was impossible. Finally, they came back and said they'd agree to meet a limited number for fifteen minutes, so I said no, I'd rather cancel it, so I did cancel, by letter to everybody, sent by special messenger.

What they did want was a briefing on Sunday morning by the Embassy. So on Sunday morning, we started at nine o'clock. At one o'clock we were still going. Every section chief had his say, and the AID mission and everything. But it was mostly spent by the Congressmen attacking the Embassy and the U.S. Government for our attitude towards Indonesia. We were doing too much, we were wasting money, all that kind of thing. We listened...As I say, this went on for four hours.

Finally, I had had enough, so I stood up, and I said that I appreciated their visit... visits like theirs serve two useful purposes: (1) they allow Congressmen to see a new country and get the point of view of the country they are visiting, and (2) it also allows the country visited to get the point of view of the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Government firsthand. "But," I said, "Things work both ways." In this particular trip they had been extremely rude to the Indonesian Government by casting aside all the plans that had been made; had been extremely rude to me and the Embassy by not answering our cables; and I and everybody in my Embassy had just been accused of being a crook. I didn't accept that -- I didn't take that positively. I said, "I want you to remember that we pay your salaries, just the way you pay my salary. This is the end of the meeting."

They were perfectly furious. After I left, they demanded to see the exchange of cables, which proved that they were in the wrong. I was giving a large reception for them that evening, and the

State Department escort officer called me and asked, "Do you still want us to come?" And I said, "Certainly. I want one thing understood, though. If the Indonesians come, and I'm not sure anybody's going to come, I don't want to see a single American speaking to another American. I want you to let the Congressmen know that." I also asked him, "By the way, what are you doing on this trip? You are a useless appendage. Why didn't you see that those cables were replied to?" So I wasn't very popular there, either.

So they came, and it turned out to be a very good evening, because they all spoke to the Indonesians, they really made an effort. Ambassador Newsom returned from Washington, where he had been on consultation, the next day. I told him what had happened, and he said, "Well, I don't want to say anything, but you'd better pack your bags!" But nobody said anything.

Q: What happened?

RIVES: Nothing. They knew they were in the wrong. I wasn't going to back up. I would have sent an honest report. I was mad as hell.

Q: Something that was of great concern to the United States and particularly to Australia, but also to other places, was the situation in East Timor. How did we deal with it during the time you were there, '75 to '78?

RIVES: We kept exerting pressure to be more open, let the press get in and see... We never got there. David Newsom never was able to go there. But it was just putting on pressure. It wasn't only on our part. The Dutch were very hard on them, too, and so were the Japanese, and the British, and the French, all the Embassies really pushed them a lot. All we were successful in doing, thanks to this, we got, I would say, about 90% of all the prisoners released who had been kept since the overthrow of Suharto. They did it a hundred thousand at a time, or something like that... it was huge numbers. Because of the pressure, they did release almost all of them.

Q: What would we do? We'd go and say..

RIVES: Continuously. And threaten to cut off aid. And these Congressional visits were useful, I think, because they'd raise it every single time. Then the Ambassador could follow it up and say, "Look, you've heard them. We've told you the same thing. Now you've got it from the people who give you your money." That's always effective.

STAN IFSHIN
Economic/Political Officer
Jakarta (1976-1978)

Stan Ifshin was born on December 13, 1942 in New York. He received his BA from John Hopkins University in 1964. His career has included positions in Saigon, Taipei, Taichung, Kuala Lumpur, and Jakarta. He was interviewed by David Reuther on March 22, 2001.

Q: It's interesting that the term political economy is British, that's what in the early days of British education, in the 19th century, political economy did cover both what we now call economics and politics. It was the Americans and the Germans who split the two apart. And then later you'd have political cones and economic cones for the foreign service. So your reward for the six-month economic course was...

IFSHIN: I went off to Jakarta as an economic commercial officer. My portfolio was commodities. We had a petroleum officer, and that was perhaps the most important...

Q: Who was that at that time?

IFSHIN: There were two guys. I'm having trouble remembering their names... I think Larry Thompson was the second one. The name that is sort of on the tip of my brain is Gary, was the first name but I'm not sure that's right [Mark Johnson]. They both went on to have successful careers and occupy important positions, but I don't have their names on the tip of my tongue now. In any case, I did all the other minerals as well as timber and spices and basically commodities. That was an interesting portfolio because those were important parts of the Indonesian...

Q: Basic to the Indonesian economy at least as it entered into international trade. Who were the main traders on these economies? Was it the United States or Japan...

IFSHIN: Japan is their big maker and their big supplier although the United States in the petroleum sector is the big player. I guess it's Texaco and Chevron have a joint venture in Indonesia.

Q: Who was the head of the economic section at that time, do you remember?

IFSHIN: Henry Bardach was the head of it most of the time I was there.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

IFSHIN: Ed Masters succeeded David Newsom. David Newsom was there when I first got there and subsequently Ed Masters became ambassador. He came from Bangladesh where I forget whether he had been the DCM or the ambassador.

Q: I think he was the ambassador because he was DCM in Bangkok at the time I was there in '75.

IFSHIN: Yes I think he had been DCM in Bangladesh as well, which always struck me as strange that he would go from DCM in Bangladesh to ambassador in Indonesia, which I think of as a more important country. But of course, in Bangladesh we do have a big complicated embassy there with a big aid mission. Anyway, I thought he was DCM, but it might have been that he was ambassador.

Q: Given all the to-ing and fro-ing in U.S. – Indonesian relations, what did the embassy look like at that time?

IFSHIN: There was a large component of other agency personnel.

Q: Was there a big AID component there?

IFSHIN: Yes, there was always a big AID mission as well, yes.

Q: By this time there was also refugee issues out of Saigon.

IFSHIN: I didn't get involved in that terribly much, but I guess there were.

Q: As a commodities officer, did you get to travel around the islands a lot?

IFSHIN: Yes, I did. In fact a peculiar kind of expertise developed by coincidence. I became our man in Irian Jaya. Freeport Minerals had their big copper gold mine in Irian Jaya. I'm not sure if you are familiar with it. It's a fascinating mine. It was developed... The mineral deposit was discovered pre-World War II, but there was absolutely no way to access it. The mine was built largely by Bechtel. It was really a product of Vietnam era technology because they used helicopters to bring in the large earthmoving equipment so they could start to build roads and slurry lines to access this mine. But it's an enormously rich mine in the middle of the jungle and mountains of Irian Jaya. I got about 2 or 3 trips there to see the mine and to visit an oil camp that was in another part of Irian Jaya. So I had developed a sort of familiarity with Irian Jaya. And the ambassador had scheduled a trip out there when they were suddenly troubled with the OPM, Organisasi Papua Merdeka, which is still around. This is the Popoem Freedom Movement. So the Indonesian authorities said the ambassador couldn't go. And he said we have to have an American go out there and check on the well-being of our American.

Q: Good Morning, it's the third of April now. We're getting back to talking with Stan Ifshin. Stan is there anything we want to add to earlier parts of our conversation so far?

IFSHIN: Well, in our last session, a few names had temporarily escaped me and I just want to fill in with those. You had asked at one point for the name of the petroleum officer in Jakarta. The beginning of the time I was there it was Mark Johnson, and he was succeeded by Larry Thompson. So those were the two petroleum officers during my tour of duty in Jakarta. We had also discussed the head of the language school in Tai Chung, and I described him and couldn't think of his name at the moment. It was George Beasley of course, and I just wanted to fill in with that. There are other names, but those two popped into my head while I was shaving or brushing my teeth or other things during this past week.

Q: Describe again, is it an economic commercial section in Jakarta?

IFSHIN: That's correct.

Q: It's combined.

IFSHIN: Yes. At least then it was.

Q: So how many... Were they all state people or were there some commerce people at that time?

IFSHIN: There were no commerce people. This was before commerce took over the foreign commercial service, or established the foreign commercial service. As a matter of fact, when I first arrived, the head of the section was Erland Higgenbotham, who subsequently headed the Foreign Commercial Service when it was transferred to Commerce, but at that time he was a State Department Foreign Service officer, as he was for the bulk of his career.

Q: And how big was the economic section at the time?

IFSHIN: It was quite large.

Q: This is what, the mid to late '70s.

IFSHIN: Yes, it was really quite large. I can't really give you the exact number, but it was like 7 or 8 Americans, officers, 2 American secretaries, as I recall, and a number of locals of course.

Q: Secretaries, what are those? [laughter]

IFSHIN: [laughter] Well, foreign service secretaries... That's probably something that perhaps I could comment on. This is only my second tour to Jakarta, I'm ignoring Vietnam. But my second overseas tour. I had previously been in Kuala Lumpur where we just had outstanding foreign service secretary after outstanding foreign service secretary in the political section. It was amazing the caliber of people we were able to attract in those days. I'm not putting down the people nowadays - I don't know enough about them. But they were really outstanding.

Q: I found it interesting, I think we mentioned it before... Chuck Cross has just done his memoirs, and in his introduction section he lists all the foreign service secretaries he ever worked for with a special thanks to them because they did play an important role in all of our lives.

IFSHIN: Yes, and they were really first class, top notch people. Incidentally, Chuck Cross figures in my story, but that's later down the road.

Q: A couple of quick ones... economic section vis-à-vis political section size wise...

IFSHIN: The political section was much smaller. There were four officers in the political sections.

Q: So one of the main... that's where we are representing one of the main interests the United States had at that time was an economic commercial interest in Indonesia.

IFSHIN: Yes, I think that's true. Of course there were other agencies, many of them doing what should have been political reporting, or at least one of them doing what should have been political reporting, as well as an important military relationship and a large aid mission. In addition to that, on the non-official side, you had a curious, I shouldn't say curious... a somewhat unique... American oil companies had hired a former military attaché, who had a very close relationship

with a number of the Indonesian officials. This was an important unofficial relationship. So the embassy wasn't the only American representation in Jakarta at that time, and of course the oil industry was extremely important to American oil interests. (End of tape)

Q: You were discussing some of your travels around Indonesia to mines. You were just getting into a story about the ambassador's trip.

IFSHIN: Right, well, the ambassador's trip was canceled or the Indonesians withdrew the authority for him to go.

Q: How did they control that?

IFSHIN: For security reasons. I'm not precisely sure of what the formalities were in terms of our travel. There's another incident in one of my first trips to Irianjya. The reason I hesitate calling it Irianjya is the name is in flux. I think the Indonesians are now calling it West Papua. The name has changed over the years. This is the Indonesian half of Papua New Guinea, which only became part of Indonesia in the late '60s when the Dutch gave it up after an alleged referendum supervised by the United Nations. In any case, that was before my time and I don't really know all that much about that.

It was and remains a sensitive area. The very first time I went there, I went there with the U.S. DAO in the DAO plane. We had first flown to Bali and then to Darwin, Australia, then to Marouke, Indonesia. Marouke is just about the easternmost city in Indonesia in Irianjya. When we arrived there the security authorities apparently had not been informed that we were coming, although we had informed the foreign ministry, perhaps somewhat late, that we had filed our flight plans and we thought we were ok. We were not, I shouldn't say detained, because we were never custody, but we had a long interview with the security people and we never really got to see very much of Marouke because they were busy interrogating us and finding out what we were doing out there. So that illustrates the sensitivities that they had about the area. In any case, the ambassador had a scheduled trip.

Q: This is about when... this trip?

IFSHIN: I can't give you an exact date. This would have been during the second half of my tour in Indonesia which would have been I suppose '78, around '78. The ambassador had this trip scheduled, and for security reasons the authorities informed him that no he couldn't go. He accepted that, but said that an American consular official visit to ensure the safety of the American citizens in Irian Jaya, and although I was part of the economic/commercial section, I had an exequatur.

This is a sidebar here... I'd never gotten consular training. When I joined the foreign service, as is typical after your A100 course, you went through the consular course. But because I'd been assigned to Vietnam, I was sent off for AID orientation, and have never had consular training in my foreign service career, although subsequently I have been a consular officer on many occasions.

But that was the first time. I had an exequatur. It's a very nice document by the way, if you've never had one. I don't know what I did with it.

Q: I got mine in Thai.

IFSHIN: So I went out there and met with Americans on several occasions.

Q: What kind of Americans were out there?

IFSHIN: We had the Freeport Indonesia Mines, which we discussed earlier, it's a copper gold mine. At least in those days there were still American nationals, a moderate number of them, I really couldn't tell you if there were 10 or 20. But it was something on that order of magnitude. They had, in what was called the Bird's Head Peninsula in Sorong, in Irianjya, there was an oil camp where they were developing and subsequently successful in bringing an oil field on line. I couldn't tell you exactly how many Americans, but there were perhaps double digit Americans there as well. And then, and this is the people we were most interested in talking to, there were missionaries who in fact were in close contact with Irieneese and quite well informed about the feelings of the people in Irian Jaya. I met with and talked to a large number of them. They represented various groups. The people who were doing the Bible translation, it's a summer institute of linguistics. They're in a number of countries.

Q: So were there about 50 to 100 missionaries out there?

IFSHIN: Yes, you say 50 to 100, that's a wide range, but I think there probably are at least that many.

In any case that was the trip and I came back and wrote up what was going on. There had been a couple of instances of violence on the part of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka. Nothing really large scale and it certainly didn't threaten the American citizens in Irian Jaya at that time. Nor did it pose a threat to the province, but it was an indicator of the latent unhappiness of at least part of the population within Indonesia with the Indonesia authorities. That unhappiness continues as you know down to the present day where Irian Jaya remains an area of instability.

Q: When you made this trip were you using the defense attaché's airplane or commercial?

IFSHIN: As I recall that was commercial. I flew out to Biak, which is a large island off the coast of Irian Jaya, which has a big airport because it was part of KLM's Around the World flight back in the colonial days. They had built large facilities in Biak. Jayapura was the capital, and so basically I got around to a number of areas in Irian Jaya, covered the province fairly significantly. Then in the course of... Basically the end of that story unless you have some other questions.

Q: Just a few details. You take a flight in, you arrive. What do you use for ground transportation? Do you hire a taxi? Does somebody from the mine come to meet you?

IFSHIN: When I arrived at the mine, I may very well have used mining company transportation. I know on some of my trips I was met by helicopter. First I took the company plane into the base

camp and then a helicopter up to the mine. Other times there was ground transportation laid on by the company. The same thing with regard to the oil field where they laid on the transportation.

Q: So the American companies were interested in having the embassy know what was going on, see the environment that they were in.

IFSHIN: In this particular instance, yes. I say in this particular instance because I wanted to make... this is a different story in a different industry, the timber industry. There were two large American companies, and I don't want to go into details as to which one had which attitude. Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific both had investments in Indonesia and one maintained fairly close relations with the embassy and kept us very well informed, and the other did not. And I was responsible for this area.

On one occasion I mentioned that, gee we really didn't hear a lot from that company and they didn't talk to us all that much, and they said that was a deliberate worldwide policy. That they try to avoid identification or entanglement with the American embassy and American officials, that they tried to do things on their own. In many ways, this particular firm seemed to be quite successful in operating in Indonesia. They had an ethnic Chinese partner who I guess steered them through the difficulties of Indonesia. He subsequently, and he's still around, that was 25 years ago, and he's still around but he's in trouble because he was very much identified with Suharto and was one of the people who were very close to Suharto.

Q: So actually American businesses overseas have a variety of policies about associating with the embassy or asking the embassy for help.

IFSHIN: They sure do. I think most of them, when they get in trouble, or when they have trouble, try to see if the embassy can help them out and maintain good relations, but at least some maintain a distance from the embassy as a deliberate policy.

Q: Do you recall at this time, whether there was an American Chamber of Commerce?

IFSHIN: Oh yes, there was.

Q: How big was it?

IFSHIN: It was significant. Again, it tends to be dominated by the oil companies and the oil service companies because that's overwhelmingly the American investment in Indonesia. But there were significant other extractive industries, and that's the area I was working in, extractive industries, basically commodities.

Q: You're the commodities officer at this time, weren't there a whole series of required annual reports?

IFSHIN: Oh there sure are. Yes. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

IFSHIN: That was a major feature.

Q: I can't remember what the names were.

IFSHIN: I can't remember what they were.

Q: But there was a long list, very required, extensive reports for Commerce and State.

IFSHIN: For Commerce, and the Bureau of Mines, and for the U.S. Geological Service. We were reporting to a whole series of different agencies. Again, if I can relate an incident. We had a visit from an inspection group.

Q: Foreign service inspector?

IFSHIN: Right. A member of the group was Burt Levin who I had known in Taiwan. When I had been a language student, he had been in the embassy as a member of the political section. So I got together with Burt for dinner or something to talk, and he was telling me, well, things are really changing in Washington and we don't want to know about every sparrow that falls. Now we have to do more analytical type of reporting, and the people on the seventh floor don't have time to read all these trivial... The U.S. used to have to know about everything that was going on everywhere, but that's not the way things are anymore and we have to get away from that. I don't what particular thing had happened in Washington that this was the line. I kept making the point that we don't just write, at least in my job, for the seventh floor, certainly, and there are lots of other agencies in Washington and a lot of our reporting is aimed at them. And to the extent that we don't do it, they'll going to find other ways to get it done.

Which I think is what happened over the years, we withdrew from certain things, and they got their own people out to do it. I think that's sad in many ways. I remember when I joined the foreign service, we used to make a big deal about it not being the foreign service of the State Department, but it being the foreign service of the United States. That was a part of our official designation and this is what we were. We weren't just reporting for the State Department, we were reporting for the U.S. government. I think it's sad that over the years, we've neglected a lot of these functions, or that they got the impression that we were neglecting them, and subsequently we were doing less and less of that.

Q: It sounds like it was illustrated by the very commodities that you had, because you are reporting to the Bureau of Mines, and sucking up everything you can about the situation in Indonesia, not just for the State Department but for all the other agencies.

IFSHIN: That's precisely what was going on. Although I'd had the economic courses and I felt I wasn't totally uninformed about these areas and unable to report. I was far from an expert on mining or on geology. But it was interesting. I remember Shell was doing extensive surveys in Sumatra where there are apparently enormous coal deposits. But they are very poor quality coal deposits. I remember discussing it with them as they were doing it, and are they going to go ahead, are they going to proceed with development, etc. And their bottom line at the end of this was, yes,

there is a coal mine in Sumatra, but not now. At some point, the price of coal, and the state of our technology, is going to get to a certain stage where it's going to be economical to develop this mine, but it's not today. And it's not in the immediate future. They abandoned the project then. I don't know whether anyone's picked it up in the years since. It was an interesting lesson.

If you remember, this is about the time of the Club of Rome and the stuff about limits, and the conventional wisdom is that we're running out of everything. As someone who knew a little bit about economics and was talking to these people, I understood that we weren't running out of anything. It was a question of price, determining the market, where it became feasible to develop a lot of these mineral deposits, for example. The minerals were there. The prices were too low at that time to develop them, but we weren't going to run out of them. At some point, the price would increase to a stage where it was economically feasible or economically desirable to develop that particular mineral deposit.

Q: In your job as the commodity officer, did you liaise with the Indonesian government or offices?

IFSHIN: Oh, yes, I was...

Q: Was your understanding of their situation better than their understanding of their situation?

IFSHIN: I think frequently it was. You had some very sophisticated people. First of all, on the oil side, of course, they had a very developed... now I didn't really liaise with them, although there was a lot of the same people where people were in the bureau of mines and their bureau of mines, and petroleum... I think were in the same ministry. But for example, the people working in the area of nickel, where Indonesia is a significant producer. Excuse me, I meant tin, not nickel, tin. Indonesia is a significant producer second only to Malaysia and the people in that area tended to be very sophisticated and had a good idea of the market and what was going on. Perhaps not so much the mining aspect as the marketing aspect of the industry, but they were sophisticated and understood. And some of the other areas where Indonesia was a potential player but was not yet into it, they were perhaps less informed. But we kept very close track of mineral development in Indonesia.

I remember a French company, I can't remember the name, took over a significant American equipment manufacturer, and the Indonesia representative of the French company used to come in and see me and talk to me all the time. I would talk to him, and after a while I would say, "well, you're really representing the competition." But he'd say, "No, no, we have this American company" and I'd say, "that's why I'm talking to you, but I feel it's a little awkward here." He'd say, "But the French embassy doesn't know anything. You guys have all the information." In any case, the equipment sellers would come in and talk to us to see where development was going and what was happening and what was the likely future...

Q: You just said something that I thought was very interesting and that follows my own experience, that even foreign businessmen would come over to the American embassy to find out what's going on. Why wouldn't the French embassy or German embassy know as much, was it a staffing issue?

IFSHIN: I think largely it's probably the size of the embassy, and I think they tend to be more I

think traditional in their approach to these issues. Whereas we sort of had an interest in everything and wanted to know everything, and basically treated much of this information of course as completely unclassified, so we had all of these reports that we prepared that were just lining shelves so that people could just come over and pick them up. I don't think any other embassy was doing anything like that or anything near that. So if you wanted information, the American embassy was the place to come by and get it from.

Q: Now, your tour in Jakarta was coming to an end. Anything else about the embassy at that time or the environment you were in?

IFSHIN: No, I really can't remember anything particularly exciting happening at that particular time. Indonesia is a fascinating country. I felt that then, and feel it now, it's really terribly interesting. Jakarta at that time was not the most comfortable of cities. I understand it improved considerably in the years after I left. I remember one incident where, I don't remember how it developed, but one evening I was out and there was a traffic accident that involved some non-official Americans, I think American teenagers, and as is often the case in these kinds of countries, a crowd developed and there was a certain amount of tension in the air. I remember grabbing these kids and getting them into police custody. That's just an incident of something that happened. It kind of reminds me of my Peace Corps days where we were under instructions that if we were ever involved in an accident in a rural area of the Philippines, we were not to stop. If there was no one around we were to stop to offer assistance, but if there were people around we were not to stop but proceed to the nearest police check point and turn ourselves in there, because there was a certain amount of danger to being caught in those circumstances. I certainly felt at that time [in Jakarta] that those kids were in danger or potentially in danger. But everything worked out okay in that particular instance. I don't really remember that much about it, I just remember that it happened.

Q: Did you find that the embassy was receiving a number of visitors, congressional or otherwise, in your area?

IFSHIN: No. Not particularly, not at that time, not in our area. There wasn't that much of that going on.

GRETA N. MORRIS
Wife of a Foreign Service Officer
Surabaya (1976-1978)
Jakarta (1978-1980)

Ambassador Morris was born and raised in California and educated at the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Redland and Claremont College. Before becoming a Foreign Service Officer she accompanied her FSO husband to Indonesia. In 1980 she entered the Foreign Service (USIA) following which she served variously as Public Affairs, Cultural, or Press Officer in Kenya, Uganda, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. Her Washington assignments at

State and USIA concerned primarily African Affairs. She served as US Ambassador to the Marshall Islands from 2000 to 2006. Ambassador Morris was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: How did you find Indonesian?

MORRIS: It wasn't a terribly difficult language; it was a fun language. The Indonesian teachers were absolutely wonderful. They were such kind people and very friendly and just delightful people to work with. For me to be able to study language full time I thought was the greatest thing; I really, really enjoyed it.

Q: You went to Indonesia?

MORRIS: Yes, we went to Surabaya.

Q: When did you go there?

MORRIS: in 1976.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MORRIS: We were in Surabaya for two years; there was an international school there so I was teaching at the international school. I guess it was there I first met people in the U.S. Information Agency and I thought, "wow this is the kind of stuff that I'm really interested in and it's the kind of stuff that maybe I could do." They were doing educational exchanges, Fulbright programs, and international visitors programs. They were doing media relations, which involved writing; they were bringing in cultural groups and these were all things that I really enjoyed. So I thought maybe this is something that I could do. So I began thinking that maybe I would like to join the Foreign Service myself.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Surabaya and your teaching. What was the situation in Indonesia and then talk about Surabaya?

MORRIS: Well it was 1976 and, of course, General Suharto had been in power since '65, basically since the overthrow of Sukarno. It was really a little bit before Indonesia had started taking off economically, so the vast majority of Indonesians were very poor and most of them were still quite traditional in terms of their attire. The women, for example, would all wear sarongs and blouses, the kebaya, as they called it. The Muslim men especially wore small hats, the pichi hats, as they called them.

We went to Jakarta after Surabaya, so we were in Surabaya for two years and then Jakarta for two years. In both cases, of course, this is part of Java and so it was very much influenced by the kind of traditional Javanese culture. At that time, the majority of Indonesians were Muslims, just as they are now, but it was very much the traditional Indonesian Islam that includes elements of some of the more syncretic Javanese beliefs. It was not terribly strict. Of course they would celebrate the end of Ramadan – that was always a big holiday – but it was not necessarily because they had

fasted strictly and done all the other things during the Ramadan period. Rarely did you see a woman who was covered in Islamic garb.

Q: At the high school whom were you teaching?

MORRIS: It was actually a junior high school.

Q: Junior high.

MORRIS: Yes, it did not go up to high school; it went up to ninth grade. These were children of expatriates. It was quite small because there was not a large expatriate population in Surabaya. I was teaching ninth graders and I would say that my class had about 10-15 students.

Q: Were any of the Indonesian children coming in to learn English at all?

MORRIS: Not at the International School, but there was a binational center. It was called the Lembaga Indonesia America and was run by USIS. That was where expatriates could go to study Indonesian and where Indonesians could go to study English.

Q: Were relations pretty good would you say with Americans at that time or was it really strained? How would you say?

MORRIS: I would say they were pretty good. A lot of Indonesians had studied and were still studying in the United States, the so-called Berkeley mafia. The Indonesians went to Berkeley and studied economics. The Ford Foundation was very active in sending people to the U.S. as well as the Fulbright program. I think there was generally a positive feeling about the U.S. There were some people who felt that somehow the United States was to blame for the fall of Sukarno so there was some criticism about the United States for that. Generally because Suharto had a pretty firm grip on the situation and one would only talk about Sukarno and the events of '65 in very hushed tones. It was not an active subject of discussion – any role that the Americans might have had. I would say generally relations with the United States were quite good.

Q: You and your husband were you able to make much contact with the Indonesians socially?

MORRIS: Yes, I would say we were able to get to know Indonesians and I would say that again the fact that I had been able to study Indonesian was such a magnificent thing for me because then I really could communicate with Indonesians. Of course, we had household help. We had a maid who didn't speak much English at all but the fact that we could speak Indonesian meant we could communicate with her well. We had a guard and so we actually got to know our household staff and in the case of the guard, we got to know the guard's family and they invited us over to their house one time, which was a very interesting and quite a humbling experience.

We both got to know the Indonesians who worked at the consulate. Javanese Indonesians, for the most part, don't invite Americans to their homes because their homes are not very prosperous or luxurious by American standards. There were, of course, Chinese-Indonesians who tended to be quite wealthy because they were involved in business and so we got to know several of them on a

good personal basis. In fact, there was one Chinese-Indonesian woman who played the piano beautifully so I used to play my cello with her and that was a delightful experience. Yes, we did get to know Indonesians.

One of the most wonderful parts of the experience of being in Indonesia was some of the trips that we took. The most memorable one was the first year that we were in Surabaya. My husband was asked by the consul to go out to Eastern Indonesia to do some reporting on the political situation and also on the drought, as there was fear of starvation. So we went out to Flores and Sumbawa and Lombok. It was an absolutely wonderful experience. We were there at Christmas time in Flores; Flores is a Catholic island unlike the majority of other parts of the country and there was a very strong Catholic presence there. They had a wonderful Christmas Eve mass at the big cathedral in downtown Ende and then the next day, Christmas morning, we went up to one of the hill stations and attended a folk mass with all the women in all their brightly colored traditional clothing singing these beautiful Flores folk songs. It was an experience that I have never forgotten; it was just truly a magnificent experience.

After the Mass on Christmas morning, the Bupati took us to visit one of the natural wonders of Flores: three no longer active volcanic mountains that are situated in the same place. In the crater of each volcano is a lake. Because the lakes are dead—there are no fish or vegetation in them, only different kinds of minerals – each lake was a different color from these minerals: one was blood red, one was bright turquoise and the third was a deep chocolate brown.

It was such a wonderful experience to be able to travel around. We stayed in both Sumbawa and in Flores with local government officials because they had to keep tabs on this vice counsel and his wife who were traveling. So the Indonesian officials put us up in his homes and we had traditional Indonesian food, we talked and spoke in Bahasa Indonesia with these people and, of course, experienced traditional Indonesian ways of sanitation and sleeping habits and all of these other things. It was a wonderful and unforgettable experience.

Q: You were in Surabaya for two years. This will bring us up to '78 was it?

MORRIS: Yes.

Q: Then you went to...?

MORRIS: Jakarta.

Q: I was just looking at time. This might be a good place to stop now.

We will pick this up in '78 when you had just come to Jakarta and I will ask what was happening there.

MORRIS: OK.

Q: OK, today is the 16th of September 2008 and this is interview number 2 with Greta Morris. Greta where did we leave?

MORRIS: We left off it was around 1978-1980. I was in Jakarta at that time as a Foreign Service spouse and was about to begin my own Foreign Service career. I took the written Foreign Service test at the embassy in Jakarta in December of 1978. I took the oral exam in the spring of 1979 and was then offered an appointment in 1980 for the June class; this was for the U.S. Information Agency.

WILLIAM H. LITTLEWOOD
Science Counselor, USAID
Jakarta (1976-1981)

William H. Littlewood was born in Detroit, Michigan on April 16, 1924. He attended the University of Florida, Princeton University, the University of Michigan, and Champlain College. He served in the US Army in World War II and received a Fulbright Grant to Denmark. His career has included positions in Sweden, Japan, and Indonesia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 26, 2001.

Q: In 1976 you went where?

LITTLEWOOD: To Indonesia. I developed an AID project which concerned the effect of high winds on “low cost-low rise” buildings such as village schools in the Philippines. In our central AID office, the Office of Science and Technology (OST), we developed and funded projects in various developing countries. The projects usually had to be tried in two geographical regions, had to be at least two different areas of AID; in other words, South America and Asia, or Asia and Africa, or even all three. So we looked for problems found in two or more continental areas, e.g. malaria. If somebody thought they had a new approach to fighting malaria, OST might be interested in supporting field tests. This was a challenge for me. Remember, Science Attachés were in the developed countries, but AID dealt with “developing” countries. My Japan experiences with STATE made me conscious of building construction vs. earthquakes. But high winds, whether typhoons, hurricanes or monsoons are all very damaging to simple, low-cost homes, schools, etc. in many developing countries. I started an OST-funded project in the Philippines, approved by the USAID Mission Director there, Tom Niblock. Tom later became USAID Director in Indonesia, and I was invited to make a survey there on science and technology projects that would help the people. He and Indonesia liked my report, so he offered me a job there. I accepted and we moved there in mid-1976. Our daughter stayed in the U.S. to continue college; our son came to the International High School in Jakarta. TA/OST gave me an AID Meritorious Honor Award for my work with them.

Q: Where did Indonesia fit in the developed, underdeveloped?

LITTLEWOOD: Well, Indonesia is still very underdeveloped. *Underdeveloped*, not undeveloped. Maybe “developing” is a nicer word. We hope they are “developing” and not back-sliding. Afghanistan, I guess, has been “backsliding.”

Q: In Indonesia, you were there from '76 to...?

LITTLEWOOD: To '81 when I retired. My Philippine project used "NIST," the former National Bureau of Standards. As I mentioned earlier, we funded NIST to study wind-resistant housing. Remember, I learned about NIST and earthquake-resistant construction when I was in Japan. The Philippines has a big problem with winds and earthquakes. It's a natural "wind laboratory." More strong winds, "typhoons," hit the Philippines than any other country in the world.

To work with our TA/OST project in the Philippines, I had to meet all the officials in Manila who were involved with housing construction policy, that is, the government housing administrators. It included their social security system, which sponsors housing as a social benefit. Our project aimed at making it safe housing. So, as mentioned earlier, I went to Jakarta. Initially Tom Niblock invited me out for a "survey of science and technology in Indonesia." Now that's a country with the fourth largest population in the world. They have some scientific centers and things that the Dutch had perhaps started, and which are still continuing. I had a series of local visits in two weeks in early 1976. Really I think Tom Niblock also wanted me to know what the situation was because he hadn't formally asked me to go out there at that point. In Indonesia I met various "science and technology" people and had discussions that gave me a pretty good inkling of what I was going to be involved in if I was asked to move there. So I spoke as though I were probably coming to Indonesia again, not just to talk, but to do something. When I came back to USAID I waited until July to move there with my wife and son arriving in August.

Q: When you went to the Philippines what was your impression of the Philippines government's program to build low cost housing. Because one hears about the horrendous "all thumbs" of Manila and all that.

LITTLEWOOD: I was not focused on that. I was just focused on why village schools and houses blew down in typhoons, or collapsed during earthquakes. Our focus was on technology and design, not administration. We would fund a NIST team of experts in this field. This approach worked in other countries and our own country. The NIST experts would analyze the village buildings' design and construction. They never got into the issues of who was getting housing and things like that. The focus was always on the science and technology aspect.

Q: How did you find dealing in Indonesia? When you got there and the whole time you were there, it was Suharto in command. How did you find the government as far as your approach?

LITTLEWOOD: They were very supportive; after all, they were going to get help. And of course I'd already met senior people on the S&T side of the government when I did that two-week survey. So I fit right in with the Indonesian government and with our Embassy too. The Embassy was very good. Ambassador David Newsom was our ambassador and he was very fine. Ed Masters was the U.S. Ambassador later on. They were both excellent ambassadors and completely cooperative with my new "Science and Technology Office" in the USAID Mission. I also "double-hatted" as a "Science Counselor" for the Embassy, since there wasn't one there, and I had five years experience in Sweden, and three in Japan.

Q: What about the scientific leaders of Indonesia. Where did they get their education?

LITTLEWOOD: Most of them in the United States. Which was very good for me. Of course I had an assistant/interpreter in my office because I didn't have to know the language. They spoke very nice English. The officials I worked with at the senior level, the Minister for Science and Technology, B.J. Habibie, and his deputy, Dr. "Billie" Joedono. We became very close friends. Billie had a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California at Berkeley. Many others in the Indonesian government had degrees from Berkeley, nearly all under AID grants. By the way, the Dutch didn't allow the Indonesians to get into higher education; that was reserved for the Dutch. So the earlier AID missions were very much interested in increasing Indonesian higher education, particularly sending them over to U.S. universities. The University of Kentucky had an earlier USAID grant for improving Indonesian universities. They graduated a lot of faculty now running the Indonesian universities. Of course I'm talking twenty years ago, so now we have another whole generation.

Q: What were your particular areas that you were looking at in the interviews?

LITTLEWOOD: The charge which came directly from President Carter was that AID should look at how the United States could help the common man in these countries. Because of the bureaucracy in these countries, which are so different from ours in the sense that there are few at the top and there are many, many, many at the middle and bottom. They lack education, and most are rural farmers. A very low standard. They can still be happy doing that; as long as they're keeping alive and such. When the Dutch were tossed out by the Japanese occupation, it was worse. But that's history. Under the Dutch, maybe one or two Ph.D.s were native Indonesian. I think one of those was in Islamic religion, something like that. And that's the only way a small country like the Netherlands could run a country that big. Maintaining the top leadership, and not allowing the local people to move up. But now they're all Indonesians in there and many are now trained in the United States or some other advanced country. The Minister of Science and Technology, not the one that was acting in that position when I first came, but the later one was B.J. Habibie, as I mentioned before. When he was young, he lived down the street from Suharto, who took a liking to him. I picture it as a sort of "godson" relationship. Habibie went to Germany, learned German, and attained a Summa Cum Laude Ph.D. degree in aeronautical engineering from Aachen University. He then joined Messerschmidt, and became Vice President for Engineering. President Suharto brought him back to Indonesia, and he became Vice President under Suharto.

Q: Oh, yes.

LITTLEWOOD: I got to know Habibie quite well as I met him about twenty-eight years ago. He was on a visit to Washington and I was assigned by OST to help him arrange the details, appointments, and to escort him. So we met at that point. He came to my office and we talked about opportunities and details. He had dinner at my house and invited me to visit him in Hamburg, which I did later. That was before I went out there for this USAID project. He was always bitter that he wanted to get his Ph.D. in California, and then immigrate to the U.S. and work at Boeing, for example. But our laws allow you to come here for an education, but you must then go back to your country.

Q: We called it an exchange. You can't become an immigrant. You have to return to your country for two years I think.

LITTLEWOOD: That's to prevent brain drain, especially from developing countries. He tried to get his son into Berkeley, but this was much later on of course, I think he did get turned down there again. Habibie certainly is exceptional. He told me he designed the wings of the "Airbus."

Q: What areas did you find particularly responsive for your work when you were in Indonesia?

LITTLEWOOD: Well, just about anything I suggested. They went along with it. For example, an "alternative energy" project from my OST projects, one with Georgia Tech. It was to process agricultural waste, such as rice hulls, or sugarcane "bagasse" into usable fuel, like charcoal, briquettes, for family cooking. I worked with the technical university in Bandung, central Java, Indonesia's "MIT." They had a small center at the university, they were trying to help the local people through science and technology. So I funded them to work with us and of course it's very easy, when you have money, to get people to listen to you and go along. In this case they have no particular knowledge of these techniques and such, so they're welcomed it, and I included the Georgia Tech experts in the project. They would send their experts to Bandung periodically to help it to succeed. I'll give you some other examples.

Q: Would you please.

LITTLEWOOD: Let's talk about earthquakes and volcanoes. Indonesia had a little volcano institute. This is a country where Krakatoa Volcano erupted, in the 1890s.

Q: Worst disaster.

LITTLEWOOD: Tremendous.

Q: It caused a year without much sun.

LITTLEWOOD: Affected the entire world. You've a great knowledge of that; that's unusual. The reason it caused so much loss of life and such is that it is located in the narrow straits between Java and Sumatra. It was explosive so it created huge Tsunami waves, commonly called a "tidal wave," nothing to do with tides of course. Krakatoa is about a half mile, mile away from the Java coastline. Along those straits were a tremendous number of fishing villages and a great number of people. The slopes, from the mountains of Java, and the mountains of Sumatra, come down to the slopes there. This wave just went up and washed all those people and villages into the ocean, many thousands! Anyway, Indonesia had a little vulcanology institute. They didn't have much money, probably the staff was eight or something like that. Maybe one or two of them had degrees from a western university.

What had happened on our side was that Mt. St. Helens, in a state park in Oregon, had erupted explosively on a nice weekend when the park would have had thousands of visitors. However, the U.S. Geological Survey, a U.S. Government agency, had experimental "tilt meters" and other instruments on the mountain side, to monitor the mountain for "swelling" that would indicate an

impending eruption. The monitoring system gave warning, and the U.S.G.S. warned the State Park's Service, "Close the park for the weekend, and maybe longer." And of course the Park Service was, I'm sure, very unhappy and took a lot of convincing because the mountain had never erupted for many years. They agreed finally, and they did evacuate as many people as would come out, and they didn't allow visitors to come in. So there was a tremendous saving of life there, when it erupted. The ones that did lose their lives included a U.S. Geological Survey person who was up there, and several who had concessions up there who didn't want to leave. They had their houses up there and they for example would sell gasoline or run a restaurant or cabins, near the top end of the road up the mountain.

Most of my projects were just common sense in putting the right things together. So I put those three together, the Indonesian vulcanologists, the U.S. Geological Survey, and several million dollars of AID money, mostly transferred to the U.S.G.S. of course to take their team and tilt meters etc. to the Indonesian vulcanology center in Bandung. The project provided that they should put a U.S.G.S. volcanologist out there to stay for the length of the project. It was to be something like a three or four year project. He would be there to assist, teach, and solve simple problems, etc. In addition there had been a U.S.G.S. project there once before some years back to help on a geological mapping project in Indonesia. They taught Indonesia the U.S.G.S. mapping procedures, particularly topographic mapping. It is very important if you're going to work in opening up minerals, mining and a lot of other things, to have good maps of the country. They had improved, but they were not yet up to international standards of mapping. We put that goal in the U.S.G.S./Indonesian project, since the mapping people on both sides already knew each other. It was a good meshing between the two organizations. So by now there should be tilt meters on many of the mountains down there that are considered dangerous mountains. Jogjakarta, one of the big cities in Java had about 30,000 people (squatters) around the base of a nearby volcanic mountain (Mount Merape) considered dangerous. I believe the mountain is now instrumented with tilt meters, and a vulcanology station. It had only "gongs" twenty years ago, a "too late" warning system.

Q: During the same time you were there, I was Consul General in Naples. When Mount St. Helens blew, we could see through our window, Vesuvius. And an awful lot of farming, very good looking tomatoes and all that. And buildings were up and down the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.

LITTLEWOOD: Mt. Etna has been very active, too.

Q: That one took the book. Vesuvius hasn't done anything since 1944 but it can.

LITTLEWOOD: That was one example of a project where it didn't cost a lot of money but it should save a lot of lives. To help the common man, there's a limit to what one can do. But to save his or her life is a good start.

Another project idea concerned the potentials of introducing to Indonesia something called "ferrocement." I learned about it from the National Academy of Sciences team I worked with when in OST. Ferrocement has been around for a long time, since about 1890 when someone made a rowboat out of it. With "ferro" we think of "rebars," those heavy bars used in poured concrete, which is cement, water and stones. The process uses molds. But with ferrocement, you plaster

instead of pouring, and you mix Portland cement with clean, sieved sand, to make a paste to plaster, not pour. What do you plaster this “cement/sand” paste on? Well, it is “free form.” That is, you use a coil of wire, about 1/4" thick, and make the desired form by bending and cutting it to make a form, and tying the wires together where they cross, using small wires twisted with pliers. And then you fill it in the spaces with wire mesh, such as “chicken wire.” Ferrocement never caught on in advanced countries because it is so labor-intensive. Perfect for Indonesia!

Q: Oh, yes.

LITTLEWOOD: When we say, “science and technology” in an AID context, we do not mean using extremely sophisticated methods like we do in the States. This is “B.C.” – before computers. For the sand, presumably from a beach, you have to be sure all the salt is washed out, but there is plenty of rain water in Indonesia to do that. The reason you want fine grains is that you get the maximum surface area. A bowling ball has a certain amount of surface area; if you grind that into small grains of “bowling ball sand” it has a tremendous surface area. So the water and sand are there, and Indonesia produces and even exports cement. The steel is an import. But they make wire in Indonesia, at least the labor of making the wire is local. So the raw costs doesn’t seem significant. Think about it, you can make your form any shape you want and it will be as strong as sheet steel. So you can follow local cultural shapes, such as a swooping roof. There are some beautiful roof designs in Indonesia. If they have thatch roofs, which often leak, you can put ferrocement under it. Also, it’s bug, mouse and termite proof. You also save wood since wood such as teak is an export, helping to get foreign currency. Also, too many trees are being cut down anyway. Another use is for water containers. You can make them any size and shape you want, to fit whatever space you have. So I talked this over with the leader of our pyrolytic conversion project at the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), that is, the ITB rural development office, Dr. Filino Harahap. He was so happy to have all this extra funding to do this project. I asked him to find about eight recent graduates in mechanical or civil engineering, from ITB and several other universities, because we wanted to try this not just in one site, but countrywide. So he found eight new graduates, including some from other islands, e.g. Sumatra and Sulawesi universities. We sent them for a special course on ferrocement at a civil engineering university north of Bangkok, Thailand. By the way, there was one place that ferrocement was used in a developed country. It’s the very famous Sydney Opera House in Australia. That famous roof is ferrocement!

Q: The opera house!

LITTLEWOOD: Those multiple arching roofs. Those roofs are ferrocement. They will never leak or deteriorate!

Q: They look like billowing sails.

LITTLEWOOD: Because they’re free-form. You can make all these beautiful shapes. So we sent the selected graduates to a Thailand graduate school for civil engineering. We sent them for a three month course in the basic principles of ferrocement. The school had tension and torsion instruments there to teach the limits of ferrocement. Our students would study what was already proven uses for ferrocement in Thailand. How to use it for food containers, water containers, roofs, other things. Our Indonesians would be the ones in a way that are going to make the “recipe” for

Indonesia. When you think about it, there must be a very trained and innovative person, who “creates” a cooking recipe, but what is produced should be very simple to use. In other words, a lot of people could follow that recipe without any great education or training. The three-month course would give them confidence. Each had to create a useful product of ferrocement as a class requirement; food storage, pipes, a small boat, or whatever.

Q: Yes, it really is remarkable.

LITTLEWOOD: So everything can be done by the local person with a little bit of training. The only tools you need are a trowel, and even that can be made of wood. You need some pliers because you have to tie this mesh wire to the basic form wire. You have to be careful that the cement completely covers the mesh as you don’t want the wire to be exposed through the cement, as it will carry rust inside. Also, you don’t want any “voids” (air voids) in it. However, if something *does* happen to that ferrocement it’s easily repairable. You just chip off the broken cement to expose the mesh wire, push in or lace in some new wires, and plaster some new cement, covering the hole and all wires. Good as new!

Q: It’s too good to be true.

LITTLEWOOD: Another factor is you don’t have to keep ferrocement dry in rainy Indonesia. Cement can even set under water. The chemical reaction to “set” requires water. You’ve noticed, here at home, when they put down new cement they will put straw on a road for example, and spray a little water on to keep it wet until it has fully hardened. So all of these things fit the Indonesian scene. Easy labor, no foreign currency (except basic steel to make the wire), and direct benefit to the people. Now, we took these graduates from this Thai summer school and under our project we sent them back to their school areas, or to villages, and asked them to use their expertise to identify anything where ferrocement would help the people and save foreign currency (imports) and just be useful in some way. And also may supplant wood usage. Actually, I had an idea when I saw that every village had a little mosque, all of which had a small dome which is supposed to be very round. To be holy the dome should be smooth. When you build the village mosque and with a dome only eight feet in diameter, you have a problem in this village, which probably built the mosque with village labor. But for the dome they can’t. So they must buy a steel plate and then to get a person to cut it with an acetylene torch make a dome out of it which is kind of difficult. A lot of welding there, and how to get a round dome out of a flat plate.

Q: With the dome shape

LITTLEWOOD: They have the classic problem of half an orange peel conversion to a flat thing. It has to be cut in pointed pieces which must be bent and welded, but will never be smooth. Also it will rust. It is difficult. They try and galvanize it, but it doesn’t last in that kind of climate. So these are not perfectly shaped and it costs the village a lot of money in the sense that they had to hire somebody to buy and bring the plate, with arc-welding equipment, etc. He would have to bring his own generator to run the arc-welding. You’ve got to have a trained person to do the welding, and the product will never be smooth. Costs go up for an imperfect solution. Now look at the ferrocement approach. Take wire loops and cut them in half loops, like northern hemisphere longitude lines, then tie them at the “North Pole” intersection. Then put loops (rings) for the

“latitude” lines, and tie them at intersections. And of course the bottoms of the wires are in cement or something like that to hold the dome to the mosque. It’s really very simple. Another thing one should think about is the “acceptance” of some new technology. In this case I felt that a ferrocement dome would help with acceptance, because although people aren’t used to this kind of roof, if their prayers are going through it, it’s go to be okay.

Q: Yes! It’s remarkable that in a way it hadn’t spread around before.

LITTLEWOOD: Worldwide it has. An “International Ferrocement Center” in Thailand which I helped get started while in OST in Washington, has been going great guns—it has a journal, and sends teaching materials around the world, to universities in developing countries. Regarding Indonesia, the mosque dome idea has spread widely. The biggest mosque in Aceh, Sumatra, had a wooden roof on its dome which leaked. A ferrocement dome was constructed under that. It’s about eighty feet across! Our grad student from Sumatra made a house for himself out of ferrocement and a “shopping mall” with different stalls of ferrocement, because it resists water and earthquakes. Another one of our trainees went to a mountainside small village in Java to see what one can do to help this village with this rediscovered technology. What he did was actually marvelous. This village, of perhaps two-hundred or three-hundred people had developed around two sides of a small stream about twelve feet wide. The streambed had, because the water would usually run fast, had eroded to about six feet deep. It came from a lake way up the mountain and the mountaintop nearly always had rain so the lake was pretty full all the time but even more full sometimes and the stream would flood their coconut log bridge. And of course they lived on both sides of the village so they were always crossing it. They would fell palm trees and walk across the trunks. When the water came down heavy it would wash them out, so they would just cut some more palm trees and replace them. When it was low, they had stepping stones down in the stream bottom, but you had to go down this slippery bank where they cut steps, and walk across the stepping stones and up the other side. The river was used for toilet and washing and drinking water (upstream, I hope). Our project man found ways, using ferrocement, to help this village improve life. He taught the local people to help him, and actually lived with them for months. So he was working with simple, uneducated villagers, and he had access to cement, wire and wire mesh. He made an aqua-duct. Not in the Roman style but a ground level aqua-duct all the way from that lake, 1.4 kilometers. He did that in sections about fourteen inches wide and seven feet long. Think of Lionel train tracks that are made in straight pieces and curved pieces. He followed the contour of the land by making many of these sections, with a half-round bottom and a flat, removable lid at ground level. They dug a trench up to the lake! He wanted to do a “quality control” check on this section lid design, because there were water buffalo around and the water buffalo can weigh a ton almost; hope I’m not exaggerating. He walked a water buffalo across this ground-level lid on a section to see if it would hold. It did. So the village now had a source of fresh, clean water from this lake all the time. It would help them avoid diseases carried by dirty water. Then he made a “pissir,” with running water, for the men, and something for the women. He made water tanks and then he made a bridge over that stream using ferrocement. It takes an engineer, that’s why I wanted an engineer, to know what arc to put in.

Q: I would imagine.

LITTLEWOOD: To know whether to put a real steep arc or a real shallow arc or none at all. So he

figured that out and then he used local stones from the mountainside to act as anchors on each side of the bridge. And rods came out of that base, and went across the stream at the correct arc, and down into the other base. So of course they were cemented into those rocks. Then he put other rods across and lengthwise to fill it in. This guy had a good head on him. He knew that the only vehicle that could get to this mountain village would be a Jeep. And he knew that sometime, somebody would try to drive a Jeep across the bridge, which was designed for people, not a vehicle. So he made the width of the bridge a little less than the axle length of a Jeep, to keep the Jeep from going over it. If you look at the bridge, you're looking at something that's only half an inch thick.

Q: Oh, boy!

LITTLEWOOD: As he made the edges, he bent the wires in a curve down, as that prevents it from getting easily chipped on the edge. Because it's rounded now, it looks like it's much thicker than it really is. I have a picture of the whole village standing on that bridge. Those are examples of what that guy did. I really complimented him on doing a great job.

Q: Was that taken as a test case and replicated elsewhere?

LITTLEWOOD: If you mean helping at other villages, I hope so. Our project was to demonstrate and prove, hoping it will grow on its own. Each of our eight engineers did different things in different areas. When I developed the project I put in a section that each sub-project would include teaching plans to spread the technology. It doesn't do any good to have these AID people in the center of things. You've got to replicate. So that was all part of the project. They had courses on this on how to teach it to others. It was very easy to teach. Just demonstrate and teach in other villages.

Another one of our eight engineers ended up by a fairly large, swift river in Java. A main road went down to the river, and continued on the other side, but there was no bridge. For the nearest bridge you had to go sixty to seventy-five miles or something like that up or down river. So they had strung cables across this swift flowing river, and they would pull a barge across with a car or truck on it, and then pull the barge back. Instead of wood and such, we built a large barge with ferrocement pontoons, to carry four cars at a time, under our ferrocement project. Also, our barge would not wear out as fast as the traditional one of fifty-five gallon drums and a wooden platform and prows. When the barge runs up on the river's sandy shore, wood wears out quickly, and ferrocement does not.

Q: You made it out of cement?

LITTLEWOOD: You make the pontoon hull out of ferrocement and the on-off ramps. Someone might say, "Oh, it will sink!" Well, so does steel, it sinks even faster, and we have plenty of steel ships out there, carrying big loads, like the oil tankers and such.

Q: Actually they built "Victory ships" out of the ferrocement.

LITTLEWOOD: You're right! Victory ships were cargo ships for WWII. We needed all the steel for war, but also needed big cargo ships, normally made of steel. Ferrocement had the same strength, but used much less steel. Also they were easily repaired if "holed," as I explained earlier.

Actually, in my project I excluded ships or yachts, as they would chew up the money without helping the villagers. I'm surprised you knew about the "Victory" ship.

Q: I just remembered it.

LITTLEWOOD: Very few people know that and don't laugh. The steel makers then probably were not happy with the ferrocement competition.

Q: What about the lasting ability of ferrocement?

LITTLEWOOD: If a mortar shell went through one, you just clean out the debris, lace up the wires, and paste in a new cement/sand mix. It's so patchable, that is, you don't have to have any expertise or special equipment to speak of, to patch it.

Q: I guess the main thing is to have, obviously the frame, but to get the formula right too.

LITTLEWOOD: Well, the formula is about fifty percent cement and fifty percent sand which is different than concrete. I'm not sure what it is in concrete. This is more cement I think and it's fine sand. All of our graduate students, if they have any technical questions, they can go back to the teacher of their courses in Bangkok.

Another one of our ferrocement graduates worked in his university on another island. They had no campus bus stops so he built bus stops out of ferrocement. Completely water proof with beautifully shaped roofs with concealed water drainage. You can make telephone poles out of cement instead of wood. You just take long rods and put rings around it and a frame around that and you've got your telephone pole. You can build in other things, steps to go up it or cross bars for wires. Termite and waterproof! I guess I'm not sure if they ever built those. In all, the ferrocement project was a great success.

Q: It sounds like you kept busy with so many projects, etc. in your five years there...

LITTLEWOOD: Absolutely! I had a lot of things going. It was exciting. Best time I ever had.

Q: Did you run across the problem of people in Indonesia at the time and that is the senior people and the Suharto family, and others wanting a piece of the action.

LITTLEWOOD: There was no money because there was nothing they could get. It's not like giving a chunk of money to the local government in this case. We controlled it, with their agreement. I had great senior counterparts in the S&T area.

Q: Oh.

LITTLEWOOD: We gave just money to help run an already established center for applying technology to local people at a certain university. Other money was to pay for the ferrocement students and that money went to the university in Thailand. Of course there are tickets and subsistence. No way can anybody get into that. I can't think of any of my projects where they could get into it. We were not giving them a chunk of money. These were just several of the many

projects I developed there. Our projects included audit rights to make sure U.S. money was spent as agreed, under the project agreements. Near the end of my Indonesian stay, the U.S., Indonesia and others had a new situation come up: "the energy crisis!" But it didn't effect my ongoing projects. One project I quickly developed was to the U.S. National Academy of Science, "BOSTID" office (which I described before), to come to Jakarta to review Indonesia's energy resources, and to advise us on formulating a relevant S&T project. They did that, and we had good meetings with our relative Indonesian counterparts, including field trips. We focused on "alternative energy," alternative to oil and liquefied gas, which Indonesia exports. Alternatives like hydro-power, peat moss, waste wood, better stoves, etc., were our focus, which was on domestic energy needs, not exportable energy sources. That was towards the end of my stay where in Indonesia (AID), so I don't know how they all worked out. I did put a large chunk of AID S&T money to help develop an Indonesian "energy research laboratory," including training their people and equipping the laboratory, etc. All together I had about twenty million dollars to program in my five years, dollars of that time. An AID energy officer came over at my request, and agreed to pick up responsibility for monitoring our alternative energy project.

Q: Unlike so many of these projects, where you kind of set them up and they go for a while and they kind of die. It sounds like this was something that took deep roots.

LITTLEWOOD: I think so. I don't know what's happened to the energy part. It was just as I was preparing to leave and retire.

Q: Were you picking up any feeling that this, this was some time ago, that Suharto was not, was he a popular person?

LITTLEWOOD: Yes, he was quite popular as far as I could see. His government kept the many ethnic groups together in a way. Of course others resented it. The Javanese were scattered in a lot of the rest of the country and running the government. Being a military person Suharto had many people in civilian clothes that ran the government but who were actually military officers, many of them educated in the United States. By the way, Habibie was not military. There were many very fine people there. I think that things went fairly well, but of course it wasn't really that democratic. They're having bigger problems now that he's out. He had become too old anyway.

Q: What about East Timor? Did that come up on your watch?

LITTLEWOOD: I could have gone down there, as AID was allowed to go into Timor but I didn't see any S&T reason for me to go. The embassy wanted us to have projects not just around Jakarta which is easier to monitor of course, but to go out into the field. So I did that, but I didn't go into Timor, nothing to do there from my S&T viewpoint. Again, problems there were mainly political and not my bailiwick.

Q: How about Irian? Did you get over there?

LITTLEWOOD: I did go over to Irian Jaya with minister B.J. Habibie, as his guest one time when he was making an inspection there. Our Ambassador went also. I visited General MacArthur's old WWII headquarters there, and learned that there had been a brass plaque there honoring

MacArthur, and it had been stolen. You never know, but I'm sure someone had stolen it to melt down the bras, to sell. I suggested to the Ambassador that it would be a nice gesture during the visit to say that we'll remake the plaque and you officiate putting it up. I looked at some different things there as S&T project possibilities, but I didn't find anything. I had so many projects going, I didn't fund anything there. I also had not funded something in today what's known as the "Spice Islands." Ambon, in Maluku, is the capital. They had a university there (it's still there) but the Dutch had made that area a center for legal training. This area, Maluku, is an island, and has a large fisheries industry which was declining. There were some problems. The bait fish that they use for tuna and such were dying out and they didn't know why. Here their university is focusing on law and such, instead of the sea, but they did have an oceanographer who had gotten some training in Leningrad. So I was in touch with the person in charge of the Ministry of Fisheries in Jakarta and learned about this. Dr. Aprilani is his name. I talked to him about this. Maybe we could have a joint project in Ambon to increase interest in studying the sea and fisheries, and to help the oceanographer. They have a library there, but with very few fisheries books in it. My program could provide it with the biggest library of fisheries and marine science books, etc. in Indonesia. The fisheries center was up in Bogor, close to Jakarta. That's in the middle of the country. Ambon is a long way off. But they did have something to build upon there. Just like the volcano institute and the rural development center in ITB. I wanted to leave something in Ambon that's right to help out and expand a marine focus. Later I went down to Ambon again, and met with this professor. We met with the university deans and such. One person was missing, that was the director of the university, he wasn't in that meeting. But everybody else was. In fact they competed with a couple of other universities who wanted us to help them, but we decided this was where we were going to put our S&T effort. I had a marine specialist from the States come over and assist me. I was familiar with a lot of it, but he had a lot of clout and knowledge. It ended up we actually contracted with the University of Seattle (in their fisheries institute), because they knew how to monitor fish populations, whether it's declining or such, so you have some warning. Also maybe to find out what was killing all the bait fish. Is it pollution? Predatory disease? Or some poison from the industry? A few things like that. Ambon should be teaching fisheries at this university there. People from that area should study fisheries, not just law. So we set up, by contract with the University of Seattle, to give Ambon the biggest marine library in the country, bigger than the one in Bogor, on fisheries, and taught the staff and gave them all kinds of instruments and things they needed to do for oceanography. They had no particular research ship, but they got a ship finally, a research ship. We also gave U.S. graduate school scholarships in fisheries to two or three of their staff. I don't have many other projects to tell you about. They were all fun projects. I really enjoyed my job. The best time of my life!

Q: Part of the fun and the feeling of achievement was you were dealing with Indonesians.

LITTLEWOOD: That's right! And helping them to help themselves.

Q: Because you could be somewhere else, but it sounds like you gave them the ability to do it on their own.

LITTLEWOOD: That's the whole idea. Just thinking it all through and coming up with a project which had to be approved by Washington and had to be approved by the Indonesian government was both a challenge and fun.

Q: Once you set it in motion, things just happened.

LITTLEWOOD: As far as I know. I never had a project turned down. I received promotions as Senior Foreign Service Officer and reached a rank equal to a multi-star General or Admiral. I really liked the Indonesians.

Q: They're very bright people.

LITTLEWOOD: There are lots of bright people. There are wonderful people all over the area. I had no problem with anyone. I had other projects, these I've described are my favorites of course. I also represented the U.S. in different Asian scientific meetings and small industry development meetings. When the energy crisis occurred of course, we all focused on that, but I never saw the results, since I retired.

Q: Did the Australians, who have always taken a particular interest in Indonesia, who want the Indonesians to be happy and prosperous, and stay away from Australia... Did you find you were working with them? Were they active in these things too?

LITTLEWOOD: My office just didn't have any real connections with any other countries except the aforementioned Thailand. Other U.S. resources might interact with Australia, but I don't know. Something in the sense of science and technology, that's a broad term I know, but that's the only term that fits. Minister Habibie left his job in Messerschmidt in Hamburg, and the President Suharto asked him to come home, so he started commuting to Indonesia while I was there, I'd met him earlier. He would come down from Germany for a couple of weeks, or a couple of months and then he'd go back to Hamburg. He had married an Indonesian pediatrician working in Hamburg. They had children who were now in high school. When I was back in the central office he had asked me to come visit him in Hamburg and I did that on the way home one time. Halfway around the world, you can either go east or west there, it didn't matter. I stopped in Hamburg for a day. He told me that he had to stay five years in Messerschmidt before he could retire and leave Messerschmidt, because he knew corporate secrets. After five years they would be considered obsolete. I personally think he wanted to see the lay of the land in Indonesia. He had been so long in Germany that he didn't really know what was going on in Indonesia. He came in with Suharto's blessing and Suharto's direction so he could do whatever he wanted and would have to find his way in between the existing ministries to be careful of other peoples' turf. My advantage in the AID mission was that what I carefully designed was not in anybody else's turf. So I became an important part of the AID mission program. I was sorry to leave the job in Washington, but I was really happy to have the field experience. I had an award when I left the office, they gave me a meritorious honor award for my work, six years there.

Q: How did you and your wife, like, how did your family like Indonesia to live in?

LITTLEWOOD: My wife did. I'm not sure about our son. He enjoyed it, it was different, but of course he had left all of his classmates and friends at home, but he made some new ones in Indonesia. It was just two years and then he went off to Florida State University. I would have stayed longer in Indonesia actually, but my wife was anxious to get home. I'm sure part of that was

because both children were in the U.S. at that point. Our daughter was married to a man she met in Indonesia, an assistant air attaché. She was visiting us for a year. Otherwise she was staying in Copenhagen with her grandparents.

Q: You retired in '81? But I take it you didn't really retire?

LITTLEWOOD: Well I retired. I thought I'd try and do a little consulting. I'm such a generalist. The science attaché, the science officer is going to be a generalist. You sort of look at the whole field. So I'm one of those who doesn't know a lot about anything but knows a bit about everything. It had worked out very well. What was the question again?

LAWRENCE P. TAYLOR
Petroleum Officer
Jakarta (1977-1980)

Lawrence P. Taylor was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1940. He graduated in 1963 from the University of Ohio with a degree in history and economics and received his MA from American University. He served as a member of the Peace Corps in the province of Antioquia in 1963. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to Yugoslavia, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Canada, England, and Estonia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 10, 1998.

TAYLOR: I was posted to Jakarta, Indonesia, as the petroleum officer there, which I want to tell you right now is heads and shoulders the best middle-level job in the entire Foreign Service, in terms of the range of responsibility, the interest, and the relevance of the work. So it was a great country, it was a great posting, but what an exciting job!

Q: Well, this would have been '77 -

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: -to when?

TAYLOR: '80.

Q: Okay, first could we talk about Indonesia in 1977, when you arrived? How did the country strike you, and then what were American relations with the Suharto government?

TAYLOR: Well, the country is striking in many ways, and it is a unique, wonderful, but very foreign culture to a North American, full of fascinating history, values, ideas, and actions, some of which at first glance seemed a bit strange. The contrast between wealth and poverty hits you the minute you walk off the plane and on the drive in from the airport. It's a contrast that I had seen before. I saw it in Yugoslavia, I saw it in the Dominican Republic, and I lived with it while I was in the Peace Corps. But I can tell you, at the time we had a big AID program, and we brought in many

contractors, and some of the contractors that we brought in were experts on agriculture or finance or some area in which we assisting Indonesia but had never been out of the United States before. They turned around and went home in the first hour, and part of the reason they turned around and went home - it didn't happen often, but it happened - was because on the ride in from the airport they simply experienced a culture shock of proportions that they could not cope with and decided that they had to leave. And what they saw was, living right by the road, just very desperate sort of poverty that they had never encountered before. So that was one of the striking features. It's also a very colorful place and a very beautiful place in terms of natural beauty.

I was fortunate, Stu, that my job took me to every corner of Indonesia. It's a big place. It's an archipelago. You know, it's a lot of water, by definition, but it's almost as wide as the United States, when you go from the tip of upper Sumatra, swing out through Irian Jaya. And my job included networking with the entire international oil community, mainly American companies, not exclusively, who were there, and they were in all parts of Indonesia, and I got to visit all parts of Indonesia on a regular basis. So you saw the immense amount of diversity that went beyond the dominant Javanese culture, which is what most of the people in the embassy experienced during their time.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived?

TAYLOR: When I arrived it was David Newsom, and he was then shortly replaced by Ed Masters.

Q: Well, now, what was your impression - you've been in a number of embassies - what was your impression of the embassy, not only how it functioned but how well plugged in was it to the powers that be in Indonesia?

TAYLOR: That embassy was extremely well plugged in and had been for a long time and remains plugged in today. And that is because of the close association the United States has had with President Suharto since he assumed power in the '65-66-67 period. There were many, and I guess still are many, former U.S. government officials who after their retirement took jobs consulting on Indonesia or with Indonesian organizations or with American organizations connected to Indonesia and who continued to exert quite an important influence over relationships, and who worked closely with the embassy, who were there to talk with the embassy and to share insights. It was a very, very close relationship - and the United States benefited from it immensely in so many ways. Indonesia did many things throughout the last 30 years, including the Vietnam period and other sensitive periods, in support of U.S. interests, at the request of the U.S. government, that would be above and beyond the expected in a normal relationship. So we've profited immensely in a number of ways - economic, commercial, political, strategic - from our association with Indonesia, but here we stand now, in 1997, perhaps toward the sunset of the Suharto era, at a time when Southeast Asia, and specifically Indonesia, has gone through an economic meltdown that is associated with the structural type of economies and crony capitalism and this sort of thing. And I think, looking back, we also have to ask ourselves whether we have been able to maintain the necessary sort of political distance from that government in order to be sure that we were correctly assessing and shaping U.S. interests at all times.

Q: What about it, when you arrived there and first took a look at it? You immersed yourself in oil

economics and all, but before we look at developments there, let's look at how you looked at the structure of the government. Was the Indonesian government dealing with its oil program well at that time, or was it just sort of being enhanced because there was oil there?

TAYLOR: It's a complicated answer. In the first instance, Indonesia had pioneered a unique method, at the time, of partnership with the much-needed foreign expertise and companies. That was called a "production-sharing" arrangement. Basically, sovereignty over the natural resource was retained by the government of Indonesia at the same time that contractual conditions were fashioned as incentives that enticed foreign oil companies, and especially American oil companies, into the country in a big way to promote development and ultimately to promote production. Indonesia had gone through a huge wave of that, based on those unique contractual features, and had established a very sizable production base by the time I had arrived. What was missing at the time was a system, a professional system of deep expertise within Indonesia itself and an honest public administration with which to administer its responsibilities with respect to the foreign oil companies. Things had gotten a little bit out of control there (and I'm sure they had elsewhere) during the first oil price run-up, when money simply rained down on these systems, and then prices had retreated, and the system was in a bit of disarray. The chief Indonesian entrepreneur and head of the State Oil Company had come in to disrepute for some of his handling of this money, and he was being shuffled offstage and new people were being brought on stage, and it was a country that was in the process of developing a liquefied natural gas industry as a complement to its oil-exporting capacity. That was quite exciting, but what really took it off again was the second oil price run-up, and it needed that sort of a kick-start.

Q: That was what? Seventy-

TAYLOR: '79.

Q: As you were looking at this, what were you looking at, really, as the petroleum officer?

TAYLOR: Well, first, several things. It's hard to believe today, but at that time the American embassy was the world's finest source of accurate and timely information on the Indonesian petroleum industry. It was even more accurate than the Indonesian sources, and so everyone who cared, whether they were in Washington or in London or in Jakarta, about the condition of the Indonesian petroleum industry relied upon the American embassy's petroleum officer, whose networks of contacts and information was better and larger than just about anyone else's. So there was almost an interesting global infrastructure of people and organizations who, for some reason, cared about the Indonesian petroleum industry that that petroleum officer position networked with and was in constant touch with. And kind of the epitome of that was an annual petroleum report drafted by that officer, which was just an incredible international bestseller.

That report kind of summarized, in an unclassified way, what we knew at the embassy about the condition of the Indonesian petroleum sector. I know that in the month that it was due, which was always April, I would receive calls at the end of March until it was actually out, whatever date it happened to come out, from all over the world - just scores of calls - saying, "Is it out?" and "We need it immediately." There were from universities, from companies, from governments. So that was one interesting aspect of it, that the condition of the world economy and the global

information system at that time was such that a country like Indonesia, with a major petroleum industry, really didn't have an accurate analytical or even informational base beyond what the American embassy was providing.

Now we used that information base and that network of contacts to promote U.S. interests in a variety of ways, but particularly in promoting U.S. commercial interests, to be sure that American companies got it. I'm a great believer in free and fair trade, but only if I can't bias it toward American companies. Indonesia was a system that was not free and fair, and so in that system I played as hard as I could to be sure that American companies, American businesses, American workers got the benefit of what was going on in Indonesia, and got and inside track on contracts and on projects. And that ranged from providing advance information - giving information to American companies first - all the way through the critical decision process, in which we help the company executives obtain appointments with Indonesia decision makers and sometimes, when push came into shove, I would go in, or if it took more, the Ambassador would go in and see the minister or even higher and really advocate as hard as we could to make sure an American company got a shot at it.

Q: Were you looking at what became very evident in the last year, when the Indonesian meltdown came, which other Asian countries have gone through but Indonesia seems to be almost the worst case of bad loans, cronyism? Were we looking at the fact that Suharto's family members were all of a sudden very wealthy people and that Suharto's daughter and others were getting a significant share of the product. Was that a case of interest at that time?

TAYLOR: I guess the answer is a little bit. From the perspective I had, there were two issues that I took on directly. They didn't relate to this. The first was when I arrived the conventional wisdom within Indonesia and internationally, including the oil companies, was that Indonesia was about to run out of oil exporting capacity, and this judgment was reached by an analysis that extrapolated a then current decline in production capacity against a rapidly growing domestic consumption curve that was going to cross in a few years and leave this country to be a net oil importer. The World Bank subscribed to that. Important parts of the U.S. government did. The IMF did. I felt this was wrong, and it was one of these fallacies of extrapolation in a situation that was more complicated. So I took that on analytically. The second was to try to assess and analyze the growing importance of Indonesia's LNG industry as a foreign exchange earner.

Q: LNG?

TAYLOR: Liquefied natural gas. And the international community that assessed Indonesia's financial stature, its growth capacities, its economic prognosis, in other words, had totally missed the very rapid buildup of the natural gas industry and its translation of production into a liquefied natural gas export capacity, which was going to be a very huge foreign exchange earner as well. So that was kind of a second analytical task I took on in order to provide what I thought was a more reasonable, realistic, and objective assessment of the economic health of the country, which at that time, hinged substantially on its hydrocarbon sector.

Now after the second oil price run-up, it is true that the Economic Section where I worked, including work that I did, reported fairly steadily on the way the rent income generated out of that

second oil price run-up was being corrupted and misused and mismanaged and that that was associated with the kind of crony capitalist nature of the system. But I have to say, all in all, at that time, that it was a more informational middle-level issue, that that was not an issue that dominated the senior agenda or senior policy-makers' attention. It was something they were aware of, something they were interested in, but it didn't seem critical at the time, and I guess the fact that it's all coming to a head here now, 17 years later, indicates that they were right - it wasn't that critical at the time.

Q: Well, of course, too, it was a reflection of what had been going on in Japan for years. I mean, this close relationship between banks and projects and all, so this all of a sudden came to a head, really, in 1997-98.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: What about the problems in the fuel area with corruption as far as American firms were concerned.

TAYLOR: In my experience, there were some very small American entrepreneurs, one or two, niched in around the edges, that were probably operating in gray areas. I knew who they were in general, but they didn't come to the embassy very often. They were part of the background environment that I worked in, and I would hear about them second-hand or see them at a distance - and they were after a quick buck. The companies that were really there, established to do business and to develop the country, the big petroleum and oil service companies, were not involved in corrupt practices or shady dealings, and they took very seriously their legal and ethical responsibilities under U.S. law, which included the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, at that time, and including in most of these big companies - the Duponts and the Shells and the Mobils and the Exxons and so forth - a corporate code of ethics that governed how they operated as well. Now, in order to get things done in Indonesia, they and everyone else had to use middlemen, contractors, and how the contractors got the job done is... I mean, we all know how they got it done. But I have to tell you, this wasn't massive bribery or corruption. This was employing a middleman to get your rig out of harbor, and, you know, it cost you thousands of dollars a day to have that thing tied up in the harbor, and I don't know how the middleman got it out, but I bet he paid \$50 to a customs official. Well, I mean, that is just the grease on the wheels of progress -

Q: Services rendered.

TAYLOR: -but they had to do it through middlemen. They couldn't pay the \$50, and they wouldn't pay the \$50, but they would hire a customs broker, who would go and somehow get the rig out. But to their credit, they would establish a fair basis for the service, and that's what they would pay, on an international standard, on reasonable standard. They did not inflate, they did not put into the remuneration to the middleman room for bribery or corruption. How the middleman got it done out of a fair rate, they didn't look at, but they paid what they deemed to be an international and fair rate.

Q: What about other competitors, not Americans, the British, Dutch, Danish who were in Indonesia? How did that work?

TAYLOR: Well, they were all there. They were all scrambling, and especially around these oil price run-ups in '73 and then again in '79 and '80, because the money was raining down and opportunity was golden everywhere. We had a big advantage because the American embassy was staffed to support this sector and had a position dedicated to doing it. Most of the other embassies relied on us totally for the information base. They were some of that set of eager customers for the petroleum report. They would come to my office, it seemed like every day. One year I was there I counted the number of people I briefed, as the embassy's petroleum officer, in a single year, and I'm counting one meeting, whether there was one person there or 10 or 20. I'm not counting 20 people as 20 times. Single meetings. And that year I had over 400 briefings on the Indonesia petroleum sector, just to give you an idea of the intensity of interest and the total paucity of sources that had any expertise or knowledge on current developments. And the international companies, the other international presence there, the embassies, the World Bank, the IMF, were a big part of that constant set of briefings. And their companies there were constantly complaining what an advantage the American companies had because their embassy was staffed to support them. And that was especially true of the French.

Q: Well, looking it in sort of mega-economic terms, when the '79 price tidal wave hit, was it the feeling that, yes, lots of money was going to Indonesia, but actually we were coming out ahead on the thing because the money had to be invested somewhere, and it was mainly going to the United States, or how did we feel about that?

TAYLOR: Well, it was certainly a boon for the American petroleum industry, in a way, but I don't think any of us thought that oil price spikes like that were good for the kind of international economy we wanted to see in place. It was so disruptive and so distorting. But fortunately the second price run-up was so severe that it did set in motions counterbalancing and self-correcting forces, and as you know, today on an inflation-adjusted basis, gasoline has never been cheaper. So that was kind of the last hurrah of those who thought we were running out of oil and that prices would continuously trend up in real terms.

Q: When you arrived, where in the supply side did Indonesia rank, as compared to Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, that sort of thing?

TAYLOR: Well, nowhere near the big Gulf producers, but quite a nice, sizable secondary-level producer. They exported more than Algeria and those kinds of countries. And very important player in the Pacific basin and particularly with respect to Japan and to the West Coast of the United States as well.

Q: What about the Japanese? Were they trying to corral Indonesia sort of into their market? I mean, they tried to do it once. I mean, World War II, as far as we're concerned, a major cause was Japan wanting to grab Indonesian oil. And I was wondering what was happening now some 30 years later.

TAYLOR: Well, Japanese businessmen were quite aggressive in Indonesia at the time, and I'm sure they continue to be. American companies dominated the petroleum sector, though. Japanese companies were there in small amounts, but they weren't then and aren't now competitive, in

terms of their services or their capabilities with the international oil industry, which is dominated by, you know, a set of American companies.

Q: What about the impact of the oil companies. I'm not talking about the money impact that hit the higher branches of government, but out in the field, because you put a crew into a place, and oil people, the roustabouts, the oil crews are not the most sophisticated group of people. It's rough, dangerous, hard work. Was this a problem?

TAYLOR: Not generally. There were one or two cases. There was an important problem where the leadership of the local international company broke down, and itself lost control, lost control of itself and created some local problems. By and large, though, many of the newly discovered Indonesian fields, the ones that were discovered in the '60s and '70s, were in kind of isolated areas, and the traditional practice of the international oil companies was to bring in those workers on rigs offshore or onshore, work them straight for 30 days and then give them 30 days off with a ticket anywhere they wanted in the world, and they just showed up again a month later. So they really didn't have the discretionary free time to relate to the local community. They worked full-time when they were there, and when they weren't working, they weren't there. And it just went 30 days on and 30 days off.

Now there was a very sizable, longstanding production capacity in Sumatra, a Caltex production, where over decades there had been built up a foreign presence living cheek by jowl with an Indonesian presence. That was extremely well managed, I think, by international standards. Obviously, there are cultural and other challenges always in a situation like that. That can't be eliminated, but in terms of managing them in a decent and sensitive way, I think the company had come to do that and had finally gotten to the point where it was even able to make an Indonesian the head of the local company, as opposed to constantly bringing in an expatriate to do that. I think that was an important watershed in that particular company's evolution.

Q: Were there any disputed areas? Did we get involved in any? The borders of Malaysia with Vietnam?

TAYLOR: Yes, there were a few. They were mainly offshore. Push never came to shove while I was there. I used to write reports about those areas and what the Indonesians thought of them, what the American companies thought of them as prospective production or exploration sites, and to try to sort of give a heads up if the Indonesians or the American industry were trying to push for action or decisions in any of those areas. It turned out that that was mainly informational, and there was never any conflict while I was here in any of those regions.

Q: How were relations with Indonesia and Malaysia and Brunei and all that?

TAYLOR: Well, they were okay by the time I got there. Some of those earlier, really difficult and even bloody sets of relationships had been overcome, and a sort of stability had set in over the borders, and the relationship. So there was that legacy still to deal with. It was still in people's minds and recent. But it was at that time accepted as being history and not part of the future.

Q: How about the Chinese community? Did they play much of a role there?

TAYLOR: Oh, they were critical on the economic side. On the banking side and the entrepreneurial side they dominate the Indonesian economy.

Q: Were we sort of keeping an eye out for if it seemed like a pogrom may be starting? I mean, was this a concern of ours?

TAYLOR: Yes, especially given the experiences in 1965 and the clear understanding of the importance and the uniqueness of the Chinese community in Indonesia, that was something the embassy always had its eye on and was sensitive to.

Q: Well, were there any, sort of, crises that hit you or the embassy during this time?

TAYLOR: I don't know that there were crises; there were just huge sets of exciting opportunities associated with developments in the petroleum sector, opportunities for American companies, major projects, and it was a window, I have to say - a very good window for us - into the decision and thinking processes of OPEC, which today doesn't seem to be too important, but in those days people thought it was critical. And we did an awful lot of reporting using that window on decisions being made elsewhere or thoughts about decisions that were being considered elsewhere in the oil-exporting world but based on information that we had got in Jakarta.

Q: You say trade opportunities. Your trade opportunities would be: they need another drilling rig here, or they need -

TAYLOR: A lot of major project opportunities - refineries, petrochemical facilities, LNG export facilities, LNG tankers - huge project opportunities associated with the petroleum sector.

Q: Well, would you find yourself in the position of going out and flagging a project? Who would it be, the Department of Commerce, or would you let it be through your contacts in the petroleum world and-

TAYLOR: No, we did it. FCS wasn't in existence then, and we did the commercial work at the time. And, again, on the petroleum side of the house, it was a very high priority because the projects were so big, the money was so big, and the scale of U.S. interests - the Bechtels, the Fluors, all of the big engineering companies and capital equipment, shipbuilding, you know, General Dynamics - they all wanted a piece of that action, so it was a big part of our work.

Q: Did you find American companies at this level responsive to the desires of Indonesia?

TAYLOR: Yes, these were world-class companies going after world-class projects, and the big players knew they had to give good value and good service. What they were interested in was making sure they got a fair shake in an environment where things were not always transparent.

Q: How did you find yourself fitting into the Economic Section? I would think that, you know, what you were doing would attract 400 interviews in a year.

TAYLOR: I'm sure some of my colleagues thought I fitted in a bit awkwardly, but what I can tell you is that the leadership of the section really understood the importance of it. More importantly, the leadership of the embassy did, and I think the Ambassador and the DCM both gave me a lot of running room and expected me to take advantage of it because my contacts were their contacts, both on the Indonesian side - I dealt directly with the minister, the head of the state oil company, all of the decision makers (so did the DCM and the Ambassador, usually in a different way), and I knew personally and very well - just see-you-every-week, come-to-my-home-I-go-to-your-home basis - the head of every American petroleum company in the country, and those were the ambassador's and the DCM's contacts as well, and I think they wanted to be sure that the embassy was being effective with that set of influential and important contacts.

Q: What about over the years by this time the educational infrastructure of Indonesia - that's the wrong term, but in other words, where were people in the ministries and all getting their expertise, and where were they being trained?

TAYLOR: All over the world. All over the world. A large number of them, in the United States, some in Germany or Holland, some in Japan (relatively few), but they had a good international exposure, and the set of officials, the key officials there, were capable global actors. The problem is that they weren't deep, and you'd have one or two people that could think and act on a kind of a global level, but there was no follow-through. They weren't deep enough to have organizations and professional systems that could follow through at that level of decision making or leadership, and so things tended to go bad fairly quickly. Even though it sounded as though the meeting or the decision had gone your way, a month or two later it seemed to be chaos, and you couldn't quite understand how we had gotten from what we thought was a clear and important kind of decision to a place where we couldn't see any relationship to what we had understood.

Q: You mentioned this tremendous contrast between the people being wealthy in Indonesia and the... This was during the Carter Administration, in which human rights were almost a major focus, anyway, and I'm sure human rights included the right to be -

TAYLOR: Rich.

Q: -the right to be rich and the right to use one's money as one wanted or something like that.

TAYLOR: Right, to have a job and to participate in the economy.

Q: Did that come in?

TAYLOR: You know, I didn't see it much from my vantage in the embassy. I certainly knew about the human rights emphasis of the Carter Administration. It was quite controversial and important within the State Department itself, and I remember reading cables from other posts about the visit of Pat Darien and other important people in that initiative, but I don't remember anything that dramatic happening in Indonesia, although it well could have because you had the East Timor issue, you had an issue of prisoners being held in conditions and for a long time stemming from the 1960s and not clear what the basis of that might be. So there was a whole host - and you had a system that, however benevolent it might have been at the time and however much we found ways

to cooperate with it, was clearly not democratic in our sense of the word. So there are all sorts of potential entry points for this human rights emphasis, and maybe the Ambassador or the political counselor of the time would remember episodes about that that I don't, but it didn't touch me in many ways.

We did get into an incipient environmental issue, which I thought was really important, and that was about the impact of developing these massive liquefied natural gas facilities up at the tip of Sumatra, in a place called Aceh. And I remember thinking at the time that I wasn't necessarily too pleased with myself for pushing the American company position as strongly as I did. I kept thinking, But you know, there are environmental consequences to this that I don't understand, but the environmental groups couldn't send people to my office or to the embassy. They were back in the U.S. If they knew about it at all it was a marginal issue to them, and of course, the companies could send - and did send - scores of very powerful lawyers and engineers and executives to explain why their position was the right one. And I was thinking, We've really got an asymmetry here between our understanding of the company's position and our understanding of environmental issues. But at that time, kind of international environmental projects and consequences were not yet a big part of American foreign policy. You know, if that same issue had materialized last year, probably Tim Wirth would have been standing in the embassy having something to say about it.

Q: *He's the under secretary for-*

TAYLOR: -global affairs.

Q: *-global affairs.*

TAYLOR: And the environment was one of those "global affairs." But at the time, that simply was not much of a factor.

Q: *Well, you left there in 1980.*

TAYLOR: Yes.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
Principal Officer
Medan (1978-1981)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by

Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Then you went to Medan and you were there from when to when?

LA PORTA: We were in Medan from 1978 to 1981.

Q: This is the 2nd of June, 2004. At the end of the last session you went to Medan, all of a sudden I thought that you were at one of those posts on the coast of Mexico, but that's not right.

LA PORTA: Almost, but the way the Medan assignment came about is kind of interesting because I had a friend who was back here on the Indonesia desk. He was deputy director and there was a situation that developed in Indonesia where somebody departed Jakarta early, then the consul in Medan, Harriett Isom was sent down to Jakarta. My friend Dan Sullivan called me up kind of in the middle of the night. Dan said, "Well, Al, you really don't want to go to Australia do you?" I had orders to go from Ankara to Canberra where I was supposed to be a political military officer and he said, "Well, wouldn't you rather be principal officer in Medan because Harriett is going to Jakarta?" I said, instantly I said, "Absolutely, let's do it." My wife had one question, is there a school for the kids, because both of our children were getting close to school age. Dan came back and said, yes, indeed there is an international school and that's how that assignment came about.

Q: Then what was Medan, what was the situation on Sumatra when you got there? This was in '79.

LA PORTA: It was late summer '78.

Q: Oh, '78.

LA PORTA: '78, yes. Medan was one of the mostly neglected cities outside Jakarta in the sense that in North Sumatra you had a strong indigenous Chinese population (maybe 20% in the city itself) and these Chinese were largely unassimilated. You also had a mixture of Malay, Acehnese and Batak some of whom were Christian, some of whom were Muslim. It was quite a melting pot in its own way.

Q: The Batak were what?

LA PORTA: The Batak are the indigenous people in North Sumatra. They settled around Lake Toba which is one of the world's second or third largest freshwater lakes. They were partially Christianized by the Lutherans in the 1880s and 1890s. Other Batak tribes closer to the coast were Islamicized by traders and itinerant preachers. The Batak are legendary for their war fighting prowess and they don't take kindly to people who are not friendly to them. It is very interesting culturally because they are about as unJavanese as you can be for being in the same country. In Medan in North Sumatra we had a wonderful window on Indonesia in the sense you had very strong Muslims and secessionists in Aceh to the North, you also had coastal Malays along the coast. The Eastern shore of Sumatra is mostly mangrove swamp and there's a very gentle plain, very wide rivers and interestingly lots of oil and gas there. In the interior it's heavily forested. Along about the '70s and into the '80s you had plantation agriculture really taking off. They had grown rubber in North Sumatra and Central Sumatra for oh, at least 70 or 80 years, but palm oil

was just in its infancy. Under the Suharto government's transmigration program, which brought migrants from heavily populated Java to remote areas, plantation agriculture really took off.

The western coast of Sumatra was mountainous, rugged and notable mainly for the home of the Minangkabau people who are ethnically Malay, but a matrilineal society. Further South on the West coast of Sumatra you had the province of Bengkulu, or as it used to be called in the early 19th century Bencoulen. There were about a dozen years when Bengkulu was a colony of the British who swapped territory with the Dutch to retain rights to Singapore. During the time of Sir Stamford Raffles, the viceroy, the British built a rather imposing fort in Bengkulu. It's kind of an interesting place in a historical sense.

Southern Sumatra is largely lowlands, swamps, some areas that are suitable for rice culture. Off Southeast Sumatra you have the tin mining areas of Bangka, several islands and where there are still are the largest tin mines in the world. Our consular district included two other important areas. One was Kalimantan, the Indonesian provinces of West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan, which formed two-thirds of the island of Borneo with Sarawak and Sabah being incorporated into Malaysia. In Kalimantan you had another odd mixture of populations, the Dayaks, or Ibans as they're known in Malaysia, who are forest dwelling people, live in long houses, have a very distinctive hunting and gathering tradition. Along the coast you had various populations of Madurese settlers from Madura off the Java coast. You also had Buginese from Sulawesi and you had ethnic Malays who streamed into most of the coastal areas. Kalimantan was important in two respects: the greatest output of forest products is from Kalimantan, and natural gas. Today Chevron and others have very well established gas fields there.

The other second big part of our consular district outside of Sumatra was the sea space between Kalimantan and Sumatra. It's like a big funnel, almost triangular in nature with Singapore sitting at the top and the Southern end of the Maluku Straits at the bottom. You had a large expanse of sea with the Natuna Islands in the far North, and to the Northeast you had the Spratly Islands. The Natuna Islands likewise were a locus for oil and natural gas development in the late '70s, continuing to today. There is also an industrial enclave at Batam Island which is basically a half an hour by air from Singapore. Batam is becoming a manufacturing center; goods are manufactured in Indonesia and sent out through Singapore. The other thing that Batam was famous for was the site for the refugee camps for the inflow from Cambodia and Vietnam. When the boat people took off they headed South. Usually if they were pushed off from the Malaysian coast, which many of them were, they found their way to Batam and some of the Indonesian islands. By the late '70s there was a significant refugee population on Galang Island, near Batam where the U.S. processing center was located, and you also had refugee camps in some other areas. All in all it was a very varied area. Lots of interest. Lots of things to do. Needed lots of time to travel to these areas. One of our big challenges was covering the consular district.

Q: I would think given what you've said about Sumatra that the attraction of Singapore would be a lot greater than of Jakarta.

LA PORTA: Absolutely. It was easier for us to go 45 minutes by air to Singapore or 40 minutes by air to Penang in Malaysia than it was for us to travel an hour and a half to Jakarta.

Q: But I also would think that the population, the business elites and all this, Singapore is a really big trading place. Indonesia was...

LA PORTA: It was a hinterland. It was a market, but it was also an entrepôt for natural commodities.

Q: Was there undue political influence coming out of Singapore or not or was there an interest there?

LA PORTA: There were hangovers from the Konfrontasi during the Sukarno era and also some overtones of Singapore-Malaysian frictions. By the late '70s most of the concerns centered on smuggling and illegal migration, because of the attraction of the relatively more prosperous areas in Malaysia along the coast, especially the West Coast of the Malay Peninsula as well as Singapore. High economic growth rates in Malaysia, due to construction, natural resource and agricultural development, were a magnet for poor Indonesians who found their way across the straits in small boats. Even today you have a mini-immigration crisis going on between Indonesia and Malaysia. Malaysia always wanted to deport or exile Indonesians who found their way over and at various points in time they herded Indonesians into camps. That kind of thing is bound to cause frictions.

Other issues were by and large manageable except you still have today the lingering rivalries and suspicions among Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia that don't always make for a very happy family and certainly inhibit cooperation.

Q: Given that, how big was the consulate?

LA PORTA: We had six American officers. We had a consular officer, who also had other duties in the political realm. We had a political-econ officer. We had a PAO. We had an administrative officer. There was myself. Later we got a dedicated political officer.

Q: How heavy did the writ of our embassy in Jakarta rest on your post?

LA PORTA: Not very much. I think that the fact that I had known and served with both the ambassador and DCM helped.

Q: Who were?

LA PORTA: Ed Masters was the ambassador and Paul Gardner was the DCM. It certainly made it easier to have known them during my first tour in Jakarta. Harriett Isom, who had been a friend from other posts, was the political counselor. We had good working relationships with the embassy and we had a good base of understanding with USAID and with the public affairs people in USIS. We had a very energetic, brilliant branch PAO, Dr. Frank Jenista, who is now retired and is a professor in Ohio. He served several times in the Philippines. We had a very dynamic public affairs program. On the AID side we had a group of 15 to 25 contractors working on various projects including port development, a road project up toward the North Sumatra-Aceh border. We

had a provincial area development program. We had Save the Children Foundation that was doing feeding and small village development work up in Aceh. And we had several other projects, such as a fisheries project that was a very good one.

My approach was to draw all of these people into dialogue with the consulate, make friends with them and with USAID. We had a very good relationship. In fact, while I was there we sponsored two conferences of donors, including project people from the multilateral agencies as well as bilateral donors. We talked for a couple of days about problems of project administration, how to deal with the provincial governments in Sumatra, and exchanged experiences. It was a good exercise in what I would call development diplomacy.

Q: What were the relations first with sort of the American community there, the oil, the missionary?

LA PORTA: We had about 2,000 Americans in the immediate North Sumatra area including Aceh, especially Southern Aceh where Mobil Oil was heavily engaged in gas field development. They had their regional headquarters and logistical base in Medan. Their families populated the international school. They were extremely generous in the work that they did in the community and for the most part they had very healthy working relations with the Indonesian side. It was a little dicey in Aceh at that point in the late '70s because of the lingering Aceh separatist movement. There were small bandit-type groups, three to seven or eight people, operating in Mobil's concession area trying to promote the Acehnese independence movement with the objective of getting control of the Mobil Oil assets.

That insurgency continues today and indeed its grown larger, but by and large these are pretty much discredited people who simply want to make a land and resource grab for their own glorification in the name of establishing Acehnese self government and identity at the very tip of North Sumatra. Then as now the majority of the Acehnese are victims of this. They're not necessarily active supporters and the insurgency is confined, as it was then, to about six districts mostly in Southeastern and Eastern Aceh. Also, then as now, the Acehnese and Indonesians in general are not helped by a poor record of governance in Aceh. In Aceh, when there has been more honest and better government, there was usually a decline in separatist activity and popular support for the Free Aceh terrorists. On the other hand, over the long span of years, the record of governance in Aceh has not been very commendable and fueled the insurgency.

Q: How did you find, how about of the role of Jakarta to the government there? How did you find dealing with them?

LA PORTA: I found the rule of Jakarta was not very heavy handed, although the central government kept a grip on finances and the security mechanisms. One of Sukarno's great contributions was creation of the unitary state. Central power and administration was exercised in several ways. The central government ministries had their own offices established in each province. Those ran all of the government programs – health, education, transportation, etc. The interior ministry had its representatives, usually for citizenship affairs. Then each province had an appointed governor who had his own administration for local affairs. In fact the provincial governments were quite benign and not bad to deal with. There was also a regional military

command under a three-star general for Sumatra and the sea space to the East and there were subordinate naval and air force commands. The central armed forces structure was perpetuated on the regional basis; then down to the provincial level. Army units are found right down into the village level where there is a security post in every settlement of any significant size.

By and large political activity was pretty calm during those years. In other words, there was no...not too much evidence of discontent with the Suharto administration. Politically, people were grouped into the parties dictated by the central government: a secularist party, a nationalist party and a religious party. There were government sanctioned labor and mass organizations, more benign than in Sukarno's time, as well as youth groups. There were large populations of students who were pretty calm, except when it came to certain causes. For example, when something bad happened in Palestine we knew that the students would be at the gates of the consulate. Likewise during the Iranian crisis in 1978-1979 a large body of the Muslim population in North Sumatra considered the U.S. to be anti-Islamic and they picked up on all of the Ayatollah rhetoric. Except for that kind of activism, there were few displays of political dissent and things were reasonably settled.

Q: Who cranked up these demonstrations?

LA PORTA: In Jakarta there reportedly were some official elements who would be behind the demonstrations. We knew there were certain activist mosques that could be triggered very rapidly to conduct a march on the embassy or to conduct a demonstration. In Medan, it was a little less automatic and a little more spontaneous. During the Iranian crisis period we made a lot of effort to reach out to professors at the Islamic University, the student organizations, and to the university administrations to keep lines of communication open. We also made sure that they were included in programs we sponsored. If we had speakers we could direct them out to those audiences and so forth.

In North Sumatra there were a number of different universities. There was the state university, the University of North Sumatra (USU). You had Nommensen University, which was a Protestant university named after the Lutheran pastor who was the first western missionary among the Bataks. Then there was a smallish Catholic University, as well as two large Islamic institutions: UISU, the Islamic University of North Sumatra, and the IAIN or State Islamic Studies Institute in North Sumatra. They were like the tertiary level Islamic universities found in all of the major areas of Indonesia. USIU was private but the IAIN was run by the government Ministry of Religious Affairs..

Q: At that time were we monitoring or aware of what was being taught in Islamic schools? Because, now at the turn of the century, this has become quite an issue all over because of the anti-Christian, anti-American studies that have been done. I was wondering whether those were issues at all at this time.

LA PORTA: Teaching in Islamic schools reflected a continuing radical strain in Islam that is traceable back to the early 1920's. At that time, several religious groups developed a fundamentalist body of teachings that advocated imposition of Sharia law and state organization instead of secularism. Part of this was directed against the Dutch colonial power, later it was

directed against Sukarno's unitary secular state. In West Sumatra in the late 1950's and early 1960's, there was what was called the PRRI Permesta rebellion in which Islamic state advocates, known as Darul Islam, made an attempt to seize power and secede from the Indonesian state. They were crushed. Unfortunately the United States was caught trying to suborn and support some of the dissident elements and it was not a happy period.

The United States' role in messing around with Islamic extremists in Indonesia was one that was not an enviable record. There has always been a radical, if not violent, strain in the Islam in Indonesia. By and large this is not mainstream, but it is confined to generally remote, what we call pondok schools or pesantrens that are isolated, deprived, cater to the poorest elements in society. This is where Islamic extremism today is manifested as a result of al-Qaeda and its ilk.

In 1981 a small group from a mosque in South Sumatra hijacked a Garuda airlines plane, flew it to Bangkok and made demands. The plane sat on the runway and a lot of people were held hostage on that airliner. After about three days of standoff with the Thai police who would not attack the plane, the Thai invited the Indonesians to send up a SWAT team of army special forces to do that. They did. They killed all of the perpetrators. I do not recall whether other sympathizers rounded up in South Sumatra or other actions taken against that particular school and mosque in that area remote area of South Sumatra, but it was a good example of how small groups of people can get big ideas even unconnected with international conspiracies.

Q: Had the communist movement pretty well dried up?

LA PORTA: The communist movement had been basically smashed. In North Sumatra, there were about 3,000 political prisoners, a few hundred of whom were actually in detention, but the others were living in the community under supervised detention. Those ex-PKI cadres were all, over time, convicted by either a military court or civilian court; they were deprived of their civil liberties; they had special I.D. cards; and they were watched very carefully. They had to report regularly to the army authorities in their areas. The detainees were not a big issue in North Sumatra although some of the more prominent PKI people who were exiled to the outer islands did succeed in writing and publishing books, and otherwise were unrepentant. Today, and only recently in the last several months, have the ex-PKI detainees been fully "rehabilitated" and their civil liberties restored.

Q: What about the Chinese? You mentioned there's a big hunk of unassimilated Chinese.

LA PORTA: The Chinese community in Medan was fascinating because, unlike most Chinese communities in Java, the Chinese were pretty much unassimilated. Many of them did not speak Indonesian. Many of them just knew only Chinese and were literate only in Chinese. This lack of assimilation has pretty much died out, I might add, but the Chinese community in Medan then and now still arouses some suspicion for its Chineseness. Under Sukarno the writing and teaching of Chinese was prohibited, you could not have signboards in Chinese. You were allowed to have shrines, but nothing approaching public displays of religion. The lion dance done at holiday times was prohibited and you did not have Chinese schools except that students were allowed to study Chinese on a tutorial basis. This was a concession granted to a few of the larger Chinese communities in the country. The Chinese in Medan were largely Hokkien Chinese from the

Southeast coast of China, some Fujianese and from also from Hainan Island. They were purely commercial. Some did gravitate into the professions and we had good friends who were Chinese doctors and lawyers. By and large the Chinese were the commercial class in Medan, as well as in Aceh and in the interior.

One of the unfortunate aspects is that when there were times of political or economic stress, it's the Chinese who bear the brunt of the complaints and violence perpetrated for political reasons. Sometimes a shop would be torched; sometimes there would be things written on the sides of a building; sometimes people would be threatened; or robberies would occur directed at the Chinese. These were always a source of great concern for the government that simply wanted to keep things tamped down.

Q: What were things like on I don't want to call it Borneo, but whatever.

LA PORTA: Kalimantan is the current name for Borneo.

Q: Kalimantan. Was that, did you have much to do with that or was that sort of the back of beyond?

LA PORTA: It was almost the back of beyond, because with such a small consulate staff it was difficult to be able to travel there regularly. I tried to visit all of the provinces in Kalimantan twice a year and that was a stretch because the airline connections were just difficult. My officers probably went to Kalimantan maybe once a year, less frequently than I did. We had this huge consular territory and the large embassy in Jakarta wasn't traveling. It would be hard to get them out of the capital.

Q: I'm surprised in a way that they didn't take over Kalimantan themselves.

LA PORTA: Well, how to divide up the consular districts more efficiently, had been a matter for discussion over many years, but I think that the embassy always, even when I was serving there in the '60s, felt it was "so busy" that it was very hard to travel other than to the Eastern Islands, which covered the Moluccas (Maluku) and the Celebes (Sulawesi) and Papua. Today the consulate in Surabaya has jurisdiction over the Celebes, but other areas are still covered from Jakarta. Part of the problem is where the airlines go; back in the '70s, for example, the airline frequency to most of the capitals in Borneo/Kalimantan was not very great. Sometimes a couple of times a week, so you'd have to go to, let's say, Samarinda and do your business and then wait for a couple of days in order to get a flight to someplace else. You couldn't go from let's say from Samarinda to Balikpapan except for maybe one day a week. The communications within these areas were not easy either. The mid to late '70s and the early '80s showed a tremendous revolution in electronic communications, television and airline communications in terms of growth. Everyday there were new airline routes being opened up. Smaller airlines were coming in and flying. There were new airports being built or other airports being redeveloped. It was significant that you could be sitting out on Natuna Island out in the South China Sea and get Indonesian television. I think that arrived, by recollection, in 1980 or 1981. Those were big steps.

Q: Oh, I'm sure. Well, did you get involved at all over the Spratly problem and Vietnamese and

Chinese, they had a claim on that.

LA PORTA: Oh, yes. Well, this was a nervous thing and the Indonesians' general inclination was to stay as far away as they could from the dispute and not take sides. They didn't want to anger China, but on the other hand they didn't want to anger their ASEAN colleagues either. They were afraid that these territorial claims would extend to the Natuna Island chain as it did in various ways in various times. There were areas where you had conflicting or overlapping claims between Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia and occasionally over small islands belonging to Singapore and Malaysia in the Southern reaches of the Strait of Malacca.

Q: Did you get involved and was piracy a problem, the Malacca Straits and all that now is a hotbed of small, well maybe even wide scale pirates.

LA PORTA: Small scale piracy is endemic to the area and its mainly borne of human and goods smuggling, whether from Southern Thailand to Singapore or across the Strait between Singapore and Sumatra or from Malaysia to Northern Sumatra. I'll be an iconoclast on this issue and I'll say that the bogeyman of piracy has been magnified to a proportion to equate that with terrorism. I don't think that that's justified. Piracy as an excuse for military action as now being proposed by some is not. It's an excuse; it's not a real problem. There are self defense measures that ships in the Malacca Strait can avail themselves of. There are other protections such as sea patrolling and other measures that can be taken. Yes, all of this could be more effective, but don't forget it's usually officials on both sides on the Strait of Malacca that have a vested interest in the illegal trade and it's the illegal trade that generally results in piracy.

Q: All right, you get down to what were some of the main activities and concerns at your post? This was '80?

LA PORTA: '78 to '81. Right. I think that we had a concern with, for lack of a better term, the political stability, political health, political evolution of Sumatra, Kalimantan and relations with the center. That was certainly our focus from Medan. The Aceh situation, both political and economic, was I think the immediate concern with the low level insurgency and the dissident movement there. Relations with Mobil Oil were, of course, of paramount concern.

Q: On that, was it sort of let Mobil take care of it, I mean, working out its own relations?

LA PORTA: Not at all. I think we and the embassy considered that we, the U.S. government, had a great role in doing what we could to facilitate not only security arrangements for Mobil Oil, but also anything in terms of furthering community development projects in that region. We had a couple of NGOs who were involved in village development in the area around Lhok Seumaw and the other areas where Mobil Oil had its operations. We worked actively with the company management to get NGOs involved. We had the rural road project in Central Aceh, so there was more of an interrelationship than just simply leaving it to the company. The company let us know when there were problems developing, whether with the locals, with dissident elements, or with Pertamina, the state oil company.

Q: Lately, some of the same challenges that happened in parts of Nigeria and other places where

small villages near the oil fields feel that they're not getting enough benefit by these big oil companies. Everybody else is getting something from them. Did you have that problem?

LA PORTA: During my time and subsequently Mobil Oil was extremely generous in local community terms. Basically anything that was useful to do they did, and the resources involved were not great. Allowing for the fact that 80% of every nickel Mobil Oil made went back to the Indonesian government. So, very often the issue was inadequate resource transfers from Pertamina and the central government back to the localities for development purposes or other kinds of programs.

Q: Were you running across the problem of the Suharto family and others of corruption and keeping out resources that could be used for developing and ending up in their Swiss bank accounts?

LA PORTA: It began to be a problem in the early '80s. There was a joke going around that Madame Suharto was known as "Madame 10%" which was a play on her name because her first name was Tien and so everybody would kind of snicker and say, well, Madame Tien had to have her 10%. Unfortunately by the late '80s it became Madame 15%, 20% and a whole lot more for the kids. Institutionalization of the culture of malfeasance, corruption and payoffs occurred. At one point in Sumatra we did a lot of reporting on the "C" word as I call it, the corruption word. We had good relations with the AID and multilateral project people, for example, the Belawan port project outside of Medan funded by the ADB.

Q: ADB?

LA PORTA: Asian Development Bank. My good friend who was the manager of the project, and it was a very large one, said that basically about 12% of the total value of his operation was being siphoned off by either local officials or in other kickbacks to people in the bureaucracy. That was even back in 1979-80. Yes, corruption was a significant and growing problem. One cause is that the overall standard of living was still so low. You knew you would never get another letter delivered to your house unless you tipped the mailman who came around on his bicycle 100 rupiahs, or about 20 cents, for delivering the mail. Those kind of gratuities were extended just to keep things going as distinct from the grand rip-offs.

Beyond kind political stability, race relations and then Aceh, was the whole subject of human rights. This had emerged as a strong strain under the Carter administration. The system of human rights reports began about that time and we had this was the one area in which the embassy did have sensitivities about what was said and reported. We could send cables to Washington and worldwide ourselves without having to go through Jakarta or get a prior clearance unless it was a joint reporting project with somebody in Jakarta. But in the human rights area the ambassador and the DCM had sensitivities about what was being said because of the "volatile nature" of the situation back here in Washington. You never knew who your reporting was going to or who would seize on what particular issue. Human rights in Indonesia was most sensitive in the Congress after their take-over of East Timor in 1974.

Q: Washington basically, State Department on things of this nature leaves quite a bit to Congress

and all that. It's endemic.

LA PORTA: It was then and it is now.

Q: Yes.

LA PORTA: Associated somewhat with the human rights were humanitarian issues concerning the refugees. When we got a dedicated political officer he spent a great deal of his time on refugee issues, visiting the refugee camps, dealing with the refugee bureau in State, regional conferences, going to Malaysia and doing other things in Singapore, etc.

Q: What were we doing with the refugees?

LA PORTA: We were basically trying to manage the refugee flow and we were trying to contain the problem. Upwards of 15-20,000 refugees reached Indonesia and most were eventually located on Galang Island near Batam off Singapore. Our government's posture was to urge the Indonesians to do the right thing and to treat the refugees humanely, to accept programs for refugee resettlement, refugee training and indoctrination prior to their resettlement in the U.S. or elsewhere. Programs were also operated through the UNHCR and others. There were far more issues with the Malaysians because of the push-offs and some of the violence directed at refugees. The Indonesians handled the refugee problem pretty well. I visited the refugee camps myself and I daresay conditions there were far better than refugee camps that the Malaysians had on these little crops of rock off the East coast of Malaya.

Q: Were we taking the refugees or processing them?

LA PORTA: We were processing them and taking them. The refugee processing in terms of the paper work was centralized in Singapore and that's where we had INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) people to do that as well as that's where the UNHCR people were. Fortunately we didn't have much to do in the consular sense with the documentation of refugees. The political officer that we had in the consulate did serve as an interface with the Indonesian officials and on a regional basis with our people.

Q: You talk about human rights. What were the human rights problems where you were?

LA PORTA: Well, there was a layer of them. There were some human rights related issues related to the dissidents in Aceh, the government cracking down on the wrong groups, the wrong people or at various times kind of going after one or another suspect student group. I think that the human rights in the positive sense involved the development of the legal aid institutes in Medan. These were kind of the first grassroots human rights NGOs to be set up in Indonesia. The Medan Legal Aid Institute (LBH) was led by a very fine elderly lady, an activist woman lawyer, Ani Abbas Manopo was her name. We knew her quite well. My wife was a lawyer, worked with her on a number of projects, and my wife did some teaching at the University of North Sumatra law school. She also put together programs on American law for seminars, meetings and conferences. On the human rights side our issue was not only reporting on dissidents and how people were treated, but also to encourage the development of these human rights institutes.

Q: You mentioned Lembaga Hukum Indonesia, that means LDH? Which stands for what?

LA PORTA: Indonesian Law Institute.

Q: Was Indonesian law common law or Napoleonic code?

LA PORTA: Dutch.

Q: Dutch. Dutch law being?

LA PORTA: The colonial law had not evolved very much. This is one of the big issues in that the Indonesians and the court system applied archaic laws from the Dutch colonial period to a whole host of issues for which they were unsuited. Even today you have controversies that develop when the courts choose to apply Dutch law rather than newer laws, for example, concerning press freedoms or human rights standards. This is still a big issue in terms of legal reform and Indonesia today is still a long way from adequacy.

Q: Did you feel that where you were that government was being fairly well projected into these places?

LA PORTA: I certainly had the feeling of optimism on most days. I think I've said before that you woke up in the morning and say, well, do you have an optimistic feeling today or negative feeling today; as long as your optimistic days outnumbered your negative ones things were in pretty good shape, you had pretty good morale and carried on. During that period in the late '70s and through the mid '80s you had a very strong sense of what Suharto had set out to do was really occurring. His stated goals were to concentrate on grassroots development as a way of improving what he called "national resilience" that contributed to the country's overall development.

In Sumatra and to some extent in Kalimantan, every week people could see new schools being built where there was no school before, a new health center where there was none before, a new airport opening up, a new airline was flying in, telephones becoming more commonplace and expanding television to the outermost areas. All of this was happening in real time. I very much felt that here is the march of progress. The governments' investments were paying off. Yes, there were some very conservative attitudes toward political freedom and not a lot of freedom of the press, but generally the government was not behaving in a brutish and repressive way towards its population. As long as things were getting better on the economic and social side, I think there were good arguments that could be made for Suharto's rule during this period.

Q: You've been there before, did you have a feeling Indonesia was knitting together as a country? Were there any sort of movements outside of Aceh which is such a small area that might break way or something?

LA PORTA: By and large there were always local issues and the government didn't have much tolerance for local languages and ethnic rights. During Suharto's time, and to some extent under Sukarno, they wanted to homogenize everything and saw assimilation as being the path to

nationhood. I think it was certainly valid up to a certain point. As long as the government was a benign presence and the people in the government in the various instrumentalities of power did not behave in unreasonable ways or were moderate, I thought there certainly was a chance for the country to, as you put it, knit together and to really develop as a unitary state. On the other hand I think that the strains began to develop by the late '80s and early '90s when the autocratic system became rapacious in the economic sense and when there were no limits in terms of what Suharto, his cronies and his family wanted to achieve. That's when the government began to get into trouble over grandiose projects and big rip-offs.

In the late '80s and early '90s, the Suharto system began to push to extremes in terms of furthering the interests of the first family, cracking down on any dissent, and the repressive political measures began really to bite. It's a pity that the Suharto revolution lost its proper perspective during that period. At the time of our assignment in Sumatra in the late '70s there were certainly enough positive signs to outweigh the negative signs.

Q: I mean I realize it was way away from your orbit, but was East Timor, did it come up as an issue, was that something that was talked about where you were?

LA PORTA: Yes it was. Indeed, it was a matter of great U.S. government concern. The imbroglio over the repression of East Timor in 1974 and '75 and the continuing presence of the Indonesians were certainly of great concern. On the other hand, it was far away from us in Sumatra and did not intrude on us as much as it did in Jakarta. But we got the full brunt of that when I returned to Washington after Medan and after a year at the War College, when I took up my job as deputy director in the office of Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma and Singapore affairs.

Q: One of the people I've been interviewing is Dick Livingston as a consular officer in Indonesia. What about consular things? I know in Jakarta they had a number of consular problems of Americans disappearing or going off on hikes or getting stranded in sailing boats and all. How about at your place, were you in the sort of the tourist orbit?

LA PORTA: To some extent. We were on the marijuana route from Central Asia and people would come down to North Sumatra or take the small boats across to Aceh or find their way into Medan, work their way down to Jakarta and then eventually to Bali. Bali was the mecca. We had our share of disappearances. We had a couple of people who were overcome by fumes while they were hiking up one of the mountains that happened to have sulfur vents; we used to call it the "evil sulfur mountain." It was behind a little cottage that the consulate maintained to enable us to get up to the highlands and get some cool air. There was a lot of concern about tourists in Brastagi, the Lake Toba region and the Island of Samosir where they had marijuana-laced brownies and other delights. We had a serious issue with merchant seamen, one of them went bonkers and that was a nightmare. The guy kept escaping from custody and we could not find family members or others to take responsibility for him.

Q: Did you say, gee that's a consular problem and pass it on?

LA PORTA: No, we all pitched in.

Q: What happened?

LA PORTA: He was a seaman. He was an American of Cuban nationality and did not speak that much English. My wife used to take him food and things at the lockup at the public hospital. He escaped a couple of times simply by either suborning or threatening the attendants, so we had to go out and round him up and take him back until we got him repatriated. Those things were always very complex. We also had the death of a road contractor who was working on the road. He died of a massive heart attack, keeled over and was gone. A wonderful guy and we were very good friends with his wife and two daughters and it was quite a tragedy. Everybody pitched in on those cases.

There's one incident that I do want to talk about if you allow me to.

Q: Please.

LA PORTA: It was one of the lower lights of my career along with the Japanese Red Army having taken over the embassy in Kuala Lumpur, but I think it is also a story that tends to show how kind of the mindset of the military and the paranoia that anti-communism engendered in Indonesia that contributed to some not very fortunate things happened. It was late 1980, a Sunday evening and my wife and I and the kids were home. My son was six years old at the time and my daughter was ten. All of a sudden we heard a knock at the door. We didn't have any guards at the consulate residence, only a night watchman who kept an eye on the house at night when he wasn't sleeping. A soldier was at the door and he was in army uniform. Then there was a smaller man next to him in battle dress and they both had AK47s. The officer, whom I recognized as a colonel, I didn't know his name, explained that he came to our house because he wanted political asylum. At the point of a gun, moreover, he was going to make sure that we gave it to him. My wife, who tells this story in a more embellished way, said, "You can't come into my house with those guns."

We were dealing with an Indonesian who did not speak English. Fortunately my wife and I could speak the language. After some discussion, this colonel finally agreed to leave his friend with his AK47 outside. He came inside. We were trying to be as gracious as we probably could under the circumstances and I called one of our officers who lived across the street from me to come over.

After questioning this guy at length, it turned out that he had just completed a security seminar or indoctrination session in Siantar, which is a town about 40 miles from Medan and where there's a large army installation. Army officers and government officials generally were required to undergo indoctrination training periodically, sometimes every six months, sometimes more frequently, where they had to relearn the principles of Pancasila, the national ideology. The official ideology includes belief in one nation, belief in God and so forth. Pancasila was emphasized by the Suharto government to override religion and other belief systems and to supersede communism as an ideology. Some of these indoctrination sessions became quite heated and quite oppressive for the participants. This officer felt that he was being discriminated against because he was a practicing Muslim. He lived in South Sumatra and he felt that his life was in danger because other army people who hated Muslims were out to kill him. He wanted asylum in the United States for himself and his family. His family was still in South Sumatra and he had a wife and three children there. We immediately got on the phone not only to Jakarta, but also to Washington because of the AK47s involved. It was a potential terrorist incident.

Q: Well, when you get on the phone, you assume that you're bugged don't you?

LA PORTA: We did, yes. Of course, the rule is when you use the phone for immediate reporting is that you follow up as soon as you're able by an official cable so people have a complete record of what went on. That's exactly what we did. We also organized ourselves. Two officers stayed with him in our house. What was going on outside Indonesia relative to this kind of situation was also significant because in Moscow and in other places in the East Bloc the Russians were assaulting and killing some of the refuseniks – the Jews who came to the U.S. embassies to seek political asylum. Our diplomatic premises were being inundated. The embassy's and Washington's concerns were to tamp down any possible hint of a situation that would lead to violence where the Indonesian authorities would have reason to come in with guns blazing or seek to take this guy by force. We wanted to prevent that.

The situation went on for three days. My wife and the children went to another officer's house and stayed there. We kept the colonel in our house, which was at least consular property. We got in touch immediately with the local authorities. We dealt with the regional military commander, a very good man, and we persuaded him to put a security ring around the residence, but at a distance so as not to be oppressive. There were no armed people at the gate or other visible signs of a security presence. We put our own guards on the gate from the consulate and we attempted to debrief this guy as best we could.

The first night, when my wife and children were still in the house, he was there we set him up in a guest room. That night he grabbed my son and he locked himself in a bathroom with my son. My son, who could speak pretty good speaking Indonesian at the time, talked his way out of it and he let my son go. That was one of the dicier moments that we had to contend with. Right after that my wife and kids cleared out and she went over to our friend's, the PAO's, house. We kept the colonel under strict control and we rotated going back and forth to the consulate so that none of us were there with him all the time. We tried to exploit him by getting whatever information we could. We dealt with the regional military command (KOWICHAN). The embassy said that there's one other important equity and that was we weren't to make the Indonesian intelligence authorities mad at us. They had had some discussions in Jakarta with the chief of Indonesian intelligence, Benny Murdani, and Murdani accused us, me, of suborning this officer. He accused us of being CIA agents and that we were out to infiltrate the Indonesian military, so we were the ones responsible for creating this situation. Fortunately that idea was dropped, but Murdani did remember the incident when I was in West Irian (Papua) in 1969 when I was accused by the foreign ministry of consorting with rebellious elements. Murdani remembered that or went back in his files, did his name check and brought that up with the ambassador. He claimed that I had been involved in unsavory things in the past and we think he's a CIA agent. Ambassador Masters, needless to say, made all the right noises and defended me and my officers against any charges. The way we did resolve it was through a negotiation with the regional military commander and also his provincial military commander in South Sumatra who happened to be a son-in-law of President Suharto. General Tri Sutrisno later became defense minister and chief of the armed forces. It was very strange that this army colonel, who felt that his life was at risk, still trusted his commanders. He still trusted the general in charge of the regional military command and he still trusted his own commander in Palembang, South Sumatra.

What we arranged was that the regional military command would fly his wife and children up to Medan which is about an hour and a half trip, that we would reunite them and then the military would take him and his family to Jakarta to an army hospital for psychiatric evaluation. As I remember, this was supposed to happen on Thursday morning. We worked out this arrangement over Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, having arrived on Sunday night. On Thursday morning I was with one of the other officers and we were at breakfast in the dining room. The colonel came out of his room and there was coffee set up for him. I was having breakfast. My back was to him and the other consulate officer wasn't in the room at that moment. He got a statue, a wooden statue of a snake, a fairly hefty piece of wood, about six inches around at the base and the tail of it went up about 18 inches. I still have it in my office downtown. He hit me over the back of the head with it. I later took 16 stitches in my scalp. We had a struggle and he tried to grab a knife. I beat him off; fortunately I was a little bit bigger than he was. Finally I threw him off me and he went into the back den and into the bathroom where he had held my son the Sunday night before. He grabbed a pair of scissors out of my wife's sewing basket and locked himself in the bathroom. He laid out a towel and was obviously saying his prayers when he attempted to commit suicide. He stabbed himself and slashed his wrists. We then called the military in from the street. I got up from the dining room floor and said, "Come in and get this guy." They broke down the door and got him out. He was still alive. The family did arrive later that day from South Sumatra and they did take him off to a psychiatric facility in Jakarta. The Indonesian army honored their agreement and they didn't waste the guy. My concern was for his life.

Q: When you say wasted you mean?

LA PORTA: To be killed. It was quite a little incident.

Q: Well, from what you've said it sounds like there was really derangement, paranoia or something. Were you, it's hard in another language, but were you sensing this was a problem maybe not so much of politics, but within the man's head?

LA PORTA: I felt it was entirely an individual case. I think that the colonel just snapped. He kept referring to conspiracies of people in the military who wanted to kill Muslims, who wanted to kill communists, and all of that was undoubtedly true to some extent. He was probably justified because the army harbored anti-Muslim sentiments at that time. The colonel was an extreme example, but he was clearly not rational. That was very clear. It was very difficult to get him back to reality and he kept looking around outside the house. He kept saying, oh, the soldiers are going to come and get me. That's why we kept the military away from the gate and pretty much out of sight. He thought they were going to come in and get him.

Q: Were you conveying to the military commanders who were dealing with this that you're really not talking about political asylum, you're talking about a mental problem?

LA PORTA: Absolutely. We said we have no interest in this man. We've never seen him before. Nobody had any connection with him. It is not our concern to want to embarrass or otherwise make things difficult for the armed forces. We have no intelligence or other interest in him. It took some persuading. It took a couple of days for them to figure this out and to get instructions from Jakarta

so that they could play ball. Fortunately our relations with people in the regional military command were good and we knew the main intelligence officers there. I think we were credible to the J2 of the regional military command as well as of the provincial military command and the commanders themselves. We kept saying that our only interest was that we don't want bloodshed. You don't want it, it doesn't serve your interests, it doesn't serve our interests to have this incident on the front pages of the New York Times either. They took it on that basis, I believe. How I'm written up in the annals of the Indonesian intelligence agencies is something else.

Q: You didn't realize that as far as bloodshed goes yours would be included.

LA PORTA: I took 16 stitches. As my wife points out, I was being stitched up by the Mobil Oil doctor while I was on the telephone to Jakarta and to Washington recounting the end of the incident. It was quite something. It did take my family a while to get over it. We left Indonesia the next year and my son still had dreams of fear, a lot of fear. It took a few years for that to work through that because he was just six years old at the time.

Q: Did the military try to make up to you or were they so embarrassed that it kept relations strained?

LA PORTA: Relations were strained. It was very interesting. Subsequent to the incident, the military became very quiet. They just simply didn't want to deal with it. When we wanted to find out what happened to the officer They wouldn't volunteer anything to us. We always had to ask. I learned three years later that in fact he did survive. He was in a military hospital. He was rehabilitated and was released.

Q: While you were in Medan, was there much of a flow of students or visitors to the United States particularly from Sumatra?

LA PORTA: Not as much as there might have been. I think that the flow of students and exchange visitors was largest from Jakarta because the universities there had the status and most importantly the pool of English language qualified people. In North Sumatra and generally in the provincial cities, the further you got away from Jakarta, the fewer people you found who could manage academic English.

That said, we did send from North Sumatra several academicians and political leaders who are today active in Jakarta on the national political scale. Given the thin base of people we had to choose from, I think we did reasonably well in IV grants particularly. As I mentioned we had a terrific branch PAO, we had a very active educational advisory service and we had a very active English teaching program in Medan. We did a lot of work with several local universities and we paid a lot of attention to Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh and one or two universities in Sumatra province. Today the higher education field is much more crowded and there has been major growth in private universities. During my time in Medan, it was easier to pick winners and identify promising people.

Q: Were any other consulates there?

LA PORTA: Yes. We had full time consular representation from the UK, the Indians, the Dutch (but not the French), Singapore and Malaysia. We had a few international organizations represented. UNDP, ADB and a couple of others had projects in the region.

Q: Did they play much of a role, I mean were you all playing a collegial role or each one sort of doing their own thing?

LA PORTA: Pretty much doing our own thing. The main interest was mercantile. Malaysia and Singapore were concerned with piracy and smuggling. Most consulates were concerned with refugees, but they were generally not concerned with political, human rights and other developments. The Brits we were of course closest to. They had one or two officers and the British Council, so to some extent we made common cause with them. There were also a number of honorary consulates. For example, one of the plantation owners was honorary consul of Switzerland. These honorary consuls provided good excuses for a party because they could afford to entertain. Between the Mobil Oil community, which was quite large at that time, and the small diplomatic/consular community, the Indonesians generally were able to socialize with foreigners. There was the Medan Club, whose members were the upper crust of society. that was left over from the colonial period. It was nice place to go and not far from our house. They had a nice bar, restaurant and movies a couple of nights a week. There were a few decent hotels. There was a very good Chinese hotel which had a good Shanghainese food and there was the old Dutch hotel which was quite nice. The social life was very good. We had lots of friends in the NGO community as well. One of our good friends was the brewer of beer, Bintang, which was almost the Indonesian national beer. It was partly owned by Heinekens and the brewmeister was a German. We also found a lot of good fun with the Hash House Harriers. I don't know if you've run into that outfit before.

Q: I've heard the name.

LA PORTA: The Hash House Harriers were a running club started by a group of desultory bachelors in Ipoh in the plantation country of Malaya. The Hash in Medan met weekly for the men's hash, the women's hash and a family hash. They would set a trail in the boondocks and you had to go out and follow this cross country trail for a couple of hours of running or hiking. It was usually about ten miles. It would be over hill, over dale, through the jungles and rivers and that kind of thing. You'd go out and do that for two hours and then come back for a big beer party. For the men's hash it was a big rivalry for the runners and lots of beer was always consumed. Everybody in the hash, men, women, children, had a hash name and some were quite inventive. You were known by your hash name. There was a whole ritual associated with this outing. We've been in a number of countries that have had the Hash House Harrier groups. There are worldwide Hash and, it's quite an international fraternity.

Q: Well, other than being hashed or whatever, is there anything else we should cover do you think?

LA PORTA: I think we've probably covered quite enough. It was an extraordinary tour of duty in a lot of respects, not in the least because of the incident with the soldier who went around the bend, but it was a great post for the family, lots of excitement, lots of things to do. We went fairly often to

Penang and to Singapore. As I said it was easier to get to than Jakarta. My family and I went to Bali a couple of times. We went to Sri Lanka on one R&R. People said, you're going from Sumatra to Sri Lanka for R&R, you're out of your mind, but it was okay.

JOSEPH F. STEPANEK
USAID Mission Economist
Jakarta (1979-1983)

Joseph F. Stepanek was born on December 12, 1943 in Houston, Texas. He received his BA from the University of Colorado in 1965 and his MA from the University of Minnesota in 1967. His career has included positions in Bangladesh, Tanzania, Indonesia, Kenya, and Zambia. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on December 29, 1997.

STEPANEK: In 1979. I told Walter Bollinger that because of my experience in USAID in Bangladesh I had decided that I was not going to work for USAID Program Officers.

Q: Why was that?

STEPANEK: Well, because I found them to be arbitrary and "territorial." I just felt that life was too short to waste time fighting with these fellows. I explained to Walter Bollinger that I'd be happy to come to Jakarta, provided I could answer to him as a Mission Economist and not be under the Program Office. Again, much to my surprise, Walter said: "Yes." So it worked out fairly well. I got "cross wise" with Tom Niblock on a couple of issues.

Q: Bollinger was the Deputy Mission Director, and Tom Niblock was the Mission Director?

STEPANEK: Yes, that's right. That was a whole different kettle of fish because Indonesia is very much its own empire, in charge of its own house. It is very powerful and an amazing country to serve in.

Q: What was the situation that you saw when you arrived there?

STEPANEK: Indonesia was becoming very important. The scale of the wealth that was beginning to flow into the country was impressive. Indonesia was struggling with the beginnings of its social programs, provincial planning, rural credit, family planning, irrigation, and various kinds of "devolution" issues. In the case of Indonesia "devolution" is not quite the right word because it is very tightly controlled by the central government's civil service, as well as the military. Nonetheless, the process involved "devolution" from their point of view.

I got involved in programs to evaluate irrigation and rural development programs, and health. The health people in the USAID Mission liked my support. We developed a "Development Studies Program" which, I think, was a very fine idea whose time had come. Mainly, the idea was to give

resources to Indonesian technocrats so that they could figure out their own programs and hire foreign and Indonesian experts to help them study the problems. It was a nice breath of fresh air.

The highlight for me about Indonesia came out surprisingly. I think that, as a Mission Economist, I was slowly realizing that I was "right" but "irrelevant." I got kind of fed up. As a consequence of that feeling of being in "limbo," a couple of things happened. Number one, I wrote to Ray Love, who was then, I think, your immediate successor (Deputy Assistant Administrator, Africa Bureau).

Q: Successor, yes.

STEPANEK: Also, Bill Fuller showed up as Mission Director in Indonesia. For reasons that aren't at all clear to me, they decided to use me as an "in house" management consultant. I was assigned to decide how to understand and "get on top of" this unwieldy USAID Mission.

Q: Why was it unwieldy? What was this about?

STEPANEK: Because there were about 55 "direct hire" American personnel. Each division was a bit of an empire of its own. Bill Fuller sensed that right away. He went through an exhaustive review of the entire portfolio of USAID projects. I think that he felt, early on, that some of them were "rubbish," and he had a very hard time controlling it.

So, first because of Bill Fuller, I realized that I really liked to handle management issues. I had never thought about this kind of a job before. I had grown up in USAID, hating Program Officers, and I swore that I had no use for any of them. Because of Bill Fuller and his driving energy and the kinds of questions that he threw at me, I was instrumental in getting the Development Studies Program going and this internal review process, where I acted as a sort of side kick to Bill, dealing with a range of management questions which I had sensed but had never really thought about rigorously.

Then, in answer to my letter to Ray Love, he called me on the telephone one fine night and said: "Joe, here's a scope of work." I said: "That's a very exciting scope of work. What's the position?" He said: "Well, it's as Program Officer." I said something like: "Over my dead body!" And then we agreed. Ray said: "You know, you take the job and write your own scope memorandum." I said: "I'll do that, provided that I don't have to be a Program Officer." Ray said: "Fine, I don't care what you call it."

So I became a Program Officer in Nairobi [Kenya]. This meant, primarily, responsibility for the ESF [Economic Support Funds] program.

Q: Let's first make sure that we've finished with Indonesia before we go too fast.

STEPANEK: That's fine.

Q: What were some of the dimensions of the program area in Indonesia that you felt were effective?

STEPANEK: Well, at the risk of arguing with Tom Niblock, I think that much of it was effective. Tom pushed rural electrification and irrigation very hard. I think that we were doing some small roads projects. In retrospect, a lot of that was probably useful to have in place as Indonesia sensed its own increasing wealth.

This was a time when there was a major debate going on among the Indonesian intellectuals about whether there was any "trickle down" taking place and whether poor Indonesians were benefiting from all of this "macro" stuff. I recall being sympathetic to critics, but also appreciating the fact that something was going on that we didn't understand. Today, we now realize that the Indonesians have "knocked the hell" out of their poverty rate. Family planning is working very well. The Green Revolution is working very well. Poverty is being reduced very sharply. It was a remarkable performance on the economic side of the house, apart from what one may feel about Indonesian "democracy."

Q: How do you account for this?

STEPANEK: Well, I think that it's real, in the sense that the Indonesian Government planned a very deliberate "trickle down" process that turned into a flood. They paid attention to the Green Revolution. They paid attention to the family planning program. For the past 26 years President Suharto has directed his cabinet, every week, to pay attention to family planning. It's as simple as that.

Q: That's a major accomplishment.

STEPANEK: You're exactly right. Behind the scenes, we worked hard on family planning, we contributed to health, we contributed, indirectly to seed research and to irrigation and to the devolution of provincial authority to locally directed public works projects. I don't think that very much has come of that last subject. The rest of it was timely, in the sense that the ideas were shared with the Indonesian bureaucracy. Pilot projects were tried out just as all of the money started to become available to the Indonesians from their own resources.

We put all of this together, and Indonesians, for their own good reasons, fully realized that the benefits of development had to be shared. And it was shared. There are no two ways about it. That is not to say that they could not have done it in a different way, that they could not have tried a little democracy, and so forth. Nevertheless, you look at the Indonesian performance, compared to other countries, and Indonesia, without a doubt, has an impressive record. You always have to say: "So far."

Q: Were we still training large numbers of Indonesians at that time in the U.S.?

STEPANEK: Yes, we were training Indonesians in the U.S. under three of the project portfolios at this time. I don't recall a major scholarship program, but there must have been one. I don't recall our focusing our energies on a training program, although I know that many, many Indonesians had been trained in the U.S. I knew this personally because my father had been UN technical trainer for many of these people who have since become senior civil servants in Indonesia. So when I returned to Jakarta, I knew these people personally. These were "family names" in our

household. People like Widjojo, Mohammed Saidli, Suryo Sediono, and many others were part of my upbringing.

Q: Did you meet with these people after you went to Jakarta with USAID?

STEPANEK: I did.

Q: Did you establish rapport with them and all of that?

STEPANEK: Yes, I did. I would be the first to say that I was not playing a major role in contacts with them. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were heavily involved in Jakarta. We in the USAID Mission were by no means a major donor of aid.

Q: At that time was there an economic advisory team from Harvard?

STEPANEK: Yes, they were in the woodwork, both for planning and for food.

Q: My understanding is that they were fairly instrumental in connection with some of the economic policies adopted by Indonesia. Were you associated with them at all?

STEPANEK: Yes. We chatted with them now and then, but I won't claim to have been an "equal" or to have been involved in the deliberations they had with the Indonesians. In that sense I would be the first to say that that part of my job was a disappointment. Either I wasn't up to it or I didn't get my Ph.D. from Harvard, so forget it. For whatever reason I didn't get very far with them.

I tried to follow the macroeconomic scene. I talked to officials from the World Bank and particularly from the International Monetary Fund. The man from the Fund was a personal friend of mine. In fact, there were two or three of them whom I knew fairly well. So I followed these macroeconomic issues pretty closely and reported on them. However, I won't say that I was an "activist" in this area. I suppose that this led to some of my frustration. Here I was, second generation in Jakarta and knew all of these people. However, I was not involved with them, for various reasons. I was changing gears, quite frankly, from being an economist to being a manager, without really appreciating that my interests were changing.

Q: How were the Indonesians to work with at that time?

STEPANEK: Well, I learned from my Title III experience that they worked well. At the time that I was in Jakarta on TDY [Temporary Duty], working on a possible Title III agreement with Indonesia, they appreciated my candor. You see, without my having permission to do so, what I did was to lay out all of the requirements that would be leveled on the Indonesians regarding a Title III agreement, as I had worked them out in connection with Harry Petrequin. I didn't say, "You guys would be 'dumb' to take this." I simply said that these are Washington requirements. They could see for themselves, thanks to my friendly candor, that this was just a good deal more than some "lousy promise." This was a potential millstone around their neck.

When I was later assigned to the USAID Mission in Jakarta, some of them remembered that and me.

Q: What was their reaction to it?

STEPANEK: Eventually, they decided that they didn't want to have anything to do with this proposed Title III agreement.

Q: So they rejected this proposed Title III agreement?

STEPANEK: They didn't have to. We ended the discussions and saved them the trouble of rejecting it. They would probably have taken the agreement to "save face," but it would not have served their interests.

Q: Did they really need this Title III agreement?

STEPANEK: No, of course not.

Q: Did the argument have an influence on whether to have an aid program there at that time?

STEPANEK: Yes, it was part of the debate, which also concerned the size of the USAID Mission and its traditional character. We weren't being sufficiently "innovative." U.S.-Indonesian relations were very important for all kinds of other reasons, not the least of which were scientific R&D [Research and Development] and military relationships. The issue of East Timor came up. The Kennedy era flights came up. All kinds of issues came up. I left Indonesia, feeling that our interests in Indonesia were very large and that our aid program was a "side show." I did not recommend a large aid program because the relationship was so important. I just felt that the relationship was sufficiently diverse and sophisticated that we should certainly recognize that and use other tools. Indonesia is an important country. It sees itself as a kind of "empire."

Q: By implication our aid program in Indonesia became decreasingly relevant in that kind of environment?

STEPANEK: I think that it became less relevant, particularly in the light of their own resources.

Q: Was there a different formulation for a program or was the idea just not to have an aid program?

STEPANEK: Maybe I'm exaggerating this. A lot of things that I did in PPC [Program Office] in Washington, Haven, is that I got involved in a lot of the discussions and am mixing my viewpoints in different jobs now. There was this ongoing, informal discussion about other ways of maintaining a U.S. presence in foreign countries. I remember being involved in that discussion throughout most of my career in USAID.

Jakarta was a very good example for this. Why build roads and ditches and promote family planning for the Indonesians, when they are fully capable of funding things whose value has been proven? Why not just focus on technical assistance and on joint experimentation, for instance? I

still believe that and I still think that it represents a very fine, middle income strategy. Whether services are provided on a grant basis or "fee or services" should be determined on a case by case basis. However, I think that there is still a very large role for USAID in middle income, developing countries.

FRANCIS J. TATU
Deputy Political Officer
Jakarta (1979-1984)

Francis J. Tatu was born in New York in 1929. He served in the US Navy from 1946-1952. Afterwards, he received his bachelor's degree from University of California in 1955. His career includes positions in Hong Kong, Laos, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Washington D.C., Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Australia. Mr. Tatu was interviewed by Susan Klingaman in October 2000.

TATU: To Jakarta, and I was Deputy in the Political Section.

Q: The Political Counselor was...?

TATU: At that time it was Harriet Isom, later became Scott Butcher.

Q: And the ambassador at that time was...?

TATU: At that time was Ed Masters.

Q: Ed Masters, who had been the DCM but not at post when you were in Chiang Mai.

TATU: That's correct.

Q: He was DCM in Bangkok.

TATU: And he had specifically asked for me to come to Jakarta. So my responsibilities were variegated, as is always the case with political officers. One of my prime responsibilities was human rights, which gave me access to many, many individuals that were not on the normal circuit.

Q: This was 1979.

TATU: Correct.

Q: So this was Carter administration.

TATU: Yes.

Q: So human rights was the big thing for the State Department.

TATU: Pat Darien was...

Q: D A R I E N, I think. They had established a new bureau/office for human rights.

TATU: That's right, the Human Rights Bureau.

Q: Who did you deal with in Indonesia on human rights issues, human rights reporting?

TATU: In terms of the Indonesians?

Q: Yes.

TATU: There was one particular Chinese attorney, who has since passed on, who was one of the heads in the efforts for the World Council of Churches. His name is not coming to me. I knew him as John Nasution...

Q: N A S U T I O N.

TATU: There were organizations, human rights organizations, of various types that we supported, and also in the provinces.

Q: There was - I'm trying to think - a legal assistance...

TATU: Legal assistance, yes, that's right. It's articulated "el-bay-hah," I've forgotten how it spells out...

Q: A legal assistance, whatever, organization - I would have known that that was...

The Indonesian Legal Aid Society, which was very involved in human rights, and it was in various provinces. There certainly was one in northern Sumatra. They're considered to be basically opposition to the government.

TATU: Correct. So I dealt with those people and I also dealt with the military who were responsible for the prisoners. When I got there, there were about 85,000 political prisoners still incarcerated. My argument was always that, "Look, you're seeking international accessibility, you're seeking a good reputation internationally, and the way you're going to get it is through compassion and letting these people out of the Buru Island, then very heavily - do you remember Buru? - very heavily populated, among them the famous novelist Pramoja Ananta Toeur. So my experience there was that I would go these various release ceremonies, I would be the embassy witness, and when Pramoaj ("Pram") was released, there I was.

Q: How many were actually released during this period?

TATU: During this period, I don't have the exact figure but I think it came down from 80,000 to in terms of 40 or so. But they, the Indonesians, fuzzed over these figures all the time. You can't get a figure on anything properly. Anyway, there was movement. I did go to release ceremonies. There's an interesting anecdote with the Pram thing. His agent focused on me and we had exchange and I got to shake hands with the great man and so forth. Then the guy came around to me later in Jakarta and asked if I would do the English translation of Pram's latest book. I thought that would be on politics and I declined, Some guy from the Australian embassy took it on. He got fired.

Q: Well, that was very hot potatoes.

TATU: It is, sure. But anyway I managed that contact.

Q: Very interesting.

TATU: You know, my Indonesian - I've got to brag a little bit - was the best language I ever had, so I could open a lot of doors with that. The amazing thing here is that Indonesian, Bahasa, lends itself to humor and punning like no other language, but the Indonesians themselves don't do it, apparently don't know it. But when somebody else does, they react overwhelmingly, I mean spontaneously. If you get somebody to fall off their chair, you know this is sincere reaction. My best experience with this: I had a thing with sort of a rhyming joke, but very original, and very obscure. After a few years, after retirement, I came back to visit the embassy. I was walking down a hall and one of the locals (whom I hadn't really known) pops his head of his office and says "saluk baluk taluk penu, penyu" (*the details of the bay full of turtles*). That was one of my premier lines, and boy, talk about validation. So the language is really, really good, a good opener. Indonesian humorists themselves had no sense of the language as a tool for humor. There was an Indonesian a comedian named Benyamin E. (sic.) who was their prime comedian, sort of the Indonesian Bob Hope. I went to an evening performance of his once. All he did was, with his female assistant joked with each other about what kind of underwear they wore. (President Clinton, take note.)

But mysterious language then came into play. I was acting political counselor in June of '82, when Israel invaded Lebanon. This is a long story but I'll skip over a lot of. First of all, a group of ancient men from the PPP came I to the embassy. Do you remember the PPP?

Q: That was the Muslim party, PPP, whatever it stood for.

TATU: They came to the embassy to protest. John Monjo was then chargé. John said he didn't want to see them, that I should. And these fellows are, you know, shakers and movers in a very subtle way, although largely ignored by the government. They were all dressed in their best suits. I brought them into my office and listened to them. Of course, they had a petition for President Reagan. So I was very proper but I was still very receptive and assured them that Reagan would see the petition. So they went away, and their visit generated just a little media coverage. That was enough to provoke the hotheaded youth to come see me. We already had some of our friends and some unfriendly, but they were there mainly for their own publicity. They got it spread all over the press that they had come to the embassy.

We were actually having a function at the embassy, delayed Fourth of July. I was standing just the other side of the receiving line, and saw the very same “demonstrators of the PPP coming through. The ranking fellow, can’t recall his name, saw me and broke out of the line. He came over and embraced me, replete with apology. He said he hoped he and his colleagues hadn’t embarrassed me, or the embassy, but he was sure I would understand that for political purpose they had to do it.

Q: The Indonesians love to publicize things and take pictures.

TATU: So the next episode is the young “fire brands” who, of course, had read about the PPP in the press. About eight of them smartly dressed, much more articulate, very confident. They of course have a petition for President Reagan. I declined their suggestion that I have my photo taken with them. They went away happy, and they generated considerably more press...

The security officer is on a phone next day - Steve says - “You’ve got to get down here right away. We’re being invaded.” I rushed down. The way the compound is laid out, USIS is at the terminal of a long heavily gassed hallway that abuts on a parking lot. This entire hall was filled with screaming youth with all sorts of banners. They were unruly, but not yet out of control. It struck me that if that were to occur, there could be considerable danger because of the glass.

Q: How did they get in? Someone let them in?

TATU: Well, that comes later. I can’t get in the hall possibly, because it’s filled with screaming people. So I go around to the back door, and here the Americans won’t let me in; they’re saying “No.” They think I’m a rubberneck or something, so I fight my way through the Americans and get up to the forward part of USIS. Here’s Steve having a hard time with the interlopers, who are pushing to get in further.

Q: Steve was the security officer.

TATU: I didn’t see any people who I knew, but I identified the leader. I struggled my way to him and shouted, in Bahasa, “Listen, I would like to talk with you but I can’t hear you with all these people screaming. Would you please get them to go outside.” After a little palaver he agrees, but he would like to have a delegation of five, himself and five. I said, “That’s fine.” Steve says, “No, no.” “But, Steve, I’ve just traded 200 for five. Won’t you please back me.” So we go into a little conference room, and it’s essentially the same routine. This leader, from a group I never heard of, but obviously down-scale, poorer kids had a petition, and I’m very courteous and assured him it would be delivered to President Reagan. So he says, “Would you come outside and talk to my people?” and I said, “Sure.” “No, you can’t, no We’ve got to get rid of them” says the security officer who had been standing by in the conference room, but who does not speak Bahasa “I’ll get rid of them.” I said, “You will note that they’re all gone from the USIS hallway and I have traded 200 for five.” I went out with the leader. In the parking lot in front of USIS every conceivable surface, the cars, were festooned with placards, banners. They’re burning Uncle Sam. They have sound equipment. They’re really organized. In the back of my mind I was pleased to see youth of such obviously humble origins becoming politicized, but of course I couldn’t say it. The leader handed me the mike. In my best voice – I intoned, “wassalam mu alika khum” (peace be with you,

a frequent Islamic greeting, in Arabic).”

This was greeted with complete silence. Young activists who had been shouting, throwing things around, endangering the cars, burning the Uncle Sam effigy, froze in their tracks to hear a white foreigner not only speaking their own language but mouthing Islamic sentiment. After a few minutes expressions of dissent began to whiffle up from the crowd. I turned to the leader, handing the mike towards him and said, “I believe a courteous response is owing.”

He nodded, took the mike, and said, “Mu alikum salam (and with thy spirit).”

Whereupon after a few anodyne words I suggested that since we had all expressed our peaceful sentiments to one another, we should all go home. And they did.

Q: Because they would not expect that.

TATU I would say that. Steve went up to see the chargé, who apparently had been totally unaware that anything was happening. This is a great line: John Monjo, the chargé, said to Steve, angrily, “When I come in the embassy with my flag flying on an official car, I’m stopped by the guards, “How did these people get in here?” Steve replied, “Well, you see, sir, they came disguised as people.”

Q: They came disguised as people.

TATU: Yes. I know what he meant. They came as though they were going to the library.

Q: They looked like they were coming to do ordinary business.

TATU: We’ve got to concede. But I refused to report it, unless I could use that line, which I did. Someday I’ll get that from the Freedom of Information. And Benny Murdani, if you remember...

Q: Oh, yes.

TATU: General Benny Murdani later called the embassy and apologized profusely for letting this group get through his security network. He said there was real potential for violence if it hadn’t been handled the way was. All around the Middle East embassies and facilities were being attacked; in Pakistan two Marine guards were killed. I got good feed-back. *Tempo* the respected Indonesian news weekly wrote me up in two pages. I heard from other embassies...but nothing from our own. At that point in history I was about to be “selected out” for “time in grade.” It might have done me some good to have that incident come to the attention of promotion panels.

Q: Say a few words about Benny Murdani.

TATU: General Leonardas Benny Murdani was the general who was then responsible for internal security in the city of Jakarta. He later became Minister of Defense. Of course now he is very far on the outs but at that time he was a very, very senior, very influential general. He called to say that the march on the embassy had been handled just right. That there was potential for violence, and

that if we had noticed there on the periphery of this mob were men with bulges in their coats. Those were his men who were armed and ready.

Q: In case there had been a real problem.

TATU: As I say, the good old embassy didn't write me up, but *Tempo* magazine did. Do you remember *Tempo*?

Q: Yes, sure, sort of an equivalent of Time or Newsweek.

TATU: They referred to me as "Mr. Cool."

Q: Mr. Cool? That's quite a compliment from Indonesians, I would say.

TATU: Yes, I've always felt very proud of that, but at the same time...

Q: At the same time didn't really get the support that you would have hoped for.

TATU: Well, I think, you know, somebody in a supervisory position could look for legitimate opportunities to give commendation...

Q: Give support to people.

TATU: ...not only support but commendation. Let me wrap that matter of the demos up with a more human touch. A few days after the PPP visit, we were having a delayed reception for the 4th of July. I was standing aside from the receiving line. And here coming through was one of the old PPP leaders (we had not been petty enough to disinvite him, and those old fellows were always so pleased to be recognized.) When he saw me he broke off from the line, came over and heartily embraced me. He was replete with apology. He and his colleagues had to do it, political necessity required that they launch some sort of protest, and since Israel didn't have an embassy in Jakarta, the Americans were the next most logical. I assured him there were no hard feelings.

Wrapping Murdani up, he professed to be a Catholic, you know. And perhaps because of that he was in charge in East Timor after his Jakarta assignment. He made some wonderful investments. There is nothing wrong, of course, for an Indonesian general to become rich. But the Catholics weren't too pleased with him. Consequently, he got no help from the church when things turned sour for him.

Q: Well, some people are more interested in playing safe. There is that restraint of some officers of just taking the smoothest way. Anyway, it was an interesting period in Indonesia. Every period in Indonesia is interesting. Of course, this was prime time for Suharto and his government at that time. It all looked very solid. There was no significant organized opposition.

TATU: That's right, there wasn't any significant organization, but there was opposition. There were human rights violations, continuing human rights violations, and a lot of external critics, if you will, so they kept us busy. I also had again the narcotics function, liaison with DEA, and

wouldn't you know that the guy from Chiang Mai was the special agent in charge.

Q: What was that?

TATU: Bud Shoaf.

Q: The one you had mentioned before?

TATU: Yes. But I related with the Indonesians who were responsible.

Q: Was there a big narcotics problem?

TATU: There wasn't a big problem, but I think that the knee jerk in Washington was we've got to give them assistance, you know, so I spent a lot of time with the police and with the psychiatrists. I found that they have regional psychiatrists everywhere and they're a great source of information. The first thing I'd do when I'd hit some outlandish place was go see the regional psychiatrist.

Q: Their purpose is to tend to Americans...

TATU: I'm talking about Indonesian psychiatrists. I had the principal liaison with the police and the Ministry of Health regarding narcotics abuse; I can't recall what DEA did. I administered a small assistance program.

Q: Oh, Indonesian psychiatrists?

TATU: Yes, they were part of it. They presented to me a nice plaque, in Bahasa, when I left on transfer.

Q: I never met any Indonesian psychiatrists, that I'm aware of anyway.

TATU: Well, you're out of luck then, because they had a lot of interesting guys. There were government psychiatrists in each province, many of whom were very knowledgeable concerning local conditions. My responsibility for narcotics suppression was two sided: one, with the police, to whom I would deliver these really costly cameras that would then get lost; and then the psychiatrists who were responsible for treatment. I would bring them literature and so forth. I got a great line out of a psychiatrist in Manado. There is quite a population of Filipinos there, you know, mostly illegal immigrants. When I asked what his principal problems were this young psychiatrist shot back immediately: The Christians. Particularly on weekends they all get drunk and this causes fights, sometimes killings, and vandalism. We don't have such problems with the Indonesian residents because, of course, Muslims don't drink.

Q: What was your experience in dealing with the Indonesian police? What was your impression of them in Jakarta?

TATU: Well, I don't know, I would say "mixed bag." On a personal side they're very convivial, great entertainers. If you go to any kind of a dinner, you've got to sing. Did you have that

experience?

Q: Actually, no.

TATU: Yes, they like to sing. It was a precursor to karaoke. I'm not much of a singer, but I used to do "Deep in the Heart of Texas" all the time, because it's audience participation.

Q: So they wanted you to get up and lead the singing?

TATU: Yes.

Q: Oh, I never was called upon to do that fortunately, no, not in Medan, not ever. But you were involved with the national police. The police in Medan were very, very local and really not of the caliber of the military, very, very sloppy, to say the least.

TATU: My national police contacts were sophisticated.

Q: Some of them were very good, yes. I had some dealings with them when we had a missing-person case. That's interesting. But there wasn't a lot of narcotics trafficking?

TATU: No, I never was aware of it, which is very interesting because - I did a lot of research on this - before World War II Indonesia was one of the prime sources of cocaine.

Q: Really?

TATU: Yes, this was legal cocaine for medicinal usages. But after the war the industry never picked up again. Strange

Q: Where was it produced?

TATU: I don't quite remember where it was. But I got around as much as I possibly could.

Q: Did you do much traveling outside of Jakarta?

TATU: Yes, as much as I could, but I refused to pay for it myself and there was rather limited travel funds. I've got to revise on that narcotics question. There was a lot of narcotics trafficking going on down in Bali.

Q: Australia?

TATU: That's right. Bali is sort of the coming-of-age location for young Australians. And then there was a lot of exploitation among people down there. So I did once make a trip down there. I was hosted by the police, and they took me all around.

Q: Yes, Bali was quite a popular destination for young Australian hippie types.

TATU: Still is.

Q: I suppose so.

TATU: Kuta Beach, if you remember.

Q: Do you have any comments about dealing with Indonesians? Did you find them pretty forthcoming?

TATU: It depended, I think, on personal relationships. I hate to cite stereotypes, but it's very difficult dealing with the Foreign Ministry because they just don't put in any time there. You'd call up and say you've got this, this and this. "Oh, he's off studying Pancha Sila."

Q: Oh, I see. Well, I had no experience really dealing with the Foreign Ministry.

TATU: So you got to know the guy, and it would take a while to get to him. You know, you were under instructions to make this point, that you should go and make these recommendations, and that's going to take a lot of time.

Q: So you have to find him on the golf course somewhere?

TATU: Yes, or whatever. I remember one time I didn't mean to explode but I said, "How much of it [Pancha Sila] can you study?" Wonderful structured response: "You people are always studying the Bible. Now, how much of the Bible can you study? It's the same thing." It depended upon what their function was. I think the people in the government were difficult; people on the private side, those who stand to make a profit from their time, for example, are much more dedicated to what they were doing.

Q: Did you have much contact with Indonesian journalists?

TATU: Yes, my wife Marian actually did a lot of writing while we were there and she had a lot published in the local press, so it was through her I probably got to know more journalists than I normally would have.

Q: What kind of writing did you wife do?

TATU: Feature stuff. It was interesting the way this came about. They had a fair. Remember, the fairgrounds were right across the street from the embassy, and we went to this fair, and she was so taken with some of the exhibits that she wrote up a foreigner's impression of the Jakarta fair, and whatever the leading paper was in the English language, whatever it was picked it right up and asked her for more. So she just kept writing. Then the hotels asked her to do things for them. Actually, we got to the point where she was probably making more money than I was.

Q: Oh, that's great. So she was able to get a paying job in a sense.

TATU: Actually, we had this thought - and this applies to what do you think of Indonesia. She was

doing work with a woman who was the daughter of a previous Minister of Commerce, so there was no question that the family was very well-fixed. The daughter, whose name was Maria actually had a firm. She had a lot of employees so she asked - my wife - she asked Marian if she would like to come in with her as partners, and we sort of considered it. But there was this hold-back. From time to time the employees would come to my Marian and say, "Would you please tell Maria that she forgot our payday, and everybody needs to have their pay." Well, okay, there was this pattern of irresponsibility, because the people there who are rich are so filthy rich that they couldn't understand other people who were concerned about money.

Q: They don't think of it.

TATU: What's the point, you see. It's just not important to them, so how could it be important to anybody else. I think that is characteristic of the mined classes there.

Q: I'm just curious. Did you wife have to get any permission from the embassy to have a paying job?

TATU: No.

Q: That wasn't a problem?

TATU: Well, it never came up.

Q: Well, it shouldn't be, but, you know, some wives have had problems, I guess depending on what they were planning to do. Interesting. But she was able to do a lot of writing? That's great.

TATU: And the newspapers for the hotels and for public relations.

Q: Did you live on the economy, so to speak?

TATU: So to speak. We had a house that was leased by the embassy, but we were still on the economy. We were contemptuous of what we called the "wagon train," the American Employees' Club, if you remember that. Do you?

Q: Not really. I didn't know Jakarta that well.

TATU: Well, there was this group of houses that were literally built in a circle, and the idea was if they were attacked they could go into the middle of the circle, where there was a swimming pool and a restaurant and a movie.

Q: Circle the wagons.

TATU: Exactly. They could go to work in an air-conditioned embassy car, work in an air-conditioned office, come home in the same car to an air-conditioned house, and never have to interface with any Indonesians, except for embassy locals.

Q: I see. So you didn't live there.

TATU: So we had our detached house, detached from any other Americans.

Q: Did that facilitate contacts?

TATU: Yes, it really did.

Q: And did your wife learn Indonesian also?

TATU: Not enough. I chuckle: we had this experience where - knowing the language we would have got a tremendous contact. My wife called me up and she said: "There's a woman sitting in our garage [which was sort of a recreation area for many of the neighborhood locals] and she's very well dressed. She looks very aristocratic. I can't figure out why she's here." I said, "Okay. Put one of the servants on." It turned out she was our next door neighbor and she was just coming to greet my wife. I got my wife back on the phone and said, "For God's sake, invite her in and give her tea and find out who she is." She was the mother of the Sultan of Yogya - I mean, she was the mother of the son, who happened to be our next door neighbor. Holy cow!

Q: How nice of her to come to call.

TATU: Anyway, it never really worked out, because the young guy, sultan to be - and he is now - was very much involved in business and he was away all the time, and the ladies didn't have anything to really relate to, and then the language barrier. You wouldn't think that the sultan's son would be living in relatively modest circumstances.

Q: Sounds like a good time.

TATU: Yes, it really was. I think that was our favorite post. My kids learned the language very well. My older daughter used to travel around a lot, and to the horror of her friends, she would always go on a third-class train because, she said, you get more conversation. People would always ask her, "Where are you going? What are you doing here?" and so forth. But I used to wander the streets. I could get away with being *Depok*.

Q: And at that time Indonesian seemed very prosperous, I would say.

TATU: Well, coming along, anyway, from the...

Q: Relative to what they had been after the fall of Sukarno, yes. Do you have anything else you'd like to add about your time in Jakarta?

TATU: I can't think of anything offhand other than to say it was our favorite country because it seemed to us that the people had this kind of *joie de vivre* despite all their depredations. God almighty, when they run amuck, they really run amuck.

JOSEPH A. B. WINDER
Economic Counselor
Jakarta (1980-1983)

Joseph Winder was born in September 1939 in Sacramento, New York. He received his BA from University of Michigan in 1964 and served in the US Army from 1951 to 1961. He entered the Foreign Service in 1966, wherein he served in Chile, Germany, Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 23, 1999.

WINDER: In 1980 I was assigned as economic counselor to Jakarta, Indonesia. This was one of a number of positions that came open at that time, economic counselor jobs. The notion of going to Indonesia was somewhat intriguing. I had been working on developing countries the past five years and Indonesia was a major developing country. So, I thought it might be kind of fun to go off to Asia, and I did.

Q: You were there from when to when?

WINDER: From 1980 to 1983.

Q: What was the situation in Indonesia at the time?

WINDER: Oil prices hit \$35 a barrel in 1983 and they were rolling in money. It was basically just a question of how effectively were they going to use it. They were making remarkable progress in development. Indonesia was one of the amazing success stories of developing Asia, both in increasing the size of the pie and in distributing the pie to the population and in pulling the people out of poverty. They had a very effective education program. They had a very effective family planning program. The government was very corrupt and a lot of the money was stolen and wasted, but nonetheless they had so much of it that a lot of it was also put to good use. We were involved in dealing with particular problems American companies had. Our job was to help create a more attractive environment for the American business community and we worked with Indonesian officials to do that. We had an AID program there and we tried to make sure that the AID program was more effective. We had very close ties with the Indonesians. Indonesian economic leaders had been educated for the most part in the United States and had an understanding of who we were and how we worked. So, we had a very good relationship. I worked very closely with the IMF and World Bank, both of whom had resident missions there.

Q: Why would we have an AID program in a country that had so much money?

WINDER: They were getting a lot of oil money but they were still poor. We didn't provide much in the way of financial resources. We provided just enough to give us some leverage to provide some policy advice. The bureaucrats, the economic technocrats, very much welcomed our policy advice and our support in trying to improve the economic structure of the country.

Q: Was your office involved in looking at Suharto and the Suharto family and how things were

going there?

WINDER: We didn't do a lot of that. There was some analytical work done on the economic linkages of Suharto and his family, but we all knew that a lot of that was going on. Most of my time in Indonesia was as DCM (deputy chief of mission) because there was a long interregnum between the departure of Ambassador Masters and the arrival of Ambassador Holdridge. It was close to 20 months.

Q: Who was acting as chargé

WINDER: John Monjo. He and I basically ran the embassy.

Q: Were there any particular problems in this period with the Suharto government, political or economic?

WINDER: No, we didn't really have major difficulties. We were always trying to expand the military relationship which was difficult because Indonesians were very sensitive to the third world status. We did have one nasty expropriation case that caused trouble and agony, but for the most part our relationship was very good.

Q: You were there when the Reagan administration came in. Did you feel any change in attitude in Asian affairs?.

WINDER: No. Indonesia was an important part of our overall Asian relationship, although not in the sense of China, Japan and Korea. The people in Washington recognized the importance of Indonesia and that continued after the change of administrations.

Q: Were a lot of Indonesian students going to the United States?

WINDER: As many as could afford it. We were always encouraging it. There was a good number of Indonesian students in the United States. The United States was truly a model that the Indonesian elite emulated. Even though it was a Muslim country, there was not much anti-American sentiment of feeling, but a lot of admiration for the United States.

Q: I interviewed somebody who was an Indonesian expert, Dick Howland, and he was saying he had a hard time with Newsom who kept thinking of Indonesia as a Muslim country when the real impetus there was nationalism. Did you find that?

WINDER: I knew Dick, of course. I was there when he was DCM and we worked closely together. Nationalism was the more powerful force than Islam in the sense of foreign policy, there is no question about that. But, Islam still played an important role in the lives of the people, although it wasn't the same kind of fundamental Islam as one saw in Pakistan and the Middle East. Islam in Indonesia was much more a layer on top of Hindu, Buddhism, on top of animism. So, it hasn't penetrated very deeply in most Indonesians, although there are some who feel very strongly about Islam.

Q: What about East Timor?

WINDER: East Timor wasn't a major foreign policy problem when I was there. I visited there a couple of times as DCM to see what was going on and report on it. But, East Timor was clearly run by the army. It was almost a colony so to speak. There was isolated occasional violence, but nothing major.

Q: Were we at all concerned at that time about any resurgence of the communists or were they wiped out?

WINDER: They were brutally wiped out.

Q: How about the Chinese?

WINDER: Very limited. In fact, I am not sure that Indonesia had diplomatic relations with Communist China. The Indonesians still had strong negative feelings about the Chinese in part because of their support of the communists.

Q: What about Papua New Guinea?

WINDER: I visited the western half of the island of New Guinea which was part of Indonesia. There was somewhat of an independence movement there, but Javanese colony. Javanese from the mainland pretty much ran the place. It was a big sprawling province with a very thinly populated area. There wasn't much going on there other than mineral development and a big copper mine run by an American company. Otherwise it was a quiet backwater.

Q: Did you get any visits while you were there?

WINDER: Not very many, we had some. We had a congressman now and then and a couple people from Washington. Actually, former President Ford visited while I was there. He was treated almost as a state visitor. They had a lot of affection for him.

Q: What was our evaluation of Suharto at that time?

WINDER: We thought he was making a major effort at stimulating the development of the country and development was clearly his number one priority. In those days his children were not old enough to be so heavily involved in his reflection, so he didn't have pressures to allow his family to be agents in such blatant acts of corruption as they later did. So, he was considered a man who had taken over in a very difficult situation, taken on development of the economy and put it on to a path of sustained development.

Q: Were there any indicators of the type of problems that were going to hit Indonesia as well as Thailand, China, Japan and everywhere else during the mid-'90s?

WINDER: You mean the economic crisis?

Q: Yes.

WINDER: No, none of that was on the horizon in the early 1980s. As I mentioned oil was \$35 a barrel. People thought they had died and gone to heaven. There were no economic crisis concerns.

WILLIAM PIEZ
Director, East Asia Bureau
Washington, DC (1980-1982)

Mr. Piez was born and raised in Rhode Island and educated at the University of Rhode Island and the Fletcher School. After service in the US Armed Forces, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Frankfurt, Kabul and Manila as Economic Officer. During his career Mr. Piez dealt primarily with economic matters of East Asian countries, particularly Japan, where he served first as Economic Counselor and, from 1983 to 1985, as Economic Minister. In the Department in Washington, Mr. Piez was Deputy Assistant Secretary of East African Economic Affairs, and from 1989-1991, Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative. Mr. Piez was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: During the time you were there, two years or so, did the investments in Thailand and Indonesia were they beginning to go sour? Were their economies in pretty good shape?

PIEZ: On the whole they were. Indonesia had some pretty forward thinking industrial and economic leaders. I think it was pretty well known the system was highly corrupt. To get into the category of economic or industrial operations in Indonesia you had to have connections. But on the whole the country seemed politically stable, and economically developing at a reasonable rate. There were continuing problems in the Philippines. Thailand was doing well. The East Asian financial crisis occurred only after I had retired.

Q: The Marcos regime was beginning to come apart right while you were doing that.

PIEZ: It was during the Carter Administration that the Marcos regime collapsed. Richard Holbrooke was our Assistant Secretary and he was concerned that Marcos be replaced, but in an orderly fashion and without violence. That was how it worked out, essentially, although economic advancement in the Philippines was still slow and sporadic.

Q: This was the Reagan administration, at least after you were there Reagan came in. You know, Reagan being a Californian and all, also his people were from California, so they must have been a little more oriented...

PIEZ: More oriented toward East Asia. The Reagan Administration came in while I was in Washington. I recall that, during the Air Traffic Controllers strike, I was on night duty for a time. Because of the time difference a lot of the traffic on related issues came in at night. Our concern was to keep flights from and to East Asia operating safely as much as we could.

Q: Did you feel that you were getting your due share of attention in the State Department.

PIEZ: Oh yes. Ambassador Mansfield, one of his repeated expressions was the U.S.- Japan relationship was the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none. He could make that case. One might choose to argue, but he had a pretty strong case. President Reagan kept him on as ambassador, a wise decision.

Q: But also to the point where you take a look at the situation you have differences. If you look at say Europe. You have a whole bunch of countries, but they are all rather cohesive. But when you look at Asia you have only really got Japan.

PIEZ: Well Japan was clearly by far the second largest economy in the world.

CHARLES A. MAST
Economic Officer
Jakarta (1981-1984)

Charles A. Mast was born on January 8, 1939 in South Dakota. He received his AB from Calvin College in 1963 and his MA from the University of Maryland in 1967. His career has included positions in Curacao, Tehran, Tabriz, and Jakarta. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 13, 2001.

Q: So you went to Jakarta in 1981, and you were there until 1984.

MAST: And I did very much the same thing I did in Turkey - all macro stuff, bankers, finance, a lot of reporting, writing the *Economic Trends Report*, some on trade, although we had a trade officer. It was a bigger economic section. The officer who did trade policy was a great guy, but he was innumerate. He just couldn't make any concept out of ratios and so on, so he was always getting me to do his trade analysis stuff, to examine the bald numbers. He'd go make the representations on trade policy and the GATT, but if he had to talk about numbers he wanted me to do it.

Q: What was the economic and political situation in Indonesia when you arrived there in 1981?

MAST: We had recently gone through the Iranian revolution of 1979, and gas prices were really quite high at the time, so Indonesia was doing quite well. Again, here was another country, like Iran, where the overwhelming percentage of its export earnings were based on oil and gas, and so if oil prices are high they're going to be booming. If oil prices are low they're going to be hurting. If it's sort of in between they can manage. At the time, Indonesia had what was known as the "Berkeley Mafia." They had four or five people that had Ph.D.s in economics from Berkeley. Wijoyo, Wardhana, Samarland, and others, who were basically running the economy for Suharto. And they did a pretty good job, I think.

Q: Well, was there a lot of money running around looking for places to invest in those days as

there had been before, or had this kind of dried up?

MAST: No, we had a very aggressive, very active AmCham - American Chamber of Commerce. This was the first post where I came face to face with an active American Chamber of Commerce. They'd meet monthly. They'd also had a lot of active committees. We'd have something at the ambassador's at least once a month where we'd have various briefings on problems, or they'd brief Embassy officers. American businessmen would also do more detailed briefs for members of the Economic Section. There were quite a few investment opportunities, but of course it was pretty much driven by the "oil patch," as they say. There were lots of American oil companies, oil service companies. Other firms such as Ernst and Young, accounting firms, had a lot of their work with the oil sector as well, with the American companies and other foreign companies or with Pertamina, the Indonesian oil company. So if you'd start scratching and say, "Find people who are not at all associated with the oil community," that was a pretty small group, obviously.

Q: What about much later, the Suharto regime collapsed mainly because of the corruption of the family, the poor economic situation, mainly because of both poor investment and corruption, and the whole process was rotten? How was it when you were there, particularly in 1981-84?

MAST: Well, in 1981-84, there was corruption in Indonesia. There's no question about it. But I always felt that a certain amount of the corruption in Indonesia facilitated economic efficiency. I remember an Australian scholar in the early '80s who argued this theory. He said in essence that we have a running machine that's the country, and there are all kinds of people always putting sand in the gears because they want to try to stop that machine long enough for them to get their share, or if they can stop that machine somebody may pay them to get the machine to run again. Consequently, lubricant had to be added to the machine in order to compensate for the sand that was being thrown in. Lubricant was a certain kind of corruption, but it was needed to counteract the sand. The machine basically ran pretty well. I don't think the senior ministers were very corrupt, although they were well compensated. Suharto's wife, whose name was Madame Tien, she was called "Madame Ten Percent" because she supposedly was scooping off ten percent. But that was nothing in retrospect. If she was scooping off ten percent, it was ten percent of certain types of batik factories and *solo* - you know, traditional stuff, a few hundred thousand dollars or something. Corruption wasn't really gross until we got into the 1980s and the '90s, where the six children of Suharto who were incredibly greedy and incredibly competitive with one another just raped that country. They would all have to be *the* major partner in various major investments that went into the country. The children were still relatively young when I was there, although some of them were getting into their 20s by that time, so we were starting to hear some of this, but not a great deal. It didn't really happen until the 1990s.

Q: Were American bankers still coming sniffing around for good investments?

MAST: Oh, yes. There were some good branches. Citibank had an operation there. J. P. Morgan, I thought, had just a branch office, but they had a superb banker, who was one of my main contacts. I'd go see him often and share war stories and intelligence. And Chase had a good operation there, and there were a number of others. American Express, Chemical, Bank of New York. And then there were a lot of American banks in Singapore, their Asian offices would be in Singapore, sometimes Hong Kong, sometimes Japan, so they'd come regularly. I had many more visitors in

Jakarta than I had in Turkey. It was a very active place.

And we also had an oil attaché who was very good, a fellow named Dick Morford, and so we would tend many times to see bankers together because the oil sector was so important. Or sometimes they'd see him and then later they'd come to see me or the Economic Counselor.

Q: How about the statistics and information you'd get from the Indonesian Government? Was that -

MAST: That wasn't as good as Turkey, by any means. It was a little more complicated and a little more difficult, although there again I got to know some people at the Central Bank and used the same system. I take the written form and say, well, what does this mean and can this be trusted, and is this more trustworthy than that and so forth? Usually they were quite willing to talk about their own documents, so it was a way to get a pretty good feel as to how seriously one could take the numbers. This was the first time - it happened again later - but there was a superb IMF rep and he was discreet in terms of gossip, but very willing to share his analysis of the numbers because he knew we would hold it confidential or might use it but wouldn't source it to him, and so we would meet every week or two, actually, to go over numbers. That was helpful, since he was in the Central Bank and had better access than I did.

Q: How did you feel about Indonesia, where the economy was going and how it was working?

MAST: I guess I saw its potential as something like Kran's, there was more potential in Turkey, I thought, because they were doing more in the manufacturing area, and Turkey was a tremendously rich agricultural economy as well, more so than Iran and in some ways more so than Indonesia. Indonesia had such incredible population pressures on Java, though Java is the most fertile place on earth, except maybe for Bangladesh. You can just put a stick in the ground and it will grow, but the populations pressures were such that it was very difficult. Indonesia had tremendous resources of gas and oil, and they were finding more and more gas all the time, so that there was clearly going to be - if they could keep the politics together - the economic wherewithal over a series of several decades to have the resources to continue rapid economic development.

Q: What was the role of Singapore? You mentioned Singapore. Was that sort of the R&R banking center or something?

MAST: Yes, Singapore was important for all the countries in the region. They didn't always get along well with each other, of course, and as arrogant as Lee Kwan Yew was, it wasn't always easy to get along with him.

Q: He's not warm and fuzzy.

MAST: That's right. Nor are the Singaporeans. There is this incredible emphasis on meritocracy and on elimination of corruption, and "the reason we can't have a democracy..." or "the reason we can't have XYZ is because otherwise it will lead to corruption," with the implication that everybody else was corrupt. It was an important place for the embassy people in the region too. That was where we'd go to the doctor and the dentist and so on. Later, Indonesia got a little more

developed, and people would tend to use medical facilities there. Our kids went to the Jakarta International School, which at the time was probably one of the top five international schools in the world. It was an incredible institution, primarily built with oil company money and a lot of oil company input. And some students would go off to Singapore and come back with a frozen Big Mac, which they later put in the microwave to take to school the next day to eat for lunch and make all the rest of the kids jealous, because Big Mac had not yet opened in Jakarta.

Q: We're talking about MacDonald's.

MAST: Yes.

Q: How about life in Jakarta for you and your family?

MAST: It was very nice. We had housing in the Pertamina oil village, where there were a lot of oil company people, but also a lot of Indonesian senior officials. For example, [Bacharuddin Jusuf] Habibie, who was a minister at the time and later, of course, became president for a while after Suharto, lived in that Pertamina village. The house had two huge Carrier air conditioners, and was centrally air conditioned. The embassy had gotten a very good rate on the rent for six houses there during a period when the oil patch had declined a little bit and there weren't as many Americans there. So we were able to rent these houses at a very good rate, but they didn't really realize how much it would cost to air condition them. But nevertheless, we had long-term leases, so we had one of those houses, and it was very nice with a great garden and landscaping.

And as I've mentioned, the school - the kids loved the school. My wife taught music at the elementary school three days a week, and this was professionally very good for her. She had the Cricket Choir, which was the third and fourth graders, and we were very involved in a great international interdenominational church. So I think living was as good as it got. The traffic was not that bad. By 1984 it was starting to get worse, and of course now it's terrible. The 1970s and the early '80s were very livable in Southeast Asia.

Q: Were we looking at Indonesia as an economic unit and concerned about the variety of nationalities and the extent of the... You've got so many islands and all that?

MAST: Yes, I traveled a little, and we had a couple of other people in the Economic Section that loved to travel, and of course the oil attaché had to be sure to get out to more areas, and we had someone who did minerals, so that got him to Irian Jaya, where the big Freeport copper mine was located. I mainly traveled in Sumatra and Java. My wife actually did a lot more traveling than I did, particularly during the last year. She had a group of Indonesian friends, maybe as many as 15, and that was where we saw the multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of Indonesia. I mean, these were Chinese Christians, they were Muslims, they were Javanese, they were from Sumatra, they were from all over. They did a lot of traveling together. There would be a wedding in some city - Palembang or Bukittingi or somewhere in Sumatra - and then she'd get to know the Minankabau culture. There were all these different cultures. Indonesia is a world, in many ways, as much as a country, like India very much, in that sense. My wife really got into the nitty-gritty much more than I did that way at these places. Then they'd be off to Turaba, which is a very strong Christian area on Sulawesi, and she'd walk across these rice paddies to go to church,

and she'd hear people singing hymns all across the valley.

Q: Often it's the wives who really introduce the society to embassy people.

MAST: I got to know many of these husbands as well. Though I didn't get to know them as well as she got to know the wives, obviously.

Q: Was there any feeling of discontent at this particular time of the Suharto regime?

MAST: Some. I'd hear them talk more than I heard Iranians talking about the Shah when we were in Iran, for example. I don't think the secret police were nearly as powerful, nearly as ubiquitous as they were in Iran. But the Indonesians - I don't mean to say that they are Chinese in this - but there was a concept, the "mandate of heaven" kind of thing, that Sukarno had it for, whatever, 20-some years, and now Suharto has it, and we got pretty good economic development during his time compared to Sukarno's. There are things that, you know, I like to complain about, and I do complain a little bit, but after all, he lets us complain a little bit. There was a lot of that.

Q: Did Vietnam play any role, or had it sort of off the map?

MAST: I think it was pretty much off the map by that time. There was still some discussion within ASEAN. Of course, Vietnam was later to become a member of ASEAN, and there was some discussion about, well, should they be a member or when could they become a member or eventually they'll become a member sort of thing, but I don't remember anything more definite.

Q: Did ASEAN play a role, from your perspective? Did you deal with it, or were we dealing strictly with Indonesia pretty much from the embassy?

MAST: On the economic side, particularly on the trade side, we tended to do a lot more with ASEAN than with any other side of the fence. We wanted to do more - certainly the Secretary and people around him - wanted to do more with ASEAN particularly on the military side or to use ASEAN vis-à-vis China or Burma or our relations with Vietnam. And so we would have yearly - and this was religiously adhered to: where the Secretary would have consultations with all of the ASEAN foreign ministers. And they in turn with the foreign minister of Japan and the EU and so forth. It was a major multi-lateral forum when the ASEAN foreign ministers would get together. It was always very interesting. I have attended a number of these sessions both when I was in Washington and when I was overseas, and we would come in and want to talk about various political or security subjects, and they would inevitably have trade complaints. Why certain products weren't on the Generalized System of Preferences or why we had countervailing duties on other products, or there were problems with USDA on sanitary standards or something or other, or the Malaysians would complain that we were slandering palm oil. There would be all of these kind of trade-related problems, so the Secretary always got frustrated. You know, even if you were George Shultz you would have a problem, but for some Secretaries who were economic illiterates, it would be particularly painful because they had briefing papers on what they were supposed to say and what they were going to ask, and it would be all these esoteric economic things. Since the ASEAN foreign ministries usually knew even less about trade than our Secretary, it was often a dialogue only for the record.

But I think it was worthwhile because both of us got to get things on the record and it did have some impact. But working in the embassy *per se* didn't have much to do with it. The ASEAN secretariat was actually in Jakarta, so occasionally we might have to go over and ask what's going to happen at the next ASEAN meeting, or are you starting to plan. But they did little planning, they would travel around and get the view from other ASEAN countries, and then they'd decide what the agenda was going to be. The ASEAN secretary general didn't have much real clout on his own.

Q: *Who were the ambassadors while you were there?*

MAST: I served under several. Let's see. Ed Masters was ambassador for the three months.

Q: *Old Indonesian hand*

MAST: Old Indonesian hand and ambassador to Burma. I really liked him. I got to know him a little bit better because after he retired he came back to work as a consultant for IAPCO, an American oil company. He lived in Singapore, and he used to come through, so we would consult with him quite a lot on some economic issues, particularly oil royalty questions.

Then we were vacant for quite some time because that was the period when Haig had put Ambassador Abramowitz forward as our ambassador to Indonesia, and the Indonesians dilly-dallied. I mean, they didn't say no, and they didn't say yes. Months went by, and so after about eight or ten months of this, Haig withdrew Abramowitz's name. We then went for several months again without an ambassador. And then Holdridge, who was the assistant secretary at the time and had been ambassador to Singapore and had been, I think, our chargé in Beijing, came as ambassador. and then he came out. Holdridge was there the rest of the time we were there. So we had as much as 15 months where John Monjo, who later became ambassador to Malaysia, was our chargé.

Q: *Who's that?*

MAST: John Monjo.

Q: *Oh, yes.*

MAST: He was Indonesian specialist. We had several at the senior levels of that embassy. We had Dick Howland who was also our DCM earlier. He was fluent in Indonesian and was on his third tour.

Q: *There really was a rather strong "Indonesian mafia."*

MAST: Oh, Paul Gardner was another one. He was the political counselor when I first got there. Later, of course, he was ambassador to Papua-New Guinea. They had some strong Indonesian speakers who had gone through the Sukarno-Suharto transition. I remember particularly Dick Howland, I'd be clearing something with him or talking with him, and it would be, you know, five-thirty or six, and you wanted to get home. Let's get this cable out. And he'd start on some

story, and it would be fascinating. He knew everything and everybody from that period. His stories were incredible.

SUSAN M. KLINGAMAN
Principal Officer
Medan (1981-1984)

Susan M. Klingaman was born on October 2, 1937 in New York. She received her AB from Oberlin College in 1959 and her AM and MALD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1961 and 1962 respectively. Her career has included positions in Dusseldorf, Manila, Copenhagen, Bonn, and Medan. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 1, 1998.

KLINGAMAN: And Bob Fritts said Medan would be available; the principal officer job in Medan was coming open and that would be a really interesting job for me. The officer in charge of that post at that time was Al LaPorta and before him had been a woman officer, Harriet Isom. Fritts said it was a great post and really interesting and I smiled and said it sounded great and thanked him for the idea. I left his office and thought, where is Medan? And how do you spell it? Well, I looked into it and found that it was actually a large post in an important area in Indonesia.

I applied for it and I had some help, I think, from George Vest. At that time he was assistant secretary for Europe and I just remember him saying to let him know what job I was interested in and he would see what he could do. I wrote him a note that my first choice was this post in Indonesia. I don't know whether he had any influence on the assignment or not but in any case I was assigned to Medan. It was a language designated position so I went into Indonesian language training for eight months, from the summer of 1980 to the spring of '81 at FSI.

Q: How did you find the language training?

KLINGAMAN: Mixed. Mixed reviews on the language training. One of the best things about the language training was that the army colonel who was designated to be defense attaché in Jakarta was in my class and so I got to meet him. We became good friends and when he went to Jakarta and I was in Medan, we had a nice relationship and I was able sometimes to travel on his airplane to visit other provinces in Indonesia.

Indonesian language training was good in some ways and in other ways it was not so good. We started out with a small class...maybe seven or eight of us. I was the only one from the State Department. There were several people from USIA and this man from the Defense Department. The training was conducted during a period when FSI linguists were experimenting with methodology and that is always a little tricky in language training.

I had actually been through the French language training at FSI, not because I was going to a French speaking post but I took the early morning French just to get a 3/3 level in French. I had been exposed to their very systematic method of teaching French. They weren't using that method

in Indonesian. They had books but they weren't really well developed and the linguist had decided the books were old-fashioned so they were experimenting with new situational methods of teaching language which were okay...it was sort of you tell us what you are going to need to use and what kind of situation you think you will be in and we'll give you the language to go with it.

This is a perfectly reasonable method and way of teaching language if the students go along with it. But the students from USIA, nothing to do with USIA but those particular students, did not like this approach and they were not going to cooperate with it so they didn't always come to class. The man who was going to be defense attaché did not have a high language aptitude score and he wanted a more traditional structured approach. The teachers were wonderful, nice, gentle Indonesians who just would do whatever the students wanted. And since the students were here, there and everywhere the course was lacking in direction.

I got very frustrated because I had to pass the language test at the 3/3 level to make my assignment stick. I was going to a so-called language designated position. The linguist in charge of Southeast Asian languages did not know very much Indonesian. And so the whole thing was not very successful until I went to the linguist and said look, I'm not going to learn this language unless something happens and so they broke me out of the course in the last three months and I had solo language training. I was able to work very well with the two Indonesian teachers. One of them in particular, the woman Indonesian language teacher named Jijis knew a great deal about how to teach Americans about Indonesian culture and the interplay of the language and the culture. She was very, very helpful to me in helping me and the other students understand the Indonesian mentality.

The problem that I found when I got to Indonesia itself was that those two Indonesian teachers were way out of date on their Indonesian language. They had been in this country for twenty years. Indonesian had evolved as a language very considerably and they were not really up to date on how Indonesian was being spoken. Also I went to a different part of Indonesia than where they were from. I went to the rough, tough part of Indonesia, the island of Sumatra, where Indonesian was spoken differently both in terms of the accent and in terms of some of the phrases used. But, you know, it worked. I did emerge from language training with a 3/3+ in Indonesian.

When I got to Medan I did have to use the language. I had to learn a lot on the ground and I did. I had to use it all day long. I was in a part of Indonesia where English was not spoken much and even the journalists, the government officials and even the military commanders who were very important did not speak much English. So I used my Indonesian a lot.

Q: You were in Medan from 1981 to?

KLINGAMAN: 1984.

Q: 1984. Can you describe the situation first in Indonesia and then in Sumatra, sort of political, economic, what was happening there then, particularly when you arrived?

KLINGAMAN: In 1981 Indonesia was under the presidency of Suharto who had come in as president of the country in '67, '68. When precisely he became president I'm not sure. His

predecessor, Sukarno had been overthrown in a coup, a very complicated coup and massacre. He had been the charismatic leader of Indonesia. He had led Indonesia since it had achieved independence from the Dutch in 1949 and then was overthrown at the end of '65. There had allegedly been the threat of a communist coup. To this date no one knows if this had been a real threat or not. But in any case the army took over and Suharto was the colonel who took over and took command of the country. Sukarno himself was placed under house arrest and was not really relieved of the presidency for something like fourteen months. So I think it was somewhere at the end of '67 or early '68 that Suharto became the president.

Indonesia was a very large country spanning something like 3,000 miles and umpteen thousand islands and over two hundred million people. Basically by the time I arrived in 1981 it was doing quite well economically. Indonesia was and is blessed with many natural resources. It had developed economically. Still there was a lot of poverty, particularly on Java, the island on which Jakarta is located and where most of the population of Indonesia is located. But the country was united; the central government was very strong and highly centralized in Jakarta with many provincial governments. It was a country basically controlled by the military that was very, very important at that time and has continued to be.

The military numbered only about 300,000 troops in a country of over two hundred million people. It was a unique institution in the sense that it was what the Indonesians called a dual-functional military. This meant that they were engaged in not only traditional military functions but also in what in most countries were traditional civilian functions which is to say they had roles in the government executive branch both in Jakarta and in all the provinces. They had roles in the economy. In other words, an Indonesian military officer could expect to spend probably half of his career in "civilian" type jobs. One tour of duty might be in a military function, and then in the next tour of duty he would put those military clothes in the closet and out would come the civilian clothes. He might be governor of a province, mayor of a city, or head of a company.

At that time most of the companies in Indonesia were government owned. And that remained true throughout my tour of duty. After I left they had more and more private companies. But Indonesia was basically united by a strong central government in Jakarta that was essentially military but with civilians in it as well. Not only military in civilian functions but also civilians in civilian functions spreading out throughout the whole archipelago. It was united also by a common language, which was the language that I had studied at FSI but which was the second language for all Indonesians. Indonesians had to learn this language in school and it was very much a unifying factor. This language had been adopted because of a student movement in 1928.

Student nationalists, nationalists against the Dutch, had decided this student nationalist movement needed to find a language for this country that they hoped would become independent. They had a big debate back in the 1920s on whether they would choose the language of the predominant ethnic group, which was Javanese, or some other language. They discarded Javanese because it was a very complicated language, very status-oriented, very complex linguistically and they wanted to find a language that all of the ethnic groups could adopt. There are over 250 some ethnic groups in the country and languages so they adopted what came to be called Bahasa Indonesia which is market Malay. It was the language spoken by the traders.

Q: Sort of like Swahili...which was the traders' language...

KLINGAMAN: Yes, analogous. It was the traders' language of the traders moving along through the Malacca Straits between Sumatra where I was stationed and Malaysia, in that whole area. It was market Malay and that became the Indonesian national language. So Indonesia at the time I arrived in 1981 was definitely a united country, with strong central government, economically rich, with the beginnings of a middle class... largely because of all these natural resources, most of which were located on the island of Sumatra where I was.

Java was rich in terms of its soil; it was agriculturally rich because it was volcanic. And so the country was rich. Even then, though, Indonesia was incredibly inefficient. It was at that time a rice importing country, despite the richness of its soil. It got over that during the period that I was there. But on the island of Sumatra there was oil, natural gas that had just started to be exploited shortly before I arrived, and rubber. Goodyear Rubber Company was there and Uniroyal was there. There were also palm oil plantations. Off on the eastern side of Indonesia there was copper and gold. A rich country. There were also spices, a lot of which were exported so if I wanted certain spices I was better off importing them from the United States. It was just like when I wanted shrimp in Denmark I had to get it out of a can because most of the fresh shrimp was exported.

So Indonesia was very rich and doing well. Of course there were many underdeveloped aspects. Roads and electricity were lacking in many of the areas of the country. There was a huge disparity of wealth and much corruption. The Suharto family had established its companies and so on. But there was the beginning of a middle class.

Q: When you arrived was it a consulate general?

KLINGAMAN: It was a consulate, actually. The ambassador and the embassy in Jakarta had recommended that Medan be a consulate general and indeed it should have been in terms of its size and its importance but it never got through in the Department. That was the beginning of the days of thinking that we needed to downsize and downgrade everything for budget reasons. The whole idea was that some people in the government wanted to close down some of the of the small consulates general in Europe like Bremen, a one-person post. Some of the Department's administrators were willing to abolish those, and they didn't want to consider raising the classification of Medan to a consulate general even though in fact it filled all the criteria for one. Medan was a large post. I was the consul and the so-called principal officer, the officer in charge of managing the post and also doing political and economic reporting. There was also an economic officer, administrative officer, consular officer, a USIS branch public affairs officer, an American secretary, twelve FSNs (Indonesian nationals) and twenty five contract employees. We also had an American telecommunications officer, and we had classified telegraphic facilities direct to Washington and all overseas posts.

Q: What did your area comprise? Was it Sumatra basically?

KLINGAMAN: It was one of the largest consular districts in the world actually. It comprised the entire island of Sumatra, which was about a thousand miles long. In addition to that it also included part of what the Indonesians called Kalimantan, in other words what we called Borneo, the western

part of Borneo. So it was a huge, huge area.

We had about 1,200 Americans at that time living in the consular district. 600 of them were in my immediate environs around Medan where Mobil Oil was very big and also north of Medan in Aceh province where Mobil Oil was exploiting natural gas. The area was very important to Mobil Oil and to the United States. Most of the Americans in our consular district were either with Mobil Oil, Caltex, Uniroyal, or Goodyear. There were also some missionaries.

Q: Peace Corps?

KLINGAMAN: No Peace Corps. The Indonesians would not allow Peace Corps in. They were still, I wouldn't say xenophobic, as they had been under Sukarno. They weren't like that. But they were very protective of their culture and they saw anything like Peace Corps coming in as spreading American ways of doing things. They wouldn't even allow Americans or British to come in and teach English in Indonesia at that time because they felt, and rightly so, that with language comes culture and they didn't want that. We did have an American couple running the English program at the U.S.-Indonesian binational center in Medan but they were administrators and teacher trainers, not teaching students directly.

There was of course an USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) mission in Jakarta and then there were AID contractors. The AID contractors were primarily doing road-building projects in Sumatra and rural development. I did go around and visit those projects. They had contacts with Indonesians in those areas and so they helped me also to develop contacts, as did missionaries who also were very helpful later on in some really difficult consular cases that I had to deal with.

I don't know in what direction you'd like to go. Medan was a really interesting post and the city of Medan was large but it didn't seem large. It was 1.6 million people at that time and really was a microcosm of Indonesia in the sense that almost every Indonesian, every major Indonesian ethnic group, was represented there in some way. The people native to that area were called the Bataks. Many were Christians, and they were about as unlike the Javanese as you can possibly imagine. They were very direct, blunt people. The Javanese were very indirect, polite and circuitous. So you had the Bataks there and you had many Javanese because most of the military who came up there to do either military or governmental functions were Javanese.

There were also a lot of lower class Javanese living in that area who had come up to work on the plantations, fifty years or so before. There were also a number of people from central Sumatra who were from a group in central Sumatra that was very highly educated and had produced many of the Indonesian central government leaders. They were very active in the retail trade and so on. Also of course there were the Indonesian ethnic Chinese. There were a good many of them in Medan since many of them were in commerce and so were in the big city, which was Medan. They were also involved in plantation businesses. So it was a very interesting area.

I would like to emphasize that I was really glad I had Indonesian language training. Indonesians love ceremonies, and I was often called on to make speeches and I did my best to make those speeches in Indonesian. My Indonesian was very far from perfect but the Indonesians appreciated

my efforts. And it was also absolutely necessary. Most of the Indonesian government officials, military, police, journalists, and business people I dealt with did not speak much English and I simply had to converse in Indonesian with them.

Medan was an interesting city and the whole consular area was just extremely interesting because of the ethnic variety. There were nine different provinces, nine different provincial governments. I had to make the rounds and go call on the governors and find out as much as I could in the way of what was going on in those provinces. Now politically Suharto and the military essentially ran the country. Nevertheless, we wanted to learn as much as we could about these military leaders and about what the people in the provinces were doing and thinking. There were interesting and knowledgeable people to talk with in Medan and in the other provinces, and the economic infrastructure in the provinces was developing.

My language training also helped me gain access to some of the so-called opposition elements in Indonesia, that is those who were associated with the Muslim party (PPP) and the nationalist party (PDI). The PDI affiliated newspaper, Waspada, interviewed me in Indonesian about US-Indonesian relations and ran it on the front page. I also became acquainted with a PDI-affiliated professor at the University of North Sumatra, who invited me to lecture in Indonesian about American government in his political science class. Without Indonesian, I just would not have had some of the contacts that I did.

I would also like to mention that both the embassy and our consulate in Medan had contact with members of the Indonesian “Legal Aid Society”, which was a group of lawyers trying to get the Indonesian government and people to pay more attention to human rights issues. They got some financial support from USAID (the U.S. Agency for Economic Development) as I recall. The Indonesian government kept close track of this group. In those days the so-called opposition groups were kept under firm wraps by the Indonesian government and military. But now here we are in May 1998 with Suharto on his way out and student unrest boiling over...

But when I was there the country was politically quiet except for an occasional demonstration and some incidents in Aceh between the Indonesian military and some of the Aceh freedom fighters. The provinces were developing economically and the economic officer and I did considerable political/economic reporting on various economic projects underway: roads, bridges, harbors, dams, hydroelectric projects, as well as small rural development projects in the villages.

Q: What about Borneo? What was going on there?

KLINGAMAN: Not a whole lot. We had missionaries there and I went up and visited. There wasn't much going on in that section of Borneo. In fact to the extent that there was consular work that needed to be done with Americans resident in Borneo, much of it was done by the embassy simply because the flight connections to and from Kalimantan all went through Jakarta. I never quite figured out why it was part of our consular district anyway. But there wasn't much going on there at that time that needed my attention or the embassy's.

Q: You mentioned missionaries, yet at the same time you had a government that was very resistant to foreign influence. How did that work?

KLINGAMAN: Well it worked with great care on the part of the missionaries. There were Baptist missionaries in central Sumatra who had been there for quite a long time. It worked because they didn't proselytize. They ran hospitals. They did medical work. They were medical missionaries. They were well received for that. I don't believe they made many converts; they weren't allowed to. There was a Methodist missionary couple in Medan and there was an active Indonesian Methodist church in Medan.

The ethnic group that was native to the area, the Bataks, was Christian, so there were Indonesian Christians there. I'll say a little bit about Indonesia's religion in a minute. In Medan, the Methodist missionary couple did two different things. The woman was a physical therapist in the Methodist hospital in Medan. So the Methodists were doing medical work. Her husband was involved in rural development work, village development, building irrigation ditches and so on to improve the lot of villagers. They had been in Indonesia for quite a long time and they knew Indonesians well. But there were tensions.

The American missionaries had problems at various times getting their residence permits renewed. It was always a delicate relationship with the Indonesians and the Indonesians did have a hold on them in the sense that they could refuse to extend their residence permits and this did happen a couple of times. That also was a problem with some of the Americans who were there to train Indonesian teachers in the English language. That was the same kind of a problem. But it worked. But it was what I would call a rather tenuous relationship.

On religion however Indonesians are pretty laid back. It is the largest Muslim country in the world. We've heard a lot about that recently. The Muslims in most areas of Indonesia are rather relaxed. The mosques and the minarets sounded the calls to prayer. They had the ritual and the ceremony and the mosque on Fridays but in most areas it was not a conservative, orthodox Islam. Indonesians are a very tolerant people, by and large, when it comes to religion. I think the term that has been used to describe them is syncretic.

They have absorbed lots of foreign influences in layers and the bottom layer is animism, superstition, and mysticism. If you scratch an Indonesian it won't take you too many layers to get to the superstition and mysticism. Religious influences moved into Indonesia from South Asia down through the straits of Malacca; it all came in with the traders. The religious influence of Hinduism anchored in Bali. You have Borobudur in Java, a marvelous Buddhist temple. And then came Islam and it really took hold in Indonesia. Then came the Dutch with Christianity. And then you have some of those ethnic groups that don't like Javanese very well becoming Christians. That included many of the ethnic Chinese Indonesians and the Bataks on Sumatra. So you have a country in which Good Friday is a national holiday; Christmas is a national holiday, and which also observes the Muslim fasting period of Ramadan. It was all very tolerant and relaxed.

But there was also an area in my consular district, the province of Aceh, that was orthodox Islam. It was the northernmost tip of Sumatra and geographically closest to Malaysia and the Middle East, and orthodox Muslims lived in that area. It was also an area rich in natural resources. That was the area where the natural gas was discovered. There was a separatist movement in this area which was fed by (a) the orthodox Islam, and (b) resentment that revenues from their natural gas

resources were going to the central government in Jakarta and were not being plowed back into developing Aceh itself. The Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement) reflected political/ economic grievances as much as it did religious differences. But that was the main area in Indonesia where there was orthodox Islam. Even at the time I was there were some separatist demonstrations even though the Indonesian military was in control. It was important for the consulate to keep informed about what was happening there. In addition to all the natural resources of the area it was and still is an area of potential separatism and violence. I went there a number of times. The State Department, on our recommendation, awarded a “young leaders exchange visitor’s grant” to one of the young PPP (Muslim Party) national parliamentarians from Aceh. I became acquainted with his family in Aceh.

Q: Were you concerned at that time about the influence of Iran? The Shiites in Iran and the Sunnis in Saudi Arabia, were they contesting the area?

KLINGAMAN: The government in Jakarta was very strong and the military command on the island of Sumatra had a very strong grip on that whole entire island. Anything resembling Iranian influence or any kind of foreign infiltration of the orthodox Muslims in Aceh would have been nipped in the bud in a big hurry; it was not a real issue. It was something that was seen as a potential problem but it never really came to pass.

Q: There must have been rather close relations with Malaysia, or not?

KLINGAMAN: Oh, yes, there were. You mean back and forth, trade-wise?

Q: Yes.

KLINGAMAN: There was a direct flight from Medan to Kuala Lumpur. Medan was an international airport. There were direct flights to Kuala Lumpur and to Penang, which is part of Malaysia, and to Singapore. Now Indonesia had economic ties with Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. They were together in ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. When I was in the Philippines it had started out as ASA, the Association of Southeast Asia. At first the Indonesians during the Sukarno era were not in this. During Sukarno’s period Indonesia and Malaysia were in a very confrontational mode. That was all over border issues on Borneo. That was in the ‘60s. And that had all been pretty much resolved.

Q: Did Australian play any role there?

KLINGAMAN: Australia certainly was very interested in Indonesia, but they didn’t have any official representation in Medan. I’ll get to that briefly. We did have quite an active consular corps in Medan. The Soviet Union had a consulate general there. That was one of the reasons we wanted to be called a consulate general. The Soviet Union had a consulate general; Malaysia had a consulate general; and Japan had a consulate general. Singapore and the United States had consulates. There were also honorary consuls representing Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and the U.K. The honorary consuls were long time residents in Indonesia who were very knowledgeable. One was a priest and the others were plantation managers.

There were some Australians in Sumatra doing rural development work. But the country playing the most important economic role in that part of Indonesia at that time were the Japanese. They were investing a lot there. They had built a huge hydroelectric dam in Sumatra. They were also involved in harbor development projects and so on. They were well informed about what was going on in that part of Indonesia.

Q: Did you see the United States as a competitor to the Japanese in market development?

KLINGAMAN: Well the Japanese had a real economic foothold in the sense they had all these economic projects. As far as developing the Indonesian markets was concerned in terms of getting American exports accepted or American investment accepted, one of the major U.S. problems in Indonesia was, of course, that in order for foreigners to get a foothold in Indonesia they were under pressure to bribe the appropriate officials. We had some laws against that. Companies can often find ways around such laws. But the Japanese government and business are so closely tied together that Japanese business just went in along with Japanese government and was able, I think, to get a better foothold. But that said Goodyear, Uniroyal, Caltex, and Mobil Oil had done very well in Indonesia. Still, the Indonesian government controlled the economy.

Q: It was basically Suharto...

KLINGAMAN: ...Suharto and Suharto's family, even then. I mean that Suharto family enterprises were going strong. The foothold that American companies had was mostly in exploiting natural resources and that had to be in cooperation with the Indonesian government. Caltex was in southern Sumatra doing the oil exploitation in partnership with the Indonesian oil company, Pertamina. Mobil Oil was doing the natural gas exploitation in Aceh, also in partnership with Pertamina, and doing very well. But basically it was not so much getting a foothold in the Indonesian domestic market as getting a foothold for American companies exploiting Indonesian natural resources and exporting them.

In fact at that time I was told that Mobil Oil was reaping about 25 percent of its annual total world profits from natural gas in Aceh.

Q: Did the corruption problem cause difficulties for you?

KLINGAMAN: For me?

Q: For the American business community?

KLINGAMAN: Obviously the U.S. Government was opposed to bribery and corruption. Mobil Oil managed the best they could. They had to work with Indonesians and they had Indonesians on their staff. I imagine it was probably the Indonesians on their staff who handled whatever money needed to be passed. But let's not forget that the Indonesians needed companies like Mobil Oil and Caltex. They had the technology to exploit the natural resources and so it was not a situation in which American companies had to bribe their way in so that they could do what they wanted to do. They were the only ones who had the equipment, the expertise and the money to exploit those resources.

Q: What about consular cases?

KLINGAMAN: There were some really difficult ones. We could take as long or as short a time as you want on those.. We had two very difficult consular cases that took a great deal of my time. Before those cases came up the consular work was pretty routine. It consisted mainly of processing non-immigrant visa applications, and this was handled by our consular officer who was assisted by an FSN.

Q: Lots of students?

KLINGAMAN: Yes. Many Indonesian students wanted to go to the United States to study. There were also some businessmen going to the United States, visitor visas, just tourists going...some, not too many...and passports renewals and so on and special consular services. We didn't have that much in special consular services until all of a sudden we did. We had two missing persons cases which were extremely time-consuming.

The first missing persons case involved a professor from California named John Reed.

That started out with the consulate in, I think, '82 with the consulate receiving a circular cable sent to all diplomatic and consular posts in Southeast Asia informing us that a Professor John Reed was on a trip around Southeast Asia and he hasn't come home to California. His wife is worried. His itinerary was unknown but has anyone seen him? No. Nobody had seen him. We of course checked whether we had any record of him. No. But Americans weren't required to register with embassies or consulates and Medan, was not a tourist attraction. There was a large volcanic lake in North Sumatra, Lake Toba, which some foreigners visited but most foreign tourists wanted to go to Bali or Jogjakarta on Java. Indonesians had no record of Reed entering through the Medan airport. So we reported this to the Department.

Professor John Reed had been due home two weeks before we received the circular cable. So the case was already quite cold. And then I received either a cable or telephone call from the embassy in Jakarta saying that his wife had arrived in Jakarta. She had flown to Indonesia because she had had a postcard from him. The last postcard from him was from the town of Bukittingi in the central part of Sumatra, which was a nice little tourist town about three or four hundred miles southwest of Medan. Mrs. Reed had a postcard from her husband some weeks before from that town.

To make a long story short I got in touch with the American missionaries, the Baptist missionaries in this little town. Mrs. Reed was also in touch with the missionaries. And together they went looking around this little town and lo and behold they found Professor. Reed's suitcases in a very rundown type hostel that you or I would never have gone to probably. It was listed in the hippies' guide to Indonesia on the cheap. Anyway they found his suitcases. I notified the Indonesian military commander in Medan in charge of Sumatra about this and then I flew down to Bukittingi. Mrs. Reed and I met with the military stationed in that area . Well the suitcases had been in that hostel for about a month.

The military started making inquiries in that area and I went around with them. The military combed the area. No trace. Nothing. Nobody had seen him; nobody knew anything. Mrs. Reed

returned to the United States, understandably very distraught. She was in frequent contact with the State Department's special consular services division requesting updates on embassy and consulate efforts to find her husband. We kept making inquiries with the military but we couldn't find any trace.

For the Indonesians this was a major embarrassment because they wanted to present Indonesia as a peaceful place and an attractive place for tourists. And here an American tourist had disappeared in Indonesia and nobody could find him. And what had happened? The Indonesians could not understand why this professor had not registered either with the embassy or the consulate. I doubt that Reed had come in through Medan; he probably came in through Jakarta. In any case we had to explain to the Indonesians that the United States does not require Americans to register with embassies or consulates. In sum, in the case of Professor Reed nothing was ever found. No trace was ever found.

Q: It became quite well known in the papers, I think.

KLINGAMAN: Well, probably in California. Our second missing persons case was reported in the New York Times, but I am not aware that the Reed case was. But we couldn't find him. You know if a man disappears... Bukittingi was a charming resort town and there was a little trail that he might have taken to look over a canyon like area there. He might perhaps have been robbed and killed, because the hostel where he was staying was a place frequented by some very unsavory types. He had been carrying a lot of money, we did ascertain that. He might have been killed or he might have fallen and been injured. You know if someone dies in an area like that in the tropics there would be no remains left after 24 hours. We could never find any trace of anything.

Our embassy in Jakarta and we in Medan kept urging the Indonesian military and police to keep pursuing the case. At one point the DCM in Djakarta and I and the Indonesian military went to the area and went up and down the trails on foot asking people if they had ever seen this man. The Indonesian military also conducted several search and rescue missions. Nothing was ever found.

The final problem was that Mrs. Reed could not settle the estate. Her husband had been a resident of California and under California law a person had to be missing for seven years before he could be declared dead. So what we did all along, continually, was to write very detailed reports of everything that we did to attempt to determine what had happened to Professor Reed. We wrote very detailed reports of all our efforts to find him and cabled those reports to the Department which in turn passed them on to Mrs. Reed. In that case I don't believe...I don't know...but I don't believe she was able to settle the estate for seven years.

Then, on the heels of that case we had another missing person case. This one we were able to latch onto a little bit earlier. The consulate had learned from the first case what the Indonesians could and couldn't do for us. The second case involved Professors Huss and Allen from New York City. I have to think now how that went. That was in 1984. Professor Huss and Allen were reporting missing.

Q: These were two professors?

KLINGAMAN: Two professors from New York City. I am trying to recall how we were notified of that case. But again I believe it was a cable from the Department saying that the nephew of one of the men was concerned because they had not returned on schedule to New York City. Again there was a time lag between the time we knew about it and the time they had disappeared. But I believe we had something of an itinerary for them.

In any event we contacted the Indonesian authorities at the Medan airport. Foreigners did have to have a visa to get into the country and the Indonesian authorities did come up with entry records for Huss and Allen into Medan. We then started an intense search in Medan. They hadn't registered with the consulate, but again very few people did if they were tourists; there was no requirement. Once again the Indonesians could not understand why they didn't register.

We had learned a few things from the Reed case one of which was that the Indonesian police were, at that time, not very competent and not very efficient. They were very unorganized. The Indonesian police is a branch of the military but definitely not the most efficient. The police were very corrupt and very poorly trained. So we had learned that we could not expect them to do much for us in the way of investigating whether or not the two professors had been in the Medan area, if so, where had they stayed and so on. All the consulate knew was that Huss and Allen had entered Medan on such and such a date about two weeks earlier. So we started really doing what in other countries would be police work...myself and the consular Officer, my Indonesian driver and the Indonesian consular assistant. We got out there and started beating the bushes.

We went around and checked hotel records. Guests were required to register in hotels even if they were just low quality hostels. We put it in the newspapers...all the local newspapers. We put out a press release. The consulate really broadcast this problem. We went to the two tourist areas near Medan. One is about an hour and a half up into the mountains, called Brastagi, which is where the consulate had a rest house, so we knew that area. The other further away was Lake Toba. My driver and I and the consular officer went up in our car and just started going all over Brastagi, going to all these rundown hostels and making inquiries. We were doing what in most countries the local authorities would do, not foreign diplomats.

I remember we were looking around, looking at hotel registers, not finding too much and then an Indonesian came riding up on his motorcycle to the consulate rest house where we were having lunch and he asked to see 'Miss Susan'. That was my name in Sumatra, I was Miss Susan. This young man, Jimmy was his name, had seen a newspaper article about this case and he said he had seen the professors, he had been their guide one day and they had stayed in such and such a hostel. So we went to this really rundown place, my driver and I and the consular officer. I remember going in and an Indonesian woman was running this place. We looked at the guest book and I noticed that a page had been ripped out of the guest book and it was on one of the crucial dates. We asked her if she had seen Huss and Allen. She said she had not. We asked her why the page was missing and she indicated she had no idea whatever. I remember walking out of that hostel and my Indonesian driver, Usman, turned to me and he looked at me and said she was lying.

We and the embassy really weighed in hard and kicked up a lot of dust with the Indonesian authorities about this. Once again, a tourist area, and American tourists missing...two this time...and the embassy in Jakarta pushed whatever buttons it could down there. This was another

very embarrassing case for the Indonesian government; they took it very seriously. The Indonesian central government in Jakarta...and this was really indicative of the importance the Indonesians attached to this case...the central government in Jakarta sent an Indonesian military police detective up to Medan. He set up an Indonesian investigative team. He worked very closely with us. This Indonesian detective was very good, very tough, very sharp. We told him about the missing page in the hostel registry, that my driver said the innkeeper was lying, etc.

A day or so later this detective called us from Brastagi.

You were saying that the policeman called you?

KLINGAMAN: Yes. He said that they had searched this hostel and found the suitcases of the two professors. Then how did it go next? I don't know...this guide Jimmy had...let's see, Jimmy had told us that he had taken the two professors on a little hike up to the volcano in that area but hadn't seen them since. As far as I know, that was true. Then suddenly this police detective from Jakarta informed us that they had arrested seven people in Brastagi in connection with the disappearance of Huss and Allen. So we were very encouraged by this news. We thought that probably Huss and Allen had been robbed and killed. Of course the Indonesians did not want to hear any suggestion like this.

This was at the tail end of a period in that section of Sumatra where there had been a brief period of significant law and order problems, of outbreaks of violent crime. In fact there had been outbreaks in different parts of Indonesia during this period, which were significant enough so that we had reported it to the Department. By the time Huss and Allen disappeared the Indonesian military had stopped this crime wave, sometimes quite ruthlessly. There were a lot of "mystery killings" in those days. Criminals were supposedly shooting one another, but there were rumors that the Indonesian military had come in and taken care of the criminals in the only way it really knew how to, which was to shoot and kill them. At that time really there was not a well-developed police system; there was not a well-developed court system. So if there was disorder it was dealt with violently. Anyway it was the tail end of this period, and there was still some crime around.

In any event seven Indonesians were arrested in Brastagi. Seven were arrested and then four were released and then three were under intense questioning. Of course we were reporting all of this back to the Department. And in the meantime the nephew of one of the professors came to Indonesia and was with us at the consulate. He was giving us very helpful information on the professors and their habits, etc. The Indonesian police detective from Jakarta was questioning several people in Brastagi. Then all of a sudden he packed up and returned to Jakarta. We never knew exactly what happened but I believe...I have no way of proving it but my hunch is that the police team found out what happened to Professors Huss and Allen. I believe that they were killed and I believe that the Indonesians found out who did it and took care of that person in summary fashion. This is just my hunch. I can't prove it in any way at all.

The Indonesians made much of the fact that Professors Huss and Allen did not register with the American Consulate. The case made the front page of the New York Times because they were from New York City. They were professors at, I think, NYU. It was on page one of the New York Times several times. We continued to make inquiries. The Indonesians of course never said they

had solved the case and taken care of it. In the meantime the Indonesians were saying well, what can you expect, these American tourists come in, they don't register with the American Consulate and they go off "into the jungle".

Well they weren't off in the jungle. In both cases, the Reed case in central Sumatra and Huss and Allen in northern Sumatra...both cases were cases in which the disappearances occurred in tourist areas which were not jungle. Granted they were on the edge of jungle because everything is on the edge of jungle in Indonesia. Brastagi was a resort area, a hill station type of place and so was Bukittingi in Central Sumatra. But the Indonesians were truly embarrassed by these cases of disappearances at a time when they were trying to promote tourism.

In the Huss and Allen case, also, we did a lot of detailed, play by play reporting which I did most of. That of course went to the Department and the Department was supposed to send the reports on to the families involved. However, in both the Reed case and the Huss and Allen case the Department did not forward the information on to the families as promptly as it might have.

In the Huss and Allen case the consulate received a letter from Professor Allen's nephew, the one who had come out to Medan while the case was going on. He wrote that he needed detailed reports about what we had done to try to find his uncle. Well the Department had all these reports but for some reason, perhaps a secretarial backlog, had not sent them on to the family. Finally it was done. And in that case it turned out to very important to the family, not that we found him or were able to tell them what happened. But because we had documented our efforts in such detail, every step of the way, the attorney for the family was able to take it to a New York State court. On the basis of our reporting the attorney was able to satisfy the need to establish that all measures possible had been taken by the Indonesian authorities to find these men, and the court, on the basis of our reporting, declared them dead so the estate could be settled. That appeared in the New York Times, that they had been declared dead finally.

Q: I would think the other shoe to drop in a case like this would be the Department of State saying, giving a travel advisory about Indonesia which of course would be highly unhappy.

KLINGAMAN: Yes that of course was something that the Indonesians did not want to have happen under any circumstance. I'm trying to think. I believe there was some consideration of a travel advisory, but none was issued. Ambassador Holdridge, John Holdridge was ambassador in Jakarta at the time, took a lot of interest in the case. He visited Medan at some point in 1984 and one of the calls on his agenda was on the Indonesian police commander in Medan,

Now the police commanders were highly competent military people. It was the rank and file police under them who were not well trained. It was a different police commander than had been in that position at the time of the disappearances, but they rolled out a chart and video show for the ambassador to show all that they had done. They reiterated that it was too bad the men had not registered at the consulate and had gone "into the jungle" on their own!

I must say that in those two cases those three American tourists were not following good sense for travel in Indonesia at that time. In both cases they were carrying a lot of cash according to our information; they were carrying cash on money belts and they were staying in hippie hostels. And

so my feeling is that they were probably excellent targets for unsavory elements and criminals. These cases were very frustrating and very time consuming and took me away from political and economic reporting. Obviously assistance to Americans in distress always has to be top priority. I can also say, though, that these cases gave me a lot of insights into the Indonesian police that I would not have had otherwise. The corruption...what else is new about that...but the ineptness of so many of the police was very evident. This ran through my mind thinking about the events in Indonesia that have taken place recently this year. When I was there most of the police were not well trained, not highly motivated, and very poorly paid.

Q: Bad combination! Were there any other developments we should talk about? We could pick it up again..

KLINGAMAN: Just reflecting on Indonesia in general I always felt that the country was not living up to its potential. The corruption was well known. I was struck at the difference between Indonesians and Filipinos, a totally different group of people. The Indonesians had a much deeper sense of who and what they were as a nation, whereas the Filipinos never seemed quite sure who and what they were despite the fact that in the Philippines the ethnic diversity was nowhere near as great; the size of the country was nowhere near as great.

But Indonesia seemed to me to be very inefficient, very lackadaisical in the way they went about things. It just seemed to me that they were coasting on this large comfortable cushion of their rich natural resources. This was enabling them to get along in apparent stability. The economy was developing. Roads were being built...footnote on that in a minute...but roads were being developed, dams were being built, a middle class was developing. There were enormous inequalities and corruption. But people at the bottom weren't starving. All of this was because of the vast riches of the country; there was enough trickling down. Expectations were rising but not so high but what the trickle-down was working and the lower classes were able to buy their mopeds and their radios and maybe even a TV. But it wasn't working as it should have. There was just this natural wealth that enabled the country to remain stable under the rule of the military.

I did a lot of traveling. I flew a lot on Garuda Airlines. There was no other choice. Garuda Airlines was always one in which you took your life in your hands because the pilots flew by mystical radar and so on. It was a white knuckle experience many times, and twice I thought for sure we would crash. I also did a lot of traveling over potholes and mountain dirt roads in our four wheel drive vehicles. The economic officer at the consulate and I and one of our Indonesian drivers took a truly memorable trip from Jakarta bringing back a new four-wheel drive jeep from Jakarta all the way up the island of Sumatra to Medan. This trip was a thousand miles on what the Indonesians called the Trans-Sumatran Highway, which was not a highway as you or I know it. It was mostly dirt roads, washboard roads; in one place we were flooded out and had to really go all the way around three sides of the square to get to where the road connected again. But it was truly a wonderful trip. There were no luxury hotels along the way to put it mildly but the Indonesians we met were very friendly and interesting people. The only disappointment was that we did not catch sight of any Sumatran tigers.

JOSEPH A. B. WINDER
Desk Officer, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Affairs
Washington, DC (1983-1985)

Joseph Winder was born in September 1939 in Sacramento, New York. He received his BA from University of Michigan in 1964 and served in the US Army from 1951 to 1961. He entered the Foreign Service in 1966, wherein he served in Chile, Germany, Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 23, 1999.

Today is October 8, 1999. We are in 1983 and where did you go?

WINDER: In 1983 I came back from Jakarta and took over the responsibility of the desk for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei affairs. I did that until November, 1985. During my time on the desk it was a very active period. We had a state visit by President Suharto that must have been just after I arrived so I wasn't heavily involved in it. But, then we had big visits involving each of the other countries. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir came for a working visit in early 1984 in which we were actively involved. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore came more than once and we were involved arranging his programs. I remember one time we had a session with Secretary Shultz calling on him at his hotel. Those two were very close confidants and Shultz asked him about our policies and Lee Kuan Yew asked him and there really was an exchange of views between two statesmen on how are we doing. In addition, Brunei celebrated regaining their sovereignty for all aspects of their affairs. I guess they already had control over internal affairs but not external. So, there was a big to do in Brunei and Ken Dam led a delegation of basically private citizens to go out and represent the U.S. at that event, and I went along and did the staff work.

We had a lot of different activities there. A lot of policy problems with Indonesia. Questions about whether we should sell them F-16s. Human rights problems with mysterious killings. The East Timor question wasn't as hot then. It was sort of a low simmering problem but it hadn't really surfaced.

Q: When had the Indonesians gone into East Timor?

WINDER: In the mid-'70s. At the time when the Portuguese empire collapsed brought about by a change in Portugal. The situation in East Timor changed and there were movements favoring independence and union with Indonesia and the army went in and supported the union.

Q: Were we monitoring East Timor?

WINDER: Yes, sure. When I was in the embassy I visited East Timor as acting DCM and looked around and talked to people. Then I filed a report on what I heard and saw. We were trying to stay on top of the situation there.

Q: When you were on the desk was there any sort of East Timor movement?

WINDER: Nothing significant. It wasn't a major issue.

Q: Was Suharto still persona grata as far as we were concerned?

WINDER: Oh, very much so. This was the early '80s. He had only been in power about 15 years. The impact of his policies on the Indonesian development process were apparent to everyone. The economy was booming. The benefits of the development were being dispersed widely throughout the society. Everybody was aware that some of the money was being siphoned off, and there certainly were some serious structural problems in the economy - the indigenous business sector was basically rent collectors, and had a favored position depending on their political ties. But, on the whole, the economy was growing fast and benefits were being broadly distributed throughout the country.

Q: Which is all a great plus.

WINDER: That's right.

Q: Were we working on American businesses to go there?

WINDER: We had always been actively involved in promoting American business in Indonesia. It was an essential part of my job as economic counselor when I was at the embassy in Jakarta in the early 1980s and that remained a focus of interest and attention. But, we didn't beat the drums looking for individual companies to go into Indonesia. We didn't really feel that was our mission. We wanted to change the environment. I took the initiative for a Memorandum of Understanding on investment between the United States and Indonesia that Secretary Shultz signed, I think on one of his trips to Jakarta. Again, it was more symbolic to demonstrate to the American business community that Indonesia was interested in foreign investment, welcomed foreign investment and to provide a basic framework of the rules of the game that were appropriate. It wasn't anything binding. The investment environment was always difficult in Indonesia primarily because if foreign investors wanted to invest in Indonesia to serve the domestic market, they would be running head on into private interests that already were serving investment in the domestic market and the politics of that were very bad. The investors who wanted to go into Indonesia for export didn't have so much of a problem - energy, mining, or even manufacturing for export.

Q: Sometimes in congress you find not necessarily the congressmen but the members of congressional staff who have their own ideology or own hobby horse. Did you find any opposition to Suharto among congressional staff?

WINDER: I don't recall that in any of the countries that I was responsible for. One of the problems we had in that area, and Southeast Asia, quite frankly was increasing the recognition in the United States, in the congress, in the American public, in the business community, about the importance of southeast Asia and the value of enhanced relationships in the area. It was an important region with a lot of economic potential, but it tended to be overlooked by the American public opinion and the political circles which were dominated by Japan and China.

Q: In a way just the fact that you had on your tray, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore.

You think about Indonesia being a major country in resources, population, strategic importance, etc. and yet it was kind of one of those countries.

WINDER: It clearly was the dominant country in the four. I had Indonesian background and we had a separate Indonesian desk officer. In fact, we had a young fellow who covered economic issues in both Indonesia and Singapore. We put more time and human resources on the Indonesian relationship. It wasn't as if the other countries weren't important, but Indonesia was the dominant player.

Q: Did we realize that Australia had economic interests in Indonesia and make allowances for that?

WINDER: Australia had foreign policy interests in Indonesia and we consulted with them. We didn't see the situation as being a conflict, really. Clearly it was in the interest of the West, generally, developed countries, including Australia, to have Indonesia part of the global economic system of which the West was the center. That involved opening to trade and investment and integrating the Indonesian economy with the global economy. And, on the defense side having a cooperative relationship with military authorities that involved up-grading their skills and trying to inculcate some kind of human rights into their activities as well. We had a common interest in dealing with Indonesia. I guess I was never involved in any discussions with Australians on policy toward Indonesia, however.

Q: What was happening in Malaysia at this time?

WINDER: Well, Mahathir was very much in control in Malaysia and they were following a development strategy that embraced again the Western economic model and included a lot of American companies. Mahathir, himself, had sort of a love/hate relationship with the American economic model and kept making speeches about looking toward Japan as the model for Asia with a bit more state directed development. His development policies were sort of bifurcated between emulation of Japan on the one hand and a more open policy to be integrated into the international economy on the other. But, we didn't have any major problems in that area. Our companies were in Penang, particularly electronic companies. There were companies invested in the northeast and that was of interest to them. We had growing contacts on the bilateral military side with them even though they weren't given much high visibility or publicity. So, the relationship with Malaysia, I think, was reasonably good. The main problem was that Mahathir thought the United States, particularly in the press, didn't pay enough attention to Malaysia. He bristled when he came across some map somewhere that didn't even show Malaysia on it. So, he was very sensitive to perceived slights, etc.

We had one incident that revolved around the visit of the New York Philharmonic. The New York Philharmonic had scheduled a tour of Asia with a stop in Kuala Lumpur. In their scheduling they had planned to perform a work called "Shlomo" and Mahathir thought that for some reason the performance of that work would provide the Muslim fundamentalists an opportunity to criticize the government as being soft on forces that might be inimical to Islam. He was always worried about protecting his flank from Muslim fundamentalist forces. Therefore, he told the New York Philharmonic that they would be welcome to come to Kuala Lumpur but they couldn't play that

song. They would have to play something else. Before the New York Philharmonic could even make a judgment about that, it hit the press. The New York Times had a front page article. So, we had quite a brouhaha about that. People were calling up the assistant secretary asking what was going on out there. Mahathir got on his high horse saying we tell people what to play here or they don't play here. Then the New York Philharmonic, the union and influential Jewish groups in New York said we couldn't let them dictate what is to be played. In the end the New York Philharmonic dropped Kuala Lumpur from its schedule and added Bangkok. I don't know if they played "Shlomo" or not, they may have, but it demonstrated the difficulty and prickliness of dealing with Malaysia and the frictions that could arise over seemingly small incidents.

Q: What about Singapore?

WINDER: At that time Lee Kuan Yew was in control. There was a lot of mutual respect between George Shultz and Lee Kuan Yew. When they visited each other's country they always had in depth consultations and conversations. I went out on a trip one time and Allen Wallis, the under secretary for economic at State was there and he had a good meeting with Lee Kuan Yew. We really had excellent high level contact between the two countries. And we had basically no serious frictions or issues of any kind that I recall.

Q: You didn't have any students getting whipped and things like that?

WINDER: No. I can't recall when that incident was, but it wasn't on my watch.

Q: Brunei?

WINDER: Brunei was just entering the international arena. I guess they had been independent to a degree, but certainly the Brits had handled their foreign and defense relations. So, when Brunei gained full independence we established an embassy there and dealt with the embassy in Washington. It was basically a start up operation. I suppose most of our concerns related to starting an embassy. The logistics, physical structure, etc. We dealt with Brunei in the context of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) as well. They were a member. In fact, I think they may have chaired the bilateral relationship with the U.S. ASEAN divided the work up as to who was going to handle U.S. relations and who was going to handle Japanese relations. We didn't have any major friction with Brunei.

Q: A little later on, I guess, Brunei became a place you went to to get some money for various things.

WINDER: I don't remember tapping Brunei for one of our major projects. You are absolutely right, we tended to go to them and ask them to put some money in this pot or that pot and sometimes they would and sometimes they wouldn't.

Q: Looking back at the whole group, were we trying to build up a defense perimeter using these countries at that time?

WINDER: No. That is a little too strong a phrase. We were trying to continue to strengthen our

defense ties with the military establishment of each country. We historically had very good military ties with Singapore which included ship visits. In fact, there was a U.S. Navy office in Singapore that did logistics and things of that kind. We were also trying to expand our ties with the Indonesian and Malaysian military that would provide for ship visits and perhaps even for repairs. There was some discussion of a repairs facility in Surabaya. Former foreign minister Ghazali Shafi, I recall, came once to Washington and we had a discussion of perhaps a repairs facility in Labuan, a Malaysian island off the coast of Borneo. There was a general discussion of threat perception, etc. A defense perimeter is far too strong a word.

Another aspect of the work of the office I might touch on briefly, had to do with the ASEAN. We at that time were the office that backstopped U.S. participation in ASEAN and the annual consultations with ASEAN that the secretaries of state had been going to for a number of years. So, I accompanied Secretary Shultz a couple of times on his trips to ASEAN. Shultz thought these trips were very important feeling that one aspect of foreign relations was tending the gardens, so to speak, and ASEAN was a garden that needed tending. So, he made time in his schedule to go out there and participate actively in the discussions. He was quite demanding in the preparation of speeches and briefing books. We had to work quite hard, actually, to satisfy his rather rigorous requirements. But it was a very rewarding part of the job because it was high level attention to countries that were important to us.

Q: On the defense side. At that time did you and your colleagues have any concern or feelings about either Vietnam or China being an expanded power in that area?

WINDER: Well, of course, Vietnam at that time was in Cambodia and we had huge foreign policy friction as a result of the invasion of Cambodia. I think the Chinese much less so. I can't recall when Indonesia normalized relations with China, it may have been after that. But, it was clear that the hostilities that had existed between China and Indonesia manifested at the time of the coup in the mid-'60s in Indonesia, because so many members of the PKI, the Indonesian Communist party, were of Chinese origin. Those sorts of tensions at the government level had abated and it seemed to be only a matter of time before Indonesia was prepared to acknowledge China's role in the region and to move forward with diplomatic relations. There were still problems and tensions between the Indonesian minority and majority populations, but as far as the Chinese government on the mainland was concerned, the major frictions that had existed 20 years previously really had abated.

Q: Were the Spratlys at all a problem?

WINDER: People were aware of the South China Sea and the fact that there were overlapping claims and potential frictions, but nothing more than that.

Q: How about the Philippines at this time? Were they beginning to cause problems for countries within your area?

WINDER: Not really. There was a problem between Malaysia and the Philippines over Sabah, and in the southern Philippines there were some Muslim insurgents that Malaysians had a certain ethnic affinity for and the Philippines resented that. There was some piracy going on that caused

some friction between the Philippines and Malaysia. But basically, ASEAN has been very successful in providing the opportunity to forge stronger bilateral ties between these countries which really had never had them before. The relations between all these countries in the region, except Thailand, had been with a colonial power and links between these countries really didn't exist. ASEAN provided an opportunity for foreign ministry officials, energy ministry officials, businessmen, private citizens to meet, to talk and get to know each other. That really helped in establishing some linkages that ameliorated a lot of the frictions.

Q: Working at the country level, one of the observations often is that some of the foreign embassies in the United States are much more effective than others. Some sort of relied on just going to the Department of State, which doesn't get you too far, while others know how to work congress, the media, the National Security Council, etc. How was the Malaysian embassy?

WINDER: They were fine. Actually the Malaysian ambassador when I arrived was a very, very popular fellow in the diplomatic circuit. He entertained very effectively. He left shortly after I took over the desk with flashy news stories about him. His successor was less flashy, but not ineffective. He got out and around but certainly didn't have the same level of visibility and public prestige as his predecessor.

Q: Indonesia?

WINDER: It was very effectively represented. They had a couple of very good ambassadors during my tenure. Indonesia was one of those countries that had a little difficulty in working the Hill because I think they thought it wasn't dignified to spend as much time and attention dealing with the Hill and the Hill staff.

Q: I'm told India has the same problem.

WINDER: Probably. It tends to be a big country syndrome, I think. Singapore, at the opposite extreme, had far more influence in Washington than its size and importance in the world merits, just because of the skill of its diplomatic ability. I always felt Sweden was another such country. On the other side, I think, Indonesia might have done a better job of getting out and about, but the ambassadors were very effective. They had very good policy ties at the highest level of the State Department. They worked the administration very well. They were very well liked. Anytime we had a policy issue we could rely on the Indonesian embassy. But, I think they could have done more on the Hill.

WILLIAM PIEZ
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics, East Asia Bureau
Washington, DC (1985-1989)

Mr. Piez was born and raised in Rhode Island and educated at the University of Rhode Island and the Fletcher School. After service in the US Armed Forces, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Frankfurt, Kabul and Manila as

Economic Officer. During his career Mr. Piez dealt primarily with economic matters of East Asian countries, particularly Japan, where he served first as Economic Counselor and, from 1983 to 1985, as Economic Minister. In the Department in Washington, Mr. Piez was Deputy Assistant Secretary of East African Economic Affairs, and from 1989-1991, Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative. Mr. Piez was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Ok, well let's talk about the '85 to '89 period. Were the issues changed much?

PIEZ: Not very much. Japan was still the number one interlocutor in East Asia for the United States, but of course the job was regional and there were any number of organizations and problems and situations in the region to occupy my time. There was the Asia Pacific Economic Council. There was an Asia Pacific Council of private, mostly business representatives. The American Chambers of Commerce in all of the East Asian countries had their regional organizations. And of course there was ASEAN that I mentioned earlier. So during that four year period there were endless gatherings and meetings. I also participated in many of the bilateral talks. The Undersecretary of State for economic affairs had regular meetings with his counterparts in individual East Asian countries, and I participated in many of those negotiations and conversations. Allen Wallis was the economic Under Secretary at that time. He was an interesting person to work with and for. He had steady nerves and never showed any ill temper. He would not disagree directly with anyone. Instead he would just state very clearly and simply his own conservative economic views. For example, he believed strongly that markets should not be regulated closely, whereas many East Asian economic experts thought that governments should apply extensive controls, or impose taxes designed to direct development of favored industries. They had a rather *dirigiste* approach to economic development. Allan Wallis, however, never came across as doctrinaire. He always favored economic freedom, and it was not easy to argue with him.

My job those four years involved extensive travel. I also made many domestic trips talking to audiences around the country. On one occasion I was paired with another speaker at a student conference. The other speaker did not show up, so I filled in for him, giving three different speeches on different subjects in one day. And I'd get drafted into other things. If Mike Smith had some talks with the Thais on textiles, I might be brought along as part of his delegation.

Q: Well how stood we with regards to Indonesia. Was Suharto...

PIEZ: He was still in power. And it was still very much an economy managed by Suharto and a group of what we called "the kids", meaning his kids and his grandchildren. Suharto initially had opened up the economy, successfully promoted growth. Even so the key monopolies remained in practice and a great deal of corruption. But there were also pretty efficient investments in Indonesia. The economy was supported by oil production and Suharto's crowd really did not interfere with oil production, and the Indonesian economy was doing quite well. We had some very good markets there for machinery and equipment, and for agricultural goods. Nothing much to complain about.

TIMOTHY MICHAEL CARNEY
Political Officer
Jakarta (1987-1990)

Ambassador Timothy Michael Carney was born in Missouri in 1944 and graduated from MIT in 1966. Carney studied abroad in France for a year before joining the Foreign Service. In the Foreign Service Carney served abroad in Vietnam, Lesotho, Cambodia, Thailand, South Africa, Sudan, Indonesia, and as ambassador to Sudan and Haiti. Ambassador Carney also spent time working with the Cox Foundation, USUN and the NSC. Carney was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

CARNEY: In '87 to Jakarta as political counselor. I had known the ambassador, Paul Wolfowitz, when he was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs. I had taken him around the Thai-Cambodian border when I was in Bangkok in the political section. I called in about December of 1986. The political counselor job was still vacant. Dennis Harter was the incumbent and was scheduled to leave. I called up. Dick Howland was DCM. Very quickly I got myself named political counselor in Jakarta. Vicki and I arrived about June.

Q: You were there in Jakarta from '87 to when?

CARNEY: To '90.

Q: Let's talk about Paul Wolfowitz. Today as we speak he is a figure of great controversy over... He is number 2 in the Department of Defense and is considered one of the major leaders in promulgating a war against Iraq. How did you find him as a thinker, as a leader, and as a person?

CARNEY: After we had been together for about 6 months, we were talking and I said to him, "You are in an ideal situation in your present job." He had started the conversation by observing that the deputy chief of station, an old friend of mine, someone who introduced Vicki and me to each other in Bangkok in the earlier years, and I seemed to be among the few people in the government overseas who got the most out of their foreign assignments. I responded that I thought he was in an almost ideal situation. He had all the enthusiasms of a first tour officer overseas. This was his first foreign posting. At the same time, he got it as ambassador, so he was able to do the policy as well.

He merits his reputation as someone not very interested in management. On decision-making he would delay his decision-making to the very last possible second with consequent impact on the bureaucracy that was trying to implement the decision. It was sometimes very difficult to get people to scramble to move forward on it. At the same time, he is enormously intellectually gifted and honest, willing to ask all the tough questions, to turn the issues upside down and have a look at them, to probe and demand a more thorough look and to demand that drafters and political and economic officers look at their own assumptions as they put together recommendations and even regular, ordinary cables.

Q: What was the political and economic situation and relations with the U.S. in Indonesia when

you arrived in '87?

CARNEY: I think I can encapsulize it by giving you a concrete example. The Suharto government had been in power 21 years. Suharto effectively took power in 1966 after the would-be coup of 1965 known as Gestapu in Indonesian. The children of Suharto had begun to become very active in business affairs with corruption rampant, sweetheart deals the norm. After I had been there 3 to six months, I got my colleagues in the political section to look very closely at what was happening in Indonesia. We put together a cable which argued that the Suharto government had exceeded the norms of Indonesian society when it came to corruption and mismanagement, but not yet the tolerance. That cable went into Washington causing a certain stir but it was well enough argued that it convinced everyone. What's interesting is that it took about 10 years for it to be crystal clear that they had exceeded the tolerance by then as well.

Q: When you're setting up a standard country... where do you figure out what the corruption norms are?

CARNEY: I'll give you an illustration. For years, the late Mrs. Suharto, whose given name was Tien, was known as Ibu or "Madame" Tien. Madame Ten Percent. In Indonesia, the phrase was "Sepulu percent biasa lebi banyak korupsi," which exactly means "Ten percent is normal. More than that's corruption." By the time we had gotten there, Mrs. Suharto had become known as Ibu Fifi, Madame 50/50.

Q: We always have this problem that if corruption is endemic and really bad at the same time we have a stable regime in a difficult neighborhood, there is the problem about reporting on corruption. If you over report on corruption, which is within the bloodstream of the system, pretty soon it will start leaking to the press. Congress will say, "That's a corrupt regime" and disregard it. So, you are not really moving... Diplomacy is supposed to be living with a country for the most part. Did you feel pressure on you on this corruption thing to say, "Okay, we've told them what it is. Let's lay off?"

CARNEY: Once we did that cable, there was much less internal embassy need to report every single incidence of corruption. There was a big AID program there so that had to be carefully watched. There was an enormous effort to get American business in there. Power plants in West Java were of considerable interest to a number of businesses in the U.S. On the other hand, corruption was pretty well covered in the press. You could make sure that FBIS picked up and translated such reports, which they did. I don't have a recollection that there was great difficulty making sure that the extent of corruption was known to Washington. Nobody had a cable slapped down. There was no effort from the ambassador or the DCM to explicitly limit aspects of reporting, at least not until John Monjo got there.

Q: Were we doing anything about this or were there any repercussions?

CARNEY: Probably the most interesting aspect of what we did was the remarks that Paul Wolfowitz made in the period just before his departure. He had earned such a reputation as someone seriously interested in and concerned about Indonesians themselves and about Indonesia in general, that he was able to make points which included corruption in his public comment and

even to the finance and bank people and even to Suharto himself.

Q: How about American business? How did they feel about it?

CARNEY: One of the leading American businessmen there was and is to this day a fellow named Jim Castle. Jim was recently quoted in the wake of the Bali terrorism act of last month. Jim and I were at Cornell when I did that academic year. That's where I met him. He was finishing his Ph.D. in Indonesian studies. If you knew the system there, and often that would mean having an Indonesian partner, you could do business. The problem then, as it is now, is that the legal system was totally subject to bribery and corruption or localitis and you could not rely on the legal system to prosecute a claim against an Indonesian partner or a violation of a contract. You had to do it Indonesian style.

Q: I think this would mean that an American business that came in would come in and really try to extract the maximum as quickly as possible on the theory that they weren't sure how long they'd be there so rather than trying to develop long-term foundations for this trade, just get in and get ready to get out.

CARNEY: Yes and no. The business which is the largest and longest running there is Freeport McMoRan. It's a spinoff from Freeport Sulphur. They signed the first or second contract with the government that replaced Sukarno's in about 1966. That was to run a copper mine in what used to be called New Guinea. They have been there mining copper ever since. That's quite a long... We're talking something that's very simple. You basically reduce mountains to ore and concentrate the copper, pipe it down to a port and ship the product off to a smelter in Japan. There are lots of impurities in that copper and those pay all the costs of the mining. Impurities are gold and silver. The copper is pure profit.

Q: As political officer, what was the political situation?

CARNEY: The political situation was controlled by the government party, Golkar, with a little bit of opposition politics there, but nothing to any great extent. The Islamic movement was in 2 parts, a rather conservative movement based in Surabaya run by the man who became the successor to Suharto and was then turfed out to be replaced by Megawati Sukarno Putri, a fellow named Abdurrahman Wahid, whom I can recall having at dinner at the house when I was political counselor, and then a modern Islamic movement known as Muhammadiyah, which is currently run by a fellow named Amin Rais, who was a contender to replace Abdurrahman Wahid but couldn't mobilize the wherewithal to do so.

Q: Let's talk about these parties. Where did they fit in the fundamentalist versus more liberal spectrum?

CARNEY: Muhammadiyah was modernizing whereas Wahid's was... Fundamentalism is such an easy term to use. It was much more orthodox.

Q: Was the orthodox turning to the Koran as the absolute word.

CARNEY: In the 1930s Sukarno and his fellow members of the Indonesian independence movement met in a major youth conference and decided that Indonesia would be a secular state and that although the Javanese are by far in the majority, the national language would be a trade language, which is essentially what was spoken in Malaya, which is the Bahasa Indonesia of this day. To keep Indonesia together - it is such a diverse state - the political philosophy has been secular, diverse, and plural. Christians, Hindus as is the case of Bali, and Muslims together in a single state. This was challenged with the separatist movement in the far western part of the island of Sumatra, known as Aceh, that began a separatist rebellion that the army was particularly ham-handed in trying to put down.

Q: Was there an anti-western core in Islam?

CARNEY: No, not at all. There was a period in which the East Timor situation once again went on the boil. Indeed I made sure that the first trip I took as political counselor outside of Jakarta was to Dili in East Timor to inform myself on the Indonesian effort to suppress the East Timorese independence movement, and to look at what Indonesia was doing to make unity with Indonesia attractive. Had a good chat with the military commander there and argued strongly to him, because he contended to me that there had been a number of courts martial for abuses of human rights in Indonesia, that those needed to be publicized, first of all to make the point among the troops, but second to burnish Indonesia's reputation under considerable pressure for human rights violations. It seemed to me that there wasn't much likelihood that the Indonesians would do the right thing and convince East Timorese that they wanted to be part of the greater archipelago.

Q: With the East Timorese, how long before had it been when Indonesia moved in on this?

CARNEY: They moved in '75.

Q: When you got there, did you see any indication that their role had had any effect?

CARNEY: The city wasn't shot up. They (The Jakarta authorities) were opening immigration, to let a lot of traders in from Sulawesi and from some of the other parts of the archipelago. And there was an increasing effort to build teak forests. I remember looking at one in the eastern part of East Timor when we flew out of Dili. Essentially there were lots of Indonesian doctors there. That was one of the programs to try to build bridges and make unity with Indonesia attractive. But the philosophy was, "You do what we want and we'll both be happy."

Q: How about this Aceh situation? Where is that?

CARNEY: The far west of Sumatra. The last year we were in Indonesia, there was a wonderful film done by an Indonesian director produced in Indonesia called "Tjuk Nyak Dien." Tjuk Nyak Dien was a woman who led one of the rebellions against the Dutch at about the turn of the 20th century. The last trip I made was to Aceh itself. I had an Indonesian friend who organized a contact who was delighted to be my host because he was Indonesian police. Everybody thought he could keep a watch on what I did. I went along, didn't take anyone, even a Bahasa speaker, with me. I had studied Indonesian at home in the period of the posting but did not speak Bahasa well enough to do serious political work. I had a 2 at the best. I went through the Dutch cemetery in the

capital there. The Dutch lost a lot of men in their effort to subjugate the people of Aceh including several generals, knights, and the cemetery is remarkable. It's kept up very nicely. It seemed to me that you had ham-handed military effort, almost a parody of the hearts and mind effort the U.S. ran in Vietnam, that was not going to be successful. But I accepted the logic of Indonesians, that if you began letting go of places that were part of Indonesia itself from the independence days, you would risk enhancing the centrifugal forces to the point that Indonesia would fly apart, which I did not see in anybody's interest, least of all the U.S.

Q: Were you able to sound out what the Achenese leaders wanted?

CARNEY: I talked to a number of people there. They were very cautious talking to me. To an extent it was clear there was a general desire to stay with Indonesia if it was at all possible. But remember, Exxon, now Exxon Mobil, has its largest money spinner in the form of gas fields just off the coast of Aceh. They were not realizing a sufficient return on those resources.

Q: How about dealing with the Indonesian government? Did you mainly deal with the ministry of foreign affairs?

CARNEY: Basically I dealt with the ministry of foreign affairs and the parliament. A very good relationship with the foreign ministry, both the Americas desk, international organizations desk, and the minister himself, Ali Alatas. This became solidified when Indonesia took up the task as host of the Jakarta Informal Meetings to try to bring about a resolution to the situation in Cambodia. My expertise was well known since I was published on Cambodia and knew all the players.

Q: Did you get involved in this?

CARNEY: Very much. It was the Jakarta Informal Meetings. I was the central watcher for that process and did the reporting. We were not formal observers there, so I would have to run around and chase Cambodian and Indonesian participants to find out what had gone on at the meetings.

Q: What was your impression of these meetings?

CARNEY: That they weren't going to produce results because it was a little too early, but it was good to get ASEAN engaged in trying to push the Cambodian process forward. The French were particularly egregious. They were very unhappy with the Australians. The French continued to believe that Indochina was their bailiwick. The Australians, as an Asia and Pacific power believed, as it turned out correctly, that they had important things to say and do to help bring about resolution of the issue. Probably the best anecdote on this was at the very last of the JIM meetings, the Australian foreign minister, volatile Gareth Evans, who now heads the International Crisis Group operating out of Brussels, a group that Mort Abramowitz founded just after he was at Carnegie... The French had been going around throwing banana peels under an effort the Australians launched for a peace plan for Cambodia. This became well known to the Australians that the French were pooh-poohing and dismissing the Australian contribution. At a press conference, Evans started out saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, I want to make it clear that contrary to what has been published in the press, I have never called my French colleagues 'perfidious

frogs.' I have called them, in fact, "perfidious fucking frogs." That sort of set the tone of Australian-French relations which continued to the UNTAC period in Cambodia itself.

Q: Did we have any role in this?

CARNEY: We did not. We had a watching brief.

Q: What did we hope would come out of this?

CARNEY: We didn't know. We were willing to let it go forward and see what might happen. I really didn't have a clue what Washington was thinking about. They were avidly devouring the reporting we did, which was copious. But essentially at about this time there was a Cambodia conference in Paris that went nowhere. But the issue seemed still to be in a military phase with the Chinese supplying guns and ammunition to the Khmer Rouge through Thailand, the Malaysians and Singaporeans supplying guns and ammunition to the non-communist Cambodians through Thailand, and the U.S. supplying non-lethal equipment through AID money (it might have been ESF) also through Thailand, with the CIA actively keeping tabs on the situation also through Thailand.

Q: Of course it was a very difficult situation. You wanted to get the Vietnamese out but you didn't want the Khmer Rouge to take over again.

CARNEY: Exactly. That situation finally broke loose in 1990 or '91 when the 5 permanent members of the Security Council together with the UN Secretariat began a series of meetings with the Cambodian parties that ultimately resulted in the Paris Agreements of 1991.

Q: What about the politics of Indonesia? You've got this huge state - lots of people, lots of islands, lots of distances. Did their parliament represent the various groups or was it dominated from a center and orders just went out?

CARNEY: Essentially the government party, GOLKAR, was the main player in parliament. There were also a number of appointed members of parliament which meant that there might have been debate in parliament but parliament was a rubber stamp.

Q: As the head of the political section, who were the people that you really wanted to find out who was doing what to whom?

CARNEY: I would talk to the various people in Golkar, Golkar being a movement rather than a political party. You would get various traits and tendencies in Golkar and talk to some of the Golkar leaders. We worked with people who were not in parliament but were politically active such as Abdurrahman Wahid and the Islamic groups. The DATT worked with the military because the military then as now continued to see themselves much as the Turkish military do, but without the constitutional mandate to ensure stability in the Indonesian state.

Q: Did we have problems with the Indonesians?

CARNEY: We did not. You knew 'tho that it was going to come apart because Suharto was not bringing up a successor. The fellow who eventually and briefly succeeded him, an islander named Habibi, was basically an engineer who was the head of the state aircraft industry. Indonesians produce parts for F-16s and were building their own version of a medium sized civilian aircraft, a turbo jet. There was state of the art equipment to produce aircraft parts, better than Thailand, in fact. But there did not seem to be a serious effort to look at a transition in politics much less an opening up that would begin to let Indonesians feel as if they were part of the government of the country.

Q: Were you there when the Marcos regime fell in the Philippines?

CARNEY: I think that had already happened. I think Cori Aquino was already in.

Q: They looked similar.

CARNEY: Well, maybe from a distance, but up close the big difference was the role of the army in Indonesia as opposed to the Philippines?

Q: Where did the army fit in?

CARNEY: The army saw itself as the guarantor of the stability of the state.

Q: But were they?

CARNEY: They were. The other big difference between the 2 nations is that everybody in politics in Indonesia remembered what happened after November of 1965. The figures ranged from half a million, to well over that, dead in the chaos that followed on the assassination of the generals and the cleanup under Suharto. Nobody wanted to see that happen again because Indonesia's so big and centrifugal. The fear was that kind of chaos would destroy Indonesia.

Q: The Cornell school blamed the United States for the slaughter after the failed coup, when the generals were killed in '65. Was this at all a myth or something going around in Indonesia?

CARNEY: I had been at Cornell from 1975 to '76, so I was steeped in the Cornell mythology of Indonesia. Ben Anderson, a prominent protagonist in that, was my faculty advisor. The late George McT. Kahin and his wife Audrey were on sabbatical at that time. I never really bought that. Barbara Harvey, who did a Cornell monograph on Permesta - "Half a Rebellion" I think she called it - was in Surabaya as consul general then. She came out of that Cornell tradition as well. Of course, Cornelians were always in Indonesia. Jim Castle, whom I mentioned as a businessman, was there. And any number of people were there doing field work for their Ph.D. dissertations- (end of tape)

Indonesian officials always viewed Cornell graduates with a jaundiced eye because of the legacy of that widely published Cornell Paper (on the coup). But there was no impact on relations with the range of Indonesians I dealt with, who included academics, think tank people, Indonesian military. I didn't have that much to do with Americans.

Q: Were we doing anything with the Indonesian military to get them to be a little less ham-handed?

CARNEY: I know the DATT [defense attaché], Colonel Jay Mussels, was very active with the Indonesian military. He and I worked very closely together. At one point we used the DATT aircraft to fly an ostensible political counselor's trip to Ambon, Biak, Jayapura, Merauke, the capital of West Timor, Kupang, and then Sumbawa and Bali, where I got off and met Vicki. Terrific trip. We met any number of military and civilian officials throughout the eastern part of the archipelago that way. Lots of effort on behalf of the DATT working closely with the Ambassador - both Paul Wolfowitz and John Monjo to push a little bit with relatively little success.

Q: How were things going in Borneo and Irian?

CARNEY: Borneo was one place I did not get to. There didn't seem to be too many issues there except those created by the effort on the part of the government to send migrants from the overpopulated parts of Java to Borneo. In Irian or the Indonesian part of New Guinea, I visited some migrant villages where life was pretty basic. It was clear that the effort couldn't possibly succeed. It just cost too much to ship people out of Java and then provide them with the wherewithal to begin a new life. It wasn't like the U.S. where people essentially used their own resources to fund their movement west.

New Guinea is an amazing place. I have talked about the copper mine that Freeport had. I visited the capital of the province, which used to be Hollandia and is now Jayapura, Victorious City or City of Victory in Sanskrit. The middle part of the island, the Baliem Valley, where as cold as it is, people are essentially naked. And Merauke itself where you have the emus wandering around and emu eggs are sold. Biak Island to this day has the caves infamous from World War II. The Japanese garrison refused to surrender and allied troops rolled gasoline drums into the caves and ignited them with tracer gunfire. Bones are still being brought out of those caves. A Japanese association dealing with missing in action and war veterans comes annually to conduct appropriate rites for the remains. It's a remarkable place.

Q: Looking at this from your perspective, you've got the problem of corruption, diverse area, huge distances, and then overpopulation particularly in Java. When you left in '90, how did you see this coming out?

CARNEY: I thought they would have a mess in the transition away from Suharto. I wasn't in doubt about that. But I also thought that there was enough depth in educated citizenry and breadth in potential governing class that they could manage the transition. I did not think it would fall apart.

Q: Had American education made an impact there?

CARNEY: Certainly on the economic and financial side - we're talking the "Berkeley mafia" and then its successors, Chicago, Cornell, and Princeton. No question. A major role on the part of the U.S. This was why one became so unhappy with the effort to isolate the Indonesian military

through an end of the IMET program and military sales which happened after I left.

Q: Did you have any contact with Megawati Sukarno and her group?

CARNEY: None whatsoever. They were not players at all nor did they seem to have the potential to be players.

Q: What was the lean at the embassy on Suharto and his coterie?

CARNEY: As I think I've explained, a belief that they were on the edge of exceeding the tolerance with a later departure a serious possibility as a result.

Q: What was a possible scenario? Were you all thinking of a military coup?

CARNEY: No, we weren't at that time. Suharto was such a clever politician. He had essentially marginalized those who might think of a coup. Notably at that time it would have been (General) Benny Murdani, who once he lost his command in classic Indonesian fashion, his power was attenuated.

Q: You were there '87 to '90 when the Soviet Union fell apart. Did that have any effect?

CARNEY: That was a fascinating period. Indonesians were deeply interested. You had American thinkers being brought out to talk at Indonesian think tanks like the one run by Yusef Wanandi, aka Lim Bian Kie, and his associates. Very much attention being paid by Indonesians themselves. That was what opened the possibility for a solution in Cambodia. The Soviets were the ones funding the Vietnamese who were in turn active in Cambodia. This was a particular aspect that Indonesians, Thais, Singaporeans, and Malaysians focused on. It also helped bring the Soviets - about to become Russians - into the fold for UNSC effort to solve Cambodia.

Q: Did the Japanese play any role there?

CARNEY: The Japanese had an enormous aid program to Indonesia. We instituted a policy of cooperation with the Japanese in the hope of helping to influence how they used their aid in Indonesia. They had a very capable set of political officers and a fellow who is also a Cambodian specialist was posted in Indonesia.

Q: I'm a navy buff. What ever happened to that Soviet cruiser that Khrushchev gave to Sukarno?

CARNEY: I have no idea.

Q: It's probably at the bottom rusted away by now.

CARNEY: Yes. The Indonesian navy was fairly active but mainly in a coastal role and we were always worried that they were going to try to close one of the straits, which under international law they had and have no right to do. Even though we hadn't signed the Law of the Sea, we stated we would act according to its provisions. I think we eventually accepted the Indonesian "archipelagic

concept” with the straits not part of it.

Q: Did Singapore and Malaysia play any role at all?

CARNEY: Singapore was intensely interested in stability in Indonesia and always worried about it. The Malaysians and the Indonesians have a territorial dispute over parts of Borneo and problems with Islam as well because Malaysia is an Islamic state and Indonesia is not. And you had (private) Malaysians supporting the separatists in Aceh. A very complicated relationship.

Q: Did you get any impression about how well the Indonesians were represented in the United States?

CARNEY: It’s very spotty, always has been. You have an occasional ambassador of amazing breadth and competence, but most were too Javanese to get along in the States, not willing to push themselves forward, thinking they didn’t have to meet with staffers because they were an ambassador and ought to be meeting with congressmen or senators.

Q: This is one of the great mistakes anybody who comes to the U.S. makes.

CARNEY: Except the Australians, the Canadians, and the Brits now.

Q: What about the American community? Was this a factor in anything?

CARNEY: The businessmen were very interested. The ambassador was often called upon to use his weight on behalf of businessmen and it worked pretty well. When the ambassador decided to get engaged, he could move things.

Q: Were you there when John Monjo came?

CARNEY: Yes.

Q: How was he as an ambassador?

CARNEY: He worked very well for the business community. The Indonesians thought he was an odd duck. He wasn’t really interested in Indonesia. He might have been in earlier postings there, but he ceased to be interested in Indonesia. He spoke good Bahasa, but as designer Iwan Tirta put it one time, “He speaks Bahasa to Americans and serves bad food to his guests at home.” That reputation colored the Indonesian view of this tour.

Q: How was the social life there?

CARNEY: It was essentially at home or at someone else’s home. Lots of dinners, receptions. Vicki and I had dinners regularly including receptions for CODELs. We’d have a whole lamb, for example. Or depending on who was invited, we once or twice had Babi Menado, which is roast pig, north Sulawesi style. I hunted in west Java once or twice, brought back a wild pig, and served it at dinner. There was a whole crowd there, pick up food. The pig was off in one corner, not

identified. There wasn't any left.

Q: We're talking about a Muslim state.

CARNEY: A Muslim population.

I had an Indonesian friend who was involved in refugee affairs because there was a boat people camp, one of the other neuralgic issues. His name was Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed. I asked him about that. He would hunt these wild... They're basically feral pigs, pretty big, 300 pounds. He said, "You know, babi is the Indonesian word for pig and nobody eats pig. But these wild pigs are known in Javanese as *chaleng*. Like every good hunter, I always eat what I hunt. Chaleng is not a babi."

Q: What about the boat people problem?

CARNEY: They would be assembled at a camp-

Q: These would be Vietnamese?

CARNEY: Essentially, although there were some Cambodians, too. In fact, we had some Cambodians bribe their way to Jakarta itself. We had a refugee officer in Singapore, Carol Courtney, who came over and talked to some of these people. They were generally treated well enough. I suspect by now those camps are long emptied and everybody's gone.

Q: What were we doing?

CARNEY: Interviewing to see if they fit our category for early movement to the United States. The French would do the same.

Q: How about the role of the Australian embassy in Indonesia? You've got this vast continent with hardly any people in it and just above it you've got this vast area with too damn many people in it.

CARNEY: Well, I got along very well with the Australians. They had some very good people there. The DCM, David Irvine, did a book on the Indonesian shadow theater. Knowledgeable. You're correct. Indonesia is the classic threat in all the Australian contingency planning, which the Indonesians found very amusing, arguing that there wouldn't be any way for the military to get through the traffic to get across the island to the south coast to have an invasion. I used to tease the Australians that the biggest danger to their continent was if the Indonesian population would line up on the south coast and everybody would take a leak, the resulting tidal wave would inundate Australia. They had the grace to laugh.

There are 100,000 or so Australian tourists a year in Bali. The problem was, and I think I've referred in earlier discussions to the views of one of my guys when I was consul in Udon, that it's an easy, convenient, and sometimes illuminating way to look at peoples as if they have a switch in the brain, a binary switch. The Thais can be viewed as looking at things as either sranuk, fun and engaging, or not sranuk, which is very bad. The American switch is, is it true or is it false? The

British switch is, is it of proper class or is it not? The Indonesian, especially Javanese, switch is, is it refined, halus, or is it coarse and crude, kasar? Australians are the living definition of coarse. There is a built-in problem between the Indonesian political elite, essentially Javanese, and Australia, and that will persist forever. Australians are not going to change.

Q: You might say their working class origins, they're proud of them and this is how they present themselves.

CARNEY: Almost sometimes deliberately crude.

BRUCE F. DUNCOMBE
Economic Counselor
Jakarta (1987-1991)

Bruce F. Duncombe was born on July 25, 1927 in Massachusetts. He received his BA from Amherst College in 1959 and his PhD from the University of Minnesota in 1964. His career has included positions in the Ivory Coast, Egypt, India, and Indonesia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 2, 2002.

Q: So, in 1987, you were off to Indonesia?

DUNCOMBE: That is correct.

Q: You were there from 1987 to when?

DUNCOMBE: 1991.

Q: 1991. Who was the ambassador when you got there?

DUNCOMBE: Paul Wolfowitz, the only political ambassador I ever had. He was excellent. A very, very capable and insightful individual. He was very courageous in his public speaking. The message he was constantly giving to the Indonesians was that, "Yes, you are doing well, and are open on the economic side, but economic openness requires, if it is to succeed, to have political openness." The political system was not an open system. The Soeharto government was a very authoritarian government. It was certainly not democratically elected, in any meaningful sense. Wolfowitz' message was that if you are going to succeed, you have got to have an open political system that matches your open economic system. In hindsight, if you look what has happened in Indonesia in the last decade, he was absolutely right.

Q: Oh, absolutely. When you arrived there, how would you describe the Indonesia economy?

DUNCOMBE: Doing quite well. They had followed sound advice, in terms of management of their exchange rate, and their agriculture. They had moved away from being an enormous rice deficit country, rice being the staple element in the Indonesian diet, to a point, by the time I arrived

in 1987, to being trend self-sufficient in rice. By trend self-sufficient, I mean in some years they had to import a little, and in some years that had a little bit to export. But, basically, they had become self-sufficient in their staple food product. They were feeding themselves. Wages were very low, but the number of people in poverty, however you define that, was on the decline. If you looked at what they were doing by way of schooling, virtually everyone had access to at least primary education. As you walked around the country and looked at the people, you did not see many signs of malnutrition and other things that would accompany total deprivation. The kids that went to school were all reasonably well dressed. Many of them were without shoes, but in the tropics, shoes aren't always at the top of your agenda.

Q: Dealing with the Indonesian government, how did you find your access and statistics, and that sort of thing, that you need?

DUNCOMBE: The statistics were not published in English. Since I had not had Indonesian language training, I had to rely on others for the statistics. But, we certainly thought the statistics were adequate. Some sources were English. I don't want to paint entirely the wrong picture. In terms of access on the economic side, it was outstanding. Most of the people I dealt with in the ministries were western educated with a Ph.D. in economics.

Q: Were you seeing signs of a problem that later hit Indonesia and that whole area? I'm talking about corruption, Soeharto family ties to people, but also loans given out from banks that weren't really supported, and that sort of thing. This is endemic in that area, not too long ago, which sort of blew up in everybody's face.

DUNCOMBE: Of course there were signs of that. But, jumping ahead to my next tour, which was in Nigeria, the way I described it to a reporter that broke the ground rules, and stated in attribution that enabled everyone to identify who he had been talking with. I characterized it in Indonesia, as facilitative corruption, whereas in Nigeria, it was malignant corruption. In Indonesia, for instance, the daughter of the president would get loans at preferential rates from banks to build toll roads. The roads got built, and the traffic moved, whereas in Nigeria, nothing got done.

Q: There is sort of the contrast with AID people, just what you're saying. In Asia, the Asians dealing with AID funds, would take ten percent, five percent off, whereas those in Africa would take 100%. Things just didn't seem to get done.

DUNCOMBE: In Indonesia, things did get done. Not all of it was productive, but the roads did get built. There were some very excellent roads built in and around Jakarta, in the city where traffic could be a horrible problem. Something that was very controversial was the minister of science and technology, BJ Habibie, who in fact became president for a short while, after Soeharto was removed. An aeronautical engineer who Soeharto brought back in the mid-1970s to be his minister of science and technology, had developed in Bandung an aircraft facility. He did in fact design and did produce an Indonesian aircraft, which I flew in a number of times, and am here to tell the story. They were producing, under contract with Boeing, components for Boeing aircraft. The whole concept was all wrong. This is high-tech trickle down. It was a misguided effort, in my opinion. But, the fact of the matter is it was an operating, very modern, high-tech industrial establishment.

Q: When you say high-tech as trickling down, in your eyes and American eyes, how should it work?

DUNCOMBE: It's not employing a lot of people. But, in all fairness, it was training a cadre of very skilled people, who if they were to move onto other endeavors, would have all sorts of management and technical skills that might be transferable to other sorts of activities. But, in the first instance, it's an awful lot of money that is going into a facility that produces a showcase kind of product, rather than providing job opportunities and training for the masses.

Q: Was there much room for entrepreneurs to start up new businesses and that sort of thing?

DUNCOMBE: Yes, if you knew the ropes and how to get around the obstacles that non-transparent bureaucracies will throw up from time to time.

Q: With Americans coming in, were they at a disadvantage, to say the French or others...

DUNCOMBE: No.

Q: ...Because of constraints on our ability to pay commissions, and that sort of thing?

DUNCOMBE: I'm sure you would be able to find some American business people who would say that the Foreign Court Practices Act was an obstacle to their doing business, although I never had anyone tell me that, to my face. That would mean they were trying to bribe. So, they are not going to come in and say, "Hey." We were not able to bribe. I'm sure you would find people who would say that was an obstacle, but having said that, there were many Americans operating successfully in Indonesia. The Am Cham was a very vibrant...

Q: American Chamber of Commerce.

DUNCOMBE: The American Chamber of Commerce was a very vibrant, active organization. Certainly, the oil companies, the American companies were the dominant oil companies in this sector of the Indonesian economy. Caltech was the major producer with a facility in central Sumatra. Mobil had a large gas project in northern Sumatra, producing liquefied natural gas. Unocal was operating in Borneo, and there were a number of others. By the way, under their production sharing contracts, they did have some tension from time to time about the number of expatriate employees, but by and large, they were not at all dissatisfied with the arrangements they had with the Indonesian government.

Q: Were you getting any complaints or concerns about members of the Soeharto immediate family wanting a piece of the action?

DUNCOMBE: Oh, yes. All the time.

Q: So, what happened?

DUNCOMBE: Sometimes they got a piece of the action, and sometimes they didn't. Sometimes

things did not go through because the spoils were not being shared in the way that the local power really wanted it to.

Q: *We learned to be pretty comfortable with this system?*

DUNCOMBE: I don't follow your question.

Q: *Were we going around saying, "You have to be..." You mentioned Ambassador Wolfowitz was saying, "You have a good, modern economy, but you have to sustain it to sustain the country, you really have to have a much more open political system." Were there elements within the economic system? For example, too much family influence? Were we seeing this as impeding economic growth?*

DUNCOMBE: Yes.

Q: *Were we making this known?*

DUNCOMBE: In the context of what was diplomatically appropriate, yes. Many of the Indonesians would put out the same message.

Q: *It was an open secret. The sticky hands of the Soeharto business, and others, I guess.*

DUNCOMBE: The ambassador is not going to get up and say that the president and his family are a bunch of crooks. The Indonesian trade minister is not going to get up and say that the president and his family are a bunch of crooks.

Q: *What about this big Indonesian family that later got implicated with the Clintons?*

DUNCOMBE: The Riyadi family.

Q: *Yes. Who were they? What sort of power were they?*

DUNCOMBE: They were very influential. I remember them as being very influential in the banking sector. I knew several of the Riyadis. I don't think I knew James who was the person I recall mentioned in connection with some of the Clinton issues. I knew them as bankers. Indonesia has a number of conglomerates, very large family-controlled, multifaceted enterprises. The Riyadis were one of the families that headed up these conglomerates.

Q: *How did we see the banking system there? Was it a healthy banking system, or were they over extended in making loans to politically correct people, or something like that?*

DUNCOMBE: There were private banks, and there were government supported banks. I think our feeling was that on balance the banking system was functioning well at the time I was there. Whether or not individual banks were overextended and had problematic balance sheets... If that was the case, it was not something that we were focused on.

Q: When American business people came to Indonesia, and dropped by to see you, were we touting Indonesia as a good place to invest, or were we telling people to be careful? How were we dealing with it?

DUNCOMBE: I think one of the pieces of advice given at all the embassies I was in was that you wanted to be very sure that you know exactly what you are doing, and have your eyes wide opened. But, in that context, Indonesia was viewed as a good place for American companies to consider doing business.

Q: Were you looking beyond President Soeharto? Obviously, everybody's time is limited, but was there the feeling that this was getting toward the end of his regime, and looking to see who might take over afterwards?

DUNCOMBE: Certainly. In the context of Wolfowitz' message, "What kind of a political system are you going to have that is going to provide for a stable transition to a new administration that everyone knows is inevitable?"

Q: Were the French, the Dutch busy there? Did we find ourselves in competition with other countries? The Japanese?

DUNCOMBE: Always. But, no one had any particular inside advantage. The Japanese were very active. The French were active, the Dutch were active, the Brits were active. Indonesia is a large country, a reasonably open country, economically. Foreign investment was open. Foreign trade was welcome. There were many opportunities. Many, many western countries were actively involved commercially, and otherwise economically in Indonesia.

Q: Were there many Indonesians getting trained in either technical subjects, business. Were they going to the United States?

DUNCOMBE: Primarily to the United States.

Q: Was there a good solid cadre of American trained people in the business community and in the government?

DUNCOMBE: Yes. When I arrived, the economic coordinating minister, Ali Wahdarna had a Ph.D. in economics from Berkeley. Professor Widjojo, the leading eminence in the Indonesia economic community, had a Ph.D. in economics from Berkeley. The man who became the governor of the Central Bank, Adrianus Mooy, had a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin. The planning minister, Salef Affif had a Ph.D. in economics from Oregon. The junior trade minister, once they split the trade portfolio into two parts, Soedrajad Djwandojo, had a Ph.D. from Boston University. The finance minister, Suiderman, had a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. Habibie was trained in Germany. The trade minister had a Ph.D. from Germany. Rador Pawiro, another one of the economic coordinating ministers, and finance minister, had a Ph.D. in economics from Rotterdam. These are western trained technocrats. Most of them were trained in the United States.

Q: How did you and your wife and family find life there?

DUNCOMBE: Very comfortable. Traffic could be a horrible problem on some of the thoroughfares. We did have a driver. At the store, you could buy anything. There was excellent domestic and imported food available, and very affordable.

Q: Were your children going to school there, or were they older?

DUNCOMBE: We in fact stayed for the fourth year, not only because we enjoyed it, but so our youngest daughter could graduate from high school.

Q: In 1991, when you left in Indonesia, looking back at it, how did you see the future for Indonesia at that time?

DUNCOMBE: On the economic side, it looked very positive. There was this political cloud as to whether or not they were going to develop something resembling viable democratic institutions, and how the eventual transition at the end of the Soeharto era was going to work itself out. It turns out that it was a very uncomfortable divorce.

Q: Were we looking at that time at Indonesians, as China being a big rival in production, or just a good market?

DUNCOMBE: I'm not sure what the drift of your question is.

Q: Well, China was beginning to develop an entrepreneurial economy at that time, wasn't it, by 1991?

DUNCOMBE: I haven't followed that timing of the Chinese emergence to...

Q: Well, did we think about the Chinese economy at that time of being a threat or an opportunity for the Indonesians?

DUNCOMBE: Certainly China would be a potential competitor for the Indonesians as well as a potential competitor for everyone else. China is enormous. Assuming they succeed economically, and continue to succeed economically, they are going to be a competitive force that not only the Indonesians, but others in east and southeast Asia and around the globe are going to have to figure out how to compete with.

Q: Well, while you were there, how did Indonesia, from an economic perspective, relate to its neighbors? I'm thinking of the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and India too.

DUNCOMBE: Well, Indonesia was one of the founding members of the ASEAN group, which at the time I left was six. It was Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei. The avowed principals of economic cooperation in ASEAN were more vows than matters that were delivered in fact. The trading relationship between the ASEAN states was fairly limited. That is partly because their economies in a number of respects were very, very similar, with the

exception of Singapore.

Q: Did the oil fit into the economy? In some places, oil becomes so dominant, and there is nothing else. Was there a comfortable fit, do you feel, in the economy, with its oil revenues?

DUNCOMBE: Yes. Oil was important, but it did not dominate the life of the country. The Acehenese in the northern province of Sumatra were constantly raising the issue of the equitable distribution of monies from the extracted resources. The other major oil producing areas, which were Riau province and central Sumatra, and East Kalimantan and Eastern Borneo, this issue was not raised systematically, in terms of the equitable distribution of resources. In Riau and East Kalimantan, they basically viewed themselves as part of Indonesia, and realized that a lot of resources were being developed for the extract of... A lot of revenue was being raised from the extracted resources in these provinces. They were not chomping at the bit about what was being used for developments in other parts of the country, in the same way the Acehenese were. The Acehenese have a special problem for several reasons: First of all, it was a serious Muslim province, as opposed to an Indonesian Muslim province, where especially in Java, traditional religions and Hinduism, mixed with Islam, in terms of a much easier going non-militant type of Islam. But, in Aceh, it was a very different attitude. Then, as the natural gas was developed, you had the construction of a large liquification facility. There were two fertilizer plants that were built in connection with it, and a very large Kraft paper plant. During the construction phase, that essentially ended during the time I was there, many workers were brought from Java to work on these construction projects. Then, when the construction work ended, there they were, without any formal program to repatriate them to Java, and tensions were developing within Aceh itself, albeit between Indonesians, Javanese Indonesians, as opposed to Acehenese Indonesians, and Muslims, but Javanese Muslims, as opposed to more serious Aceh Muslims, that was giving rise to a whole variety of tensions within the Aceh province.

Q: Were we looking at and concerned about the depletion of the forests in Borneo, or in other places?

DUNCOMBE: Some people were. There were those who would oppose cutting any tree, under any circumstances at any time. There are others who would say, "Let's go, let's cut." There are others, myself included, who think they were cutting a lot of timber, but in many areas, it was being replanted albeit to a monoculture, for purposes of providing feed stock for paper mills, palm oil and rubber plantations, and that sort of thing. What you had was the development of tree plantations, much like what we have in many parts of the United States, where what was originally in the colonial periods, a multi cultural forest, has now been replaced by managed forests that are cut and replanted.

Q: But, you saw a system that was not just despoiling the area without replacing it?

DUNCOMBE: In some areas, that was happening, certainly. There were people going in, doing illegal logging, where replacement was not taking place. This would be primarily in Borneo, I think. I'm not saying that there were not problems. As you know, people that are concerned with environmental issues have many different perspectives on them.

Q: Yes. Well, you moved from this, I take it, an enjoyable tour? It sounds like a real challenging place. It had a thriving economy, a place where you could really get your teeth into, as far as we're concerned, but also nice people.

DUNCOMBE: I enjoyed my time there very much, professionally. Once you get away from the Indonesian cities, the countryside itself is beautiful. It was a real pleasure. Although I did not have the language, in Jakarta, that was not a serious problem, because all the people I had to deal with professionally spoke excellent English. We had excellent access, with very few exceptions. The ambassadors, Wolfowitz, and then Monjo, would allow me to call in ministers, and many ministers would be quite content to receive somebody below the ambassadorial level.

MARCUS L. WINTER
Director, Agriculture and Rural Development Office, USAID
Jakarta (1988-1992)

Marcus L. Winter was born and raised in Minnesota. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis/St. Paul. His career included positions in Peru, East Africa, and Zimbabwe. Mr. Winter was interviewed by W. Haven North on January 23, 1997.

Q: Where did you go next?

WINTER: To Indonesia. Where I spent the next four years. I arrived there in January of 1988 and I stayed there until July, 1992.

Q: And you were the Agriculture Officer?

WINTER: I was head of the Office of Agriculture and Rural Development which, when I arrived, was a large office. We had thirteen direct-hire and contract staff in the office. In addition there were over fifty contract staff working on projects and a Foreign Service National staff of about forty-two.

Q: What was the situation in the country and our US relationship to it?

WINTER: Indonesia was starting to do very well in growth terms and viewed very positively. The government was very stable. AID had been providing substantial amounts of assistance to Indonesia since the late 1960s and, although smaller, the program in 1988 was still substantial. There were assistance activities across a wide spectrum from stock market development to family planning to private sector support to small credit. All part of the program had very good working relationships at the national and the provincial levels.

In agriculture and rural development, the environment was equally positive. Agricultural production was going up, rural services were improving and government programs were generally viewed as effective. AID had a long history of assistance in agriculture and rural development and

a large on-going program of twelve or thirteen projects. The activities were scattered both in terms of technical areas and in geographic regions. We were supporting programs in crops research, soil conservation, agricultural planning, provincial rural development, rural road construction, irrigation improvement, upland crop production, fisheries development, livestock research, soils research, watershed management and perhaps something else that I am forgetting. Three of the projects were new-one in irrigation, one in rural roads and one in fisheries, but the remainder were basically in mid to late stages of implementation.

I can characterize my time in Indonesia in two ways. One, we managed to begin a few new assistance activities in a systematic manner. Second, we completed a large number of programs and consolidated both activities and staff as requirements changed.

Q: What do you mean by requirements changing?

WINTER: Driven partly by budget, but also by a change in what Indonesia seemed to need most, we moved from a hands-on, field-based program to a more policy-oriented effort aimed at some of the macro level issues. Put another way, we moved to a substantial extent from assistance at a local level to a more Jakarta-based program. Projects that were largely field based were allowed to come to an end, were not continued or extended. And even the three new projects I mentioned-rural roads, irrigation management and fisheries were shrunk in scope just as they were starting to reduce the field activities. Reducing the fisheries project by 50 percent before it started was one of the first things I did.

Q: Was this strictly a budget issue? Or were there reservations about working...?

WINTER: It was a budget issue related to the feeling that we needed to be devoting more resources toward policy and private sector activities. So, it was a rethinking of the assistance strategy. There was also a new mission director.

Q: Who was that?

WINTER: David Merrill. He certainly brought in a focus on the private sector and policy change, not just in agriculture and rural development but across the board. And it was time for AID to acknowledge the results of some assistance activities and move on.

Q: Which ones would you cite-of ones that had been there for awhile that were the most significant of the programs?

WINTER: Probably reflecting my bias, I think the agricultural research program we been involved in since the late 1960's was the most significant. Cooperating with the World Bank in the research program, we had helped develop the research system and the rice varieties that enabled Indonesia to be basically self-sufficient in rice.

Q: Was this at the university or was this...?

WINTER: No. This was through the Agricultural Research Department of the Ministry of

Agriculture. We helped establish the research system, including working with the World Bank and others to construct it, to staff it and to train the people in it, and to put in the actual research programs. It was really a massive effort over more than twenty years. There were others involved but we had a real leadership role.

Q: We were at the heart of it, right?

WINTER: Yes. We were at the heart of it. By the time I left Indonesia our assistance in agricultural research basically ended except in the area of bio-technology. I really felt we still had something to offer in that area and that we needed a little phase-out period.

Q: And successfully?

WINTER: Yes. I think we ended successfully.

Q: People had been trained, it was sustained and it was going forward?

WINTER: The system was operating and producing new varieties. They were facing problems, of course, as any system does. For example, the problem of low salaries was there-just as in Egypt. Funds for maintenance and operating costs were issues which we were trying to address through the policy work we supported on resource allocations within the Ministry of Agriculture.

Q: What was your view of the quality of the research that was being done?

WINTER: I believe it was quite good. Basically the Indonesians were carrying out a program that had enabled them to develop high yielding varieties and take new germplasm from domestic and external sources to produce new local varieties and extend them to farmers.

Q: And they had a system for extending them?

WINTER: Yes. They had a system for providing seeds and inputs to farmers and they did it well. We also supported an integrated pest management program that dealt with the problem of overuse of pesticides that was very successful. It enabled the Indonesians to reduce pesticide use substantially while not having serious out-breaks of plant-hoppers. They may still be receiving some very limited support for this very successful program, but I think it is now being continued completely on their own.

In general, I believe the US can be very pleased with the success of our assistance in Indonesia in the agricultural research area. I think we could have productively continued our support in a different mode, but that didn't happen. What I had in mind was to continue the relationships that were established between US and Indonesian scientists and to continue supporting the relationships established between Indonesia and international research centers. We no longer needed to have an in-country presence but enabling the Indonesians to travel or enabling the links to continue in some other way would have been useful. The same problem I saw in Korea. We didn't solve the problem there and I don't know that we have yet. There is really...

Q: It was important to Indonesia to maintain its link with international US system of agriculture research and not become isolated.

WINTER: That's right and they are managing to do so. I think we could have helped them do it better with benefits to US agriculture also. I realize that there is no easy way to say how you do this in perpetuity. When do they finally have to "bite the bullet" if effect and assume all responsibilities. That isn't clear.

Anyway, the final research assistance was through a small biotech activity which involved the private sector there and a private company here with some AID support. Robert "Woody" Navin, the project officer was initially, I think, frustrated because we didn't have any money or very little money for the activity. However, in the end, the shortage of money was actually very good. In developing the program with the Indonesians, they realized that the US wasn't going to put in a lot of money because there was no new money. The money we proposed to use had to come out of the existing, terminating research project. And there was a small amount of money from something that didn't get done. This process and activity helped the transition away from US support. It was also useful because it brought in the private sector and their resources. And I think it helped the Indonesians to start thinking that they should get the private sector involved. That was important.

Q: Private sector in research?

WINTER: Right. They have a role and I think...

Q: What was the bio-technology that you were...?

WINTER: There were several things that the biotech activity involved. One was to put in a gene that would help control stem bore in corn. A second was to help develop micro-propagation of some planting materials. With a US company they were working on propagating genetically superior varieties of bananas and pineapples. Local Indonesian companies were interested and Woody Navin, without money, spent a lot more time talking, linking people up. Everybody realized that couldn't do this by ourselves and this led to what is considered to be a pretty successful effort. As far as I know it is on-going.

Another assistance program that I would cite as highly significant was the provincial area development program. These were programs of providing the infrastructure, the services that people needed throughout the rural areas of Indonesia. While we could never finish these local level activities, we really had an impact. We trained a tremendous number of people at both the national and provincial levels in the process of rural development and in doing things in rural areas. We made them comfortable with determining what to do and in managing small activities, in analyzing the problems and options and trying to respond to rural needs. So as we left, we not only had assisted in completing thousands of small activities such as rural roads, schools, clinics, tree nurseries, but there were also systems and people in place. And the program didn't stop. Indonesia continued to operate and support that program.

Q: Was it run by the Ministry of Agriculture?

WINTER: No. It was run by the Ministry of Provincial Development. It involved assistance with agricultural activities and on roads and on other rural development activities in an integrated sort of way.

Q: But it was working? Because there was a lot of controversy over integrated rural development activities.

WINTER: The program worked at a provincial and local level. But it was not the same type of integrated rural development that we saw in Africa. Those were more complex with a new infrastructure system set up just for that purpose. The program in Indonesia was more a series of discrete activities carried out in the same area over time. There were activities in literally dozens of sites. The program did not depend on complicated coordination arrangements among ministries. Unfortunately, I didn't visit enough of these sites to see all the things that were going on. At one time we had US advisors in a number of provinces to monitor and to assist with implementation. And actually, I think it might have continued but we had an audit that said that AID was not adequately monitoring the rural activities. In point of fact, given the variety of places we were assisting, we would have had to expand our staff to the monitoring suggested. And that was not going to happen.

Q: We had technical people working in all these areas?

WINTER: I had Indonesian staff that were based in Jakarta. We also had contract people in each of the provinces we were working in to start with.

Q: Do you remember how many different locations?

WINTER: I have a feeling at one time we were in nineteen provinces. The number dropped and the program ended while I was in Indonesia. Although from our perspective, and that of the Indonesians, it was a successful assistance program, we were unable to manage, supervise or monitor it to the extent that the auditors felt was necessary. There is no doubt there were opportunities for abuses given the number of provinces and local areas where activities were undertaken.

Q: We were financing operating costs as well as...?

WINTER: Yes. We were financing operating costs through the budget as well as technical assistance. Through to particular local...

Q: Local currency generation?

WINTER: These were actually dollars, so it wasn't local currency.

Another assistance activity with impact was the rural roads project. In this activity we were attempting to assist the Indonesians build better rural roads in selected provinces. The project only operated in, I think, three provinces-maybe four. Our project included local cost funding of host country contracts for the costs of constructing roads to the design specifications. In the process of

implementation we became involved in some very interesting areas related to the contracting process and contract awards and construction standards. From this experience we understood why many roads seemed to have such a short life. The strategy was not to build good roads and then to maintain them, but to build, let the road deteriorate and reconstruct in about three years. We found that in many cases the problems started with the competitive award process. The process of making contract awards to private sector firms to build the roads was far from transparent. Further, once the awards were made, the roads were not built to the specifications. The reasons for the lack of transparency and the poor construction turned out to be linked. To secure a road construction contract it was necessary to pay off a number of people. After the contractors made the payoffs, they no longer had enough money to build the road to the design specifications. But that wasn't a problem since the people making the awards also certified the construction. The system did result in roads, but roads of poor quality. When we became involved, we insisted on our own certifying engineer. And that caused all kinds of consternation and problems for the existing system.

Q: Why did we feel we needed to get into rural roads?

WINTER: Good question. There seemed to be several reasons. First, rural roads were needed and several other donors including the World Bank and the Japanese were involved. Our commitment was for a piece of the larger effort. A need to improve the quality of rural road construction was a second reason. A third reason seemed to be an AID desire to have a project or two that could absorb large amounts of capital. "Where can we put money?". The rural roads activity and the irrigation activity had the potential capacity to absorb large amounts of money. You could expand these activities quickly by simply agreeing to construct more roads or to construct more irrigation system structures.

Q: This was part of a multi-donor programs?

WINTER: Not formally. Earlier on, AID had been involved in the construction of some major highways in collaboration with other donors. The collaboration in that instance was more formal. In this case, we were demonstrating better rural road construction techniques with other donors financing something similar in other areas.

Q: Were you developing rural road institutions?

WINTER: Yes, we were trying to, particularly at the provincial level. The project included training programs and technical assistance in design, road selection and other areas as well as assistance on contracting and certification. Under the program some very good roads were built. I remember some rural villagers say, "Oh, this road is fantastic. Before during the rainy season, we couldn't get out of our village because the road would simply dissolve and would be all mud. The teacher at the school wouldn't come because she didn't want to walk the half mile to our school. Now the school is open in the rainy season and we have new shops in town." It was really convincing testimony to the importance of good roads.

Q: Was there an evaluation of this apart from the audit question?

WINTER: Yes. There was an evaluation that concluded that we were successful in many locations with a real impact in those areas. A scaled down program was still underway when I left Indonesia. However, I really don't know what happened.

Q: Were there other significant activities? You also said that you were evolving more toward policy orientation?

WINTER: Yes, as I mentioned, in addition to research, provincial development and rural roads, there were projects in irrigation uplands agriculture, fisheries, and also in agribusiness development and natural resources management. These were all rather significant activities. Several had policy elements. In addition there was an agricultural policy project. Under that project AID helped set up a separate office in the Ministry of Agriculture to handle policy. We also supported some smaller activities related to policy, particularly rice policy.

Within AID, a separate Policy Office was created to provide a focal point for all policy efforts. One of the activities transferred to that office was the agricultural policy program.

Q: Were there any major policy initiatives though, in the agriculture area that you were attempting?

WINTER: In cooperation with the AID Office of Policy, we had extensive interaction with the government on a variety of policy issues. This involved the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the Indonesian Ministry responsible for economic planning (BAPPENAS). AID had provided some funds for to support policy change and we worked with BAPPENAS on determining which activities would be supported. One of the areas supported was the integrated pest management program.

Q: That was a policy issue?

WINTER: It was a policy issue because it involved a change from regular applications of chemicals to control insect pests on rice to a program where chemicals were only a last resort. In terms of government budgets this made quite a difference. But we also dealt with issues such as funding for research facility maintenance, input supply systems, policy analysis - a whole range of issues.

We were also heavily involved in policy in the natural resources management area. While I was in Indonesia we designed and implemented a new project that had a major policy component involving national issues and on-the-ground activities in two locations looking at policy issues in coastal zone management and forestry management via pilot activities. In addition to project staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, I had a natural resources policy advisor on my staff who also had an office in the Ministry.

One aspect of that initiative, that we thought we were going to get started but really didn't, was a system of natural resource accounting. The concept was to value things in terms of their cost in natural resources. The normal system was that when you cut down a tree it added to your Gross National Product. But there is no recognition that there had been a subtraction from the natural

resource base. So we were trying to introduce that approach in looking at logging and other natural resource extraction activities.

Q: A real pioneering effort in that one.

WINTER: Yes, it was. We weren't alone. The World Bank was also providing some support. But, although they were involved, I think we were providing the intellectual leadership.

Getting back to the Natural Resources Management Project, the work in forestry was aimed at greater sustainability which implied changes in policies regarding the sale of forestry concessions, the length of the concessions, the terms of the concessions. The coastal zone management element involved the establishment of an aquatic park and the management of the surrounding area to protect and sustain the park while also encouraging tourism and income-generating activities based on the park. A number of policy areas related to pollution, fishing, local community involvement and other areas were being addressed. Shortly before I left we also started a "brown" environment activity under the project to introduce low-cost or no-cost pollution prevention technologies to industrial companies and in so doing to help the Indonesian government with environmental protection and monitoring. Again, the activity had a real policy bent to it. There are other examples from every activity we were supporting.

Q: Did you get a feeling that the program was less essential to Indonesian needs and that they had the capacity and they were carrying forward as some people have commented recently.

WINTER: Clearly, they were much more capable. They had substantial numbers of trained people and were able to do many things without external assistance. Sometimes there was a certain security that having an external advisory there or a program that could support more innovative ideas but in many areas they were fully capable. For example, the Indonesians could do much of the policy-related analysis leading to policy recommendations. But it was reassuring to have an outside expert come by now and then and say, "That looks right". Particularly in sensitive areas like rice production. Originally, AID had funded some experts. Using their own resources the Indonesians continued to bring them out just to...kind of review where they were and what was happening. To confirm what was being done and to give them the confidence that yes, what we are doing is more or less right.

For example, one of the changes in rice policy revolved around the question of whether Indonesia needed to be rice self-sufficient on an annual basis or was trend self-sufficiency more appropriate. In other words, did the Government of Indonesia have to guarantee through high-cost programs that domestic rice production exceeded demand every year? Which meant that there was going to be over-production much of the time because they would have to ensure that in the worst year there would still be enough rice. Or could a longer-term approach be used which aimed at increasing rice production to meet the growing rice consumption in most years. Sometimes rice production would exceed demand but if demand exceeded production in a particular year it would not be a national crisis. When I was there the Indonesian policy makers became convinced that thinking over a little longer period-not just annually-made sense. It wasn't something that you had to panic about or worry about if demand exceeded production now and then.

Q: Smooth out the curves.

WINTER: Yes, so you didn't have to over-invest in rice production. And they didn't have to be worrying much of time about disposing of a surplus and operating large storage systems.

Q: Was there a PL 480 program?

WINTER: Small and very specific to NGO's. I did not work with the PL 480 program.

Q: Did you have a relationships with NGO's generally within the agriculture sector?

WINTER: Actually, not very much. We were involved with NGOs in the environmental area but we had no project per se with NGO's.

Q: How was the private sector part of this working out? I mean ag business...?

WINTER: Our agribusiness project was just getting underway as I left. In developing the project, we had quite a debate with the government on the issue of whether or not projects should be supporting the private sector and what part of the private sector. Many Indonesians felt that the AID program was should be used to support Indonesian government programs only-that the private sector should get along by itself. And we were saying that we should be fostering and supporting the private sector.

In the agribusiness project we proposed focusing on getting the government to work with private associations and to think of their responsibility not as controlling the private sector but as facilitating their activities. Working with trade associations and examining export potential, we had identified fisheries and tropical fruits in a couple of regions as places to start. This had also involved interacting with US companies who were coming to source products out of Indonesia. To see how they might work with them. Finally, we reached an agreement with the Government of Indonesia, but I wasn't certain that they were completely pleased.

Q: What was sustained?

WINTER: That is an interesting question, As I argued with the auditors at one time, it seems to me that the continuation of an AID program in its entirety is probably not the criteria you should use to judge success or sustainability. I believed that because it was hard for me to believe that AID and AID contractors always knew exactly how things should be done and that we always left the perfect system in place. So when the auditors suggested, "Well, they didn't continue this, therefore you've failed", I was willing to agree that the program didn't continue exactly as before. However, if you looked at what the Indonesians were doing you could see how they had taken our assistance and were using pieces of it here and a piece of it there. So we had this on-going debate. Does sustainability mean continuing exactly what the AID project supported?

Q: What was your definition?

WINTER: Well, I argued that by design, at least most of the time, project activities can't be

sustained after AID support ends quite the same way because we introduce external factors such as foreign technical assistance experts and support systems that we think should be sustained. My definition of sustainability was that the program we were supporting was continued. For example, the provincial rural development program had evolved during the years of our involvement. Expecting it to continue in the same form as we were leaving it in 1991 was unrealistic.

Q: What would you say...?

WINTER: First of all, I would say the program doesn't look today like it did five years ago or eight years ago either. It has changed already so why would we expect it to just continue?

Q: What was sustained?

WINTER: Well, programs for example, of support to rural communities in that case, to engage in small scale activities, i.e.: a drainage ditch, a terrace, a road.

Q: Some of the technological components or ideas?

WINTER: Right. A livestock program that was dealing with small ruminants is going on. So, yes, it is being sustained.

Q: The concepts and the ideas and the trained people, I suppose.

WINTER: Exactly. The trained people have come back and are working in Indonesia. I think that has always been our strength. That is what we have done so well. And I think over time they are what make the difference.

Q: Any more on Indonesia?

At the time I was there, as I said before, there was constant consolidation of the program. At times it was a real struggle, and I guess this is what every down-sizing program faces, to maintain morale and maintain production from individuals, particularly Indonesian FSN staff, when there may not be a job for them next year. The American direct-hire staff when their projects ended could transfer, but the Indonesians didn't have that option. But we certainly had staff stability. Over the time I was there, we had one new US direct-hire, in charge of the environment, and that was all. Everybody else kind of came when I did. We didn't turn over. So we had the same staff the whole time I was there, just a lot fewer of them as people left and as we shrunk the Indonesian staff.

All in all it was a good program and I think we wound things up in a way that, in almost every instance, was quite satisfactorily.

I left at a good time for me to leave.

Q: You left when?

WINTER: 1992.

RICHARD W. TEARE
Director, Office of Indonesian Affairs
Washington, DC (1989-1992)

Richard W. Teare was born in Ohio in 1937. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1948. His career includes positions in Barbados, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, New Zealand, and Australia. Mr. Teare was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July 1998.

Q: You say they expelled some journalists?

TEARE: Yes and refused to issue visas to new ones or replacements. They were very unhappy about the article and things stayed rather frozen for a couple of years. They were beginning to warm again around 1989 when Try Sutrisno, the Commander in Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, finally accepted an invitation to visit Australia. He went on to become Suharto's Vice President in the 1993 to '98 term.

Anyway, Australia had six journalists killed, that is had suffered the loss of six journalists who were covering the takeover of East Timor in 1975. There is strong reason to believe that the Indonesian Armed Forces killed them quite deliberately. That was a major irritant from the Australian standpoint and one that is remembered down to this day. Despite that, however, the Hawke Government early in its tenure, in 1983 I believe, decided to accept the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. The United States did something similar. We have this strange formulation in which we say that we recognize Indonesian control over the territory without maintaining that a valid act of self-determination ever took place.

Maintaining seems to me a strange word for it. Accepting would be more like it perhaps. But anyway we in Australia have done that but when you hear East Timor referred to otherwise the frequent tag line is "whose incorporation into Indonesia has never been accepted by the United Nations". Well that is true, but I think in practical purposes what was important was that Australia and the United States accept it and that others such as Japan and China not challenge it, which they don't.

So, Australia had mixed feelings about Indonesia just as Indonesia did about Australia and, yes, we did watch the relationship quite closely. As I mentioned, by '89 Try Sutrisno visited and the Indonesians had sent a very savvy ambassador, a journalist named Saban Seigyan who started to improve relations. But in '86 when I got there, due in part to the Jenkins article and the freezing of relations, things were pretty frosty. I remember going to pay a courtesy call on the Foreign Secretary, that's the senior public servant in the Department, and he kept me unusually long and got off onto subjects of conversation that I hadn't imagined he would raise. So the result was that our meeting went maybe half an hour beyond the appointed time. On my way out I saw the Indonesian Ambassador waiting to see him. I think what happened was that he used me as a device to keep the Indonesian waiting and demonstrate, or make a point, shall we say?

Well this goes way beyond my direct experience, but later on, in the '90s, Paul Keating, who had succeeded Hawke as Prime Minister, worked out a sort of loose defense cooperation agreement with Suharto and did it in great secrecy. We did not know that was coming. There were only four or five people in the Australian Government who were involved in the negotiations and I think a similar number on the Indonesian side. That came as quite a surprise, but we thought at the time that it was a good thing. One reason the Australians did it, I think, was to assuage any feelings of isolation on Indonesia's part because Australia has been involved for many years in a five power defense agreement which links it with both Malaysia and Singapore. So now there is something more like parity in Australia's relations with those countries.

But Australia in my time at least paid a lot of attention in intelligence terms to what was going on in Indonesia.

TEARE: I became Director of the Office of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs, the East Asia Bureau.

Q: You did that from '89 to?

TEARE: '92. Three years just about on the nose.

Q: Were you beginning to feel that you were being typed?

TEARE: Yes, sort of. Let me add a couple of things though first.

Late days in Australia...you talked about issues between us. There were as I've mentioned a few. But more often it seemed to me we were working cooperatively. In one instance after the Tiananmen Square incident in Beijing in 1989 we were definitely in parallel. We were harboring the physicist Fang Lei Ja in our embassy and the Australians for at least a few days were harboring somebody in theirs. This led to some EXDIS cables and again very close cooperation with people I had been working with in Australia for years.

The other incident that I wanted to mention, well actually a series of incidents, involved the firebombing of a South African diplomat's car at his residence in Canberra. It destroyed the car but didn't hurt a baby who was sleeping in the adjacent room and the attempted firebombing of two of our cars. One was the Defense Attaché's at his house and the other was a First Secretary's at his house. In both cases the bombs didn't really ignite or didn't stay ignited so there was some paint damage to the Defense Attaché's car and none at all to the other property.

But while I was there also, this was late '88 I guess, we received a threatening letter to Ambassador Lane, done in block printing on bright red construction paper or I guess it was photocopied in red. That letter came to me the way all of the non-expected correspondence did. I immediately recognized it as something sensitive so I tried to keep my hands off it. I picked it up with a paper clamp and carried it over to the copy machine and made a copy right away. I called the RSO and he

got the Australian federal police in.

There was a long investigation and it eventually led to the arrest of an Australian woman and her African husband. I think he was from Botswana although I am not sure if it was ever clarified. She was the more vicious of the two and she was eventually put on trial. In 1991 the Australians brought me back from Washington to testify about the letter. They also brought a couple of other people back. That was the one count on which she was convicted. The evidence in all the fire bombings was really circumstantial although I am sure she was responsible for them also. But in the case of the letter there were a couple of her fingerprints on it big as life and that convicted her. To my disappointment she was given a suspended sentence. She had already spent some time in jail awaiting trial, not the whole two years, two and a half.

Q: What was her point?

TEARE: Well, that the United States was in league with South Africa, the apartheid government there. That we were about as bad as they were and we all ought to suffer or at least we were fair game for symbolic acts. There was a South African...had been a High Commission in Commonwealth days, it reverted to embassy when South Africa was kicked out of the Commonwealth. It was very near our Residence and Chancery and then on a piece of vacant land near it was the Free South African embassy put up by a handful of people who opposed South African policy. Many in Australia opposed the policy but this was a handful of activists who operated this Free South African embassy. They had a placard out by the road some days saying, "honk if you oppose apartheid" and so forth. So there was this sentiment. And Kerry Ann Browning was her name, and she was determined to do something about it.

I was very glad to see that the Australians went to this extent in prosecuting terrorism.

Okay, '89 to '92 back in Washington.

Q: Probably this would be a good place to stop because we have already gone two hours. So we will pick up '89 to '92 as the country director for Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei. Okay? We'll do that.

TEARE: Fine. Good deal.

Q: Today is _____ 6th, 1998. Well, Dick, where are we now?

TEARE: 1989 to 1992, my tour as country director for Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore in the EA/P Bureau.

Q: What was sort of the order? This was the Bush Administration?

TEARE: It was all Bush Administration, right.

Q: Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia...who was the head of East Asian Affairs?

TEARE: It was Richard Solomon.

Q: Whom I've interviewed. He is pretty much a China hand.

TEARE: Yes.

Q: Did you find you were off in left field or something?

TEARE: I would say that we were in the middle or outer orbit, yes, because a lot of his time and attention went to China and then to Japan and Korea. Southeast Asia got less attention although more I suppose than Australia, New Zealand and the Islands. The East Asia Bureau had gone through a number of re-organizations. Holbrooke back in the '70s pumped up the importance of the Islands and created a separate Office of Pacific Island Affairs under Bill Bode apart from Australia and New Zealand. And then later, after the Compacts of Free Association were negotiated with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, a third office came in. It was my old negotiating office transmogrified. It was the Office of Freely Associated States Affairs. So at one time there were three offices dealing with the South Pacific. Now they are all combined into one since 1997.

Q: I suppose the best thing to do is to go through these because these are all very separate places really.

TEARE: They are.

Q: During the '89 to '92 periods, let's take Indonesia first. What was the situation there?

TEARE: That was the biggest and it became the most complex. I imagine it would be hard to sort out the time I spent but I would guess that over the three years it was something like this: Indonesia 40 percent, Singapore 30 percent, Malaysia 20 percent and Brunei 10 percent. That is very rough but it adds up!

With Indonesia we were then in, I forget, but Suharto late in his fourth term and eventually his fifth term. We had a continuing series of issues. One of them, for example, was worker-rights. Labor unions in the United States would regularly challenge Indonesia's GSP.

Q: GSP?

TEARE: Generalized System of Preferences, the break that Third World countries get or used to get for duty into the United States. The challenge from U.S. unions was that workers in Indonesia were treated badly, underpaid, underage, working under inhumane conditions and all of that. A lot of it was in the athletic shoe business. It would frequently emerge that the actual company in Indonesia was owned and directed by Koreans but those Koreans would be selling virtually their entire output to Nike or somebody like that.

The Indonesians would be... I can't even remember now the name of the body before which they were hailed but essentially they had to make a case to somebody here in Washington. Was it the

International Trade Commission, the Federal Trade Commission?

The Indonesian approach typically was to shrink from any direct representation by them but rather to get their law firm to do it. So they had the firm of White and Case which is a big and expensive Washington firm. Their lawyers would come in with 75 page briefs which were not of interest to the Commission, or at least made little impact on the Commission. What we urged and finally got the Indonesians to do was to get a Minister here to appear before the Commission and make their case. I would have to do the research to be able to tell you for sure but I think the Indonesians managed to fend off sanctions, but it was something of a cliffhanger each time.

Q: We seem to be playing an ambiguous role talking about the Department of State.

TEARE: We thought the Indonesians were bad but not that bad. That the best hope of achieving reform in their practices was to have them keep their preferred status but under some threat so there was incentive for them to improve. Our calculation was that if they lost their preference they would simply go home with their tails between their legs and meanwhile of course some importers in the States would be at least inconvenienced and maybe worse. I don't recall that we had a lot of political pressure in favor of Indonesia. It was rather a case of trying to get Indonesia to put its own best foot forward or to polish up the shoe on that foot, if you would.

Q: I think at this point for the benefit of historians could you explain the role of sport shoes at this particular time in the United States?

TEARE: Well I'm not the sociologist of dress or manners but indeed it seemed to me that just about everyone under 60 or so was wearing them a lot of the time, including virtually all of the women at the Department of State, particularly the secretarial force. They would commute in their athletic shoes, their sneakers, and then at the office some of them anyway change into other shoes and that goes on, of course, to today.

Q: One of the things, too, is that these things were, particularly among youth, were endorsed by and highly advertised. I mean all sorts of things were done with them all of which to show that if you wore certain shoes you were really better than the person who didn't wear that particular shoe.

TEARE: That's right and Michael Jordan was and I guess still is the leading advertiser and endorser.

Q: He is a very famous basketball player. So this was a big social item?

TEARE: Yes and a big business.

Q: A very big business. Essentially the major manufacturers didn't manufacture them. They had the names and then they went to Koreans who went to Indonesia to turn out the shoes.

TEARE: That's right. I don't remember all of the brand names. I don't know the nationalities of the brand names but certainly Nike, Reebok, Puma, Adidas and a lot more.

Q: What about what we were getting from the ground? I mean this must have absorbed a good bit of time from our embassy going out looking at factories and that sort of thing.

TEARE: The embassy did some of that and there was a considerable degree of overlap between that and the Human Rights Report. That was always a big issue with Indonesia. Particularly because of the separatist movements in East Timor, in West Irian or in Irian Jaya and in Aceh in Northern Sumatra, and the heavy-handed way in which the Indonesians sought to keep those movements under control or eliminate them if they possibly could.

That led to the single biggest incident on my watch. On November 11th, 1991, a demonstration by Catholic East Timorese in the town of Dili, capital of East Timor, caused some I would say rather raw junior Indonesian troops to panic. The troops pursued some of the marchers into a cemetery where, we don't know how many but probably 175 to 200, Timorese were killed.

Q: Good God that is a lot!

TEARE: A lot. That became known as the Dili massacre. It was the worst incident in Indonesia for many years before and since. It was, I think, in several respects a watershed. I think it caused Australia and the United States who had recognized with qualifications the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia to do some serious thinking and it got the United Nations back on the case. I don't want to exaggerate it, but soon after that the Secretary General was involved in brokering meetings between the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers working for some sort of compromise there.

The history is that East Timor had been under Portuguese rule whereas the western half of the island and virtually all of the rest of what is today Indonesia were under Dutch rule. When the Dutch gave up in 1949, the Indonesians took over, but the Portuguese stayed on the eastern half of Timor. It was only in 1975, after the fall of the Salazar Government in Portugal, that the Portuguese authorities literally bugged out of there. They stayed in Macao. I guess they had already given up Goa. But they left East Timor in a hurry. Left the keys to an arsenal with, according to the Indonesians, a group that came under Communist control. This in itself seems implausible, but Indonesia took the occasion to go in and occupy the eastern half of the island. Furthermore, Indonesia did so in December, 1975, right after a visit by Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger to Djakarta. Although I have not read Kissinger's memoirs on the point, I understand he denies it, but the allegation was that the Indonesians sought and obtained Kissinger's blessing and went ahead with the military occupation -- Ford apparently being sort of a rubber stamp. That is, Ford probably didn't know where Timor was but he was President then. Also American weapons, M-16s. were used in the takeover and in fact that is a standard issue weapon now.

Q: This is Tape Six, Side One, with Richard Teare.

TEARE: FEDTALINE...I'd have to think back and work out what it precisely stands for but essentially it's the National Front for the Liberation of East Timor, some of whose leaders reside overseas in Australia and Portugal. Its best known figure, Jose Ramos-Horta, shared the Nobel Prize with a Timorese bishop, Bishop Bellow, three or four years ago which outraged the Suharto

regime.

As it happened our desk officer for Indonesia, a man named Larry Dinger, was planning a trip to Djakarta. He had just joined the desk; he'd been away from Indonesia for a year and a half, so it was his refresher. He was going to take a plane that holiday, Veteran's Day, 1991, to go to Djakarta. So I said he should keep on going and when he got out there to get on whatever investigating team Ambassador Berry sends to Timor itself and he did that. He spoke the language. Although circumstances were not the best, Larry and the embassy officer whom he accompanied out there went to the cemetery and were able to pick up some shelling casings and so forth. They did not get total or an independent account of the casualties, this was within the first week after the event. But they were confident that at least 75 to 100 people had been killed. They said that estimates of half again that or double that were entirely plausible.

The Indonesians didn't deny it. We urged them to do the right thing. To appoint an investigating commission, punish those responsible, and eventually Indonesia did that. It ended the careers of a couple of general officers including the major general who commanded that CODAM or military region. But at the same time the punishment to the actual participants, those who worked on it, was minimal, only a few months in a stockade. Some of the leaders of the march that had precipitated all this were given longer sentences for disturbing the peace and violating martial law or whatever the charge was. So in other words the victims, if you will, were punished more severely than the true wrongdoers were.

This was a continuing problem. I called in the Indonesian Chargé a couple of times and chewed him out and we made representations in Djakarta. Although the Indonesians made the right initial steps they didn't follow through and they were not in my view at all consistent in the way they punished the people involved. So it was a lingering issue and it is I think still remembered. It was one of the chinks in Suharto's armor and, of course, earlier this year he packed it all in in the face of demonstrations and the killing of a handful of university students in Djakarta, again by government forces.

Q: Prior to this Armistice Day, 1991 massacre what had been our attitude towards Indonesia? Policy towards Indonesia?

TEARE: Our policy for really 25 years before that had been that Indonesia was a bulwark against Communism in Southeast Asia. That was the original thought back in the mid '60s when Sukarno was forced out and Suharto took over. We saw Indonesia as a country with enormous problems but going in the right direction generally, particularly in economic terms, reducing poverty, raising the standard of living of much of the population rather dramatically, partly through employment at athletic shoe factories. But through other things as well. It had achieved self-sufficiency in rice, which was a major achievement. Its population was growing fast. By the late '80s it must have been 170 million and now, today, it is 200 million or more... 180 million in the late '80s, I guess.

At the same time it had a rather embarrassing human rights and worker rights record, as I've already mentioned. And that was something that we tried to minimize for some purposes, mostly public purposes, and something to work on them about in private. And I'm not sure that we were terribly successful there. But, for example, in the annual meetings of the UN Human Rights

Commission or in the Donors Group, which is called the IGGI, I think, Inter-Governmental Group for something to Indonesia, of which we were a member, we tended to overlook some of the worst aspects of Indonesian behavior. We believed that they were more likely to remedy their behavior if they were coaxed along than beaten. And I think in most respects that was probably true but it was usually a case of two steps forward and one step back with them.

Let me go back to the Dili massacre just for a moment because it is frequently alleged that similar incidents had occurred over the '70s and '80s in Indonesia and were hushed up and not only in Timor but in other parts of the country as well. That may be true, although I personally don't know of any that was of the magnitude of Dili. However, what guaranteed the prominence of the Dili incident was that there were some foreign journalists on the scene. Two of them were Americans, a man named Allan Nairn and a woman named Amy Goodman. Nairn had been a stringer for the New Yorker, I think, and Goodman worked for Radio Pacifica, which is sort of an alternative radio network.

Q: It is basically a relatively Left Wing organization.

TEARE: Yes. And there was a BBC cameraman, a television cameraman. So two things happened. Nairn and Goodman both got beaten up somewhat and Nairn had his head bashed with the butt of an M-16, or so he later claimed. They essentially got out of the country as fast as they could and were back in Washington within a matter of three or four days. The BBC cameraman had Indonesian troops coming in to surround him in the cemetery. He managed to secrete a roll of his videotape. He went back to the cemetery that night and got it and it was shown on the BBC. It is kind of murky, obviously he was not operating under ideal conditions, but you can see soldiers running through the cemetery pointing their weapons, you can hear gunshots. So it was pretty damning. The combination of his footage and the first-hand testimony of Nairn and Goodman was more than enough to guarantee that it was a top-drawer issue.

Nairn and Goodman in fact came to the Department of State and saw Assistant Secretary Solomon and a group of others of us. That was by arrangement I think through Senator Baucus and Bishop Paul Moore, retired Bishop of the Episcopal Church. No, maybe it was through Senator Wallop, because I think Moore and Wallop are cousins. But whatever the case....

Q: Wallop is from where?

TEARE: Well Wallop was from Wyoming. Moore had been, I think, the Auxiliary Bishop of New York and was now retired. He was a Marine Corps veteran.

Moore had been active in organizations critical of Indonesia's human rights policy for a number of years.

What they wanted to do was get maximum attention to this gross violation by Indonesia and they succeeded in doing that.

The Indonesian Ambassador to the United States at that time was Abdul Rachman Romle, who was a guy from Sumatra, a Batak as they are called. I had worked with him for two years plus at

that time and knew him quite well. He was supposed to leave Washington at the end of 1991 and very much wanted to do so. He wanted to get back to Indonesia. He had been gone for several years and wanted to be around his grandchildren and so forth.

I organized a farewell luncheon for him in Solomon's name or the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ken Quinn, I guess, by that time. Then there was an Indonesian community farewell reception for him at the embassy about two days before he was supposed to leave. During that reception he got a call from the old man, Suharto, in Djakarta, asking him to stay on to help deal with the public relations fallout of the Dili massacre. The Indonesians had already planned to renovate Romle's residence and his successor was going to go into rented quarters. So Romle wound up staying virtually another year. He had already moved out of the house and he went into the rented quarters out in Bethesda somewhere. He was pretty unhappy about the whole thing, but it demonstrated that what Suharto wanted, Suharto got, and this guy was one of Suharto's old associates.

Q: The accusation comes up quite often that the Department of State doesn't like to see things change. You know, it generally keeps on course and if you have something like a horrible massacre and all it generally wishes that it would go away...there is a certain inertia and it takes almost outside forces to make a reaction. Did you find sort of the establishment above you really didn't want to hear this?

TEARE: No. I think that the establishment recognized the problem and I think it comes back to the dilemma we faced in so many countries over the years. Do you deal with the people who are there or do you try to encourage alternatives? In general we have dealt with, and in reality I would say we usually have little choice, but to deal with the people who are there...Brezhnev, Mao Zedong, you name it. Now granted there are cases where we have been more comfortable with bad guys, if you will, the Shah of Iran or Ngo Dinh Diem, or somebody than with other less conservative, less comfortable people. But not that we should have been comfortable with Diem or the Shah or anybody like that. But we simply can't go around breaking governments when we feel like it. We tried that in Vietnam after Diem and it didn't work very well. It was one thing to get a government out it was something else again to put in a satisfactory substitute.

So our emphasis with Suharto, and as I said in a previous session about Ferdinand Marcos during my time on the Philippine desk, was to try to get them to clean up their act rather than to deplore publicly what they had done or to go around courting alternatives.

Q: What were we doing other than talking to the Indonesians, saying isn't this awful and so on?

TEARE: I think one thing we did, certainly in the AID Program, was to channel quite a bit of it to non governmental organizations that were either implicitly or explicitly critical of the Indonesian Government. They were doing things that we thought ought to be done such as environmental protection, legal rights. I can't remember now the acronym for one legal organization in Indonesia that was quite courageous and worked on behalf of a lot of interests.

Another issue with Indonesia was trade unions. There was one authorized trade union and the Indonesian Government effectively prevented the formation of any others. That was of concern to the U.S. Government, to the AFL-CIO, to everybody. Again, we worked on that.

We also tried, and this has become much more controversial in the last year or two, to shape the Indonesian military, the armed forces. We would bring officers to the United States, a couple of hundred a year at the peak, to send them to professional training at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Campbell, any of the service schools but particularly the command and staff colleges. This was to increase their professionalism but also to inculcate in them some idea of a functioning democracy and of civilian supremacy over the military and so forth. This was considered particularly important in the case of Indonesia because of the very prominent role of the armed forces in civil administration as well as in military affairs. Typically the provincial governors are military officers. The whole area has a mission known as *dwi fungsi*, two functions, civil and military.

Romle, the Ambassador to Washington whom I mentioned, had been consul general in New York, but before that he was a major general. He had also helped clean up the national oil monopoly after some scandal back in the '70s. So the military was all over the lot, if you will, in government, politics, and administration in Indonesia. Suharto of course being a four-star general.

Q: What about the administration of what do you call it, Irian? I want to say New Guinea.

TEARE: It became a Province of Indonesia, the 27th Province, I believe. I can't remember the year. I think it was in the earlier '80s, before I came on the desk. Again something we were very much aware of was Indonesia's policy of transporting Indonesian people, mainly Javanese, that is ethnic Malay people, to Irian Jaya and settling them in towns around the coast and giving them some agricultural land. This was to dilute the original Melanesian population of about half the island.

This is a formal policy of transmigration that the Indonesians have used to send Javanese to many of the outer islands, not only to Indonesianize them as in the case of West Irian, but to relieve some of the population pressure on Java, which I think has 120 million people.

Q: Well when you do that in a way this doesn't sound like our business?

TEARE: No and I think you could argue that it is not. Except that, again, we have to look at the annual Human Rights Report, and for other purposes, we would find that indigenous people in West Irian were being dispossessed of land claimed historically by their tribes. They were being sent away from the coast and to maybe less desirable areas, more malaria, that sort of thing. The Javanese were being favored even if some of them really...well I think transmigration is essentially voluntary but I'm not sure the poorer Javanese were given a lot of choice in the matter either.

Those were internal policies of the Government of Indonesia. It is not too easy to complain about those except maybe when they wind up constituting what is arguably a violation of somebody's human rights.

Q: Well as we were looking at Indonesia it certainly was in the last year or so with the overthrow of Suharto, but it must have been obvious prior to that, the corruption particularly of Suharto, his family and entourage. How did we view that?

TEARE: I think we viewed it as unfortunate and undesirable but maybe ultimately part of the price, I don't mean literal price, that we paid for good relations with Indonesia. Indonesia among other things back in the '70s had supplied observers for Vietnam when the Paris Agreements came into effect. The original four were Canada, Indonesia on the western side if you will and Poland and Hungary on the Communist side. Canada pulled out in calculated frustration and was replaced by Iran as I recall. But Indonesia stayed throughout.

We saw Indonesia as essentially a constructive actor. Indonesia tended to be looked to by the other countries of Southeast Asia as their natural leader. This was particularly true after Lee Kuan Yew retired.

Q: From Singapore.

TEARE: Of Singapore...moved upstairs to become senior minister in 1990. Suharto, given his style, was never a dynamic leader of ASEAN or anything else. Dr. Mahathir of Malaysia, who is so much in the news right now as he fires and then persecutes his Deputy, former Deputy, I think, began to figure that if Suharto was to leave a vacuum he, Mahathir, ought to step forward as the leader of ASEAN.

Q: What about things like the environment, the cutting down of trees and all? Was this of concern during this particular time?

TEARE: Yes it was and it is. I think we did not have a lot of money or other tools under our direct control but we certainly did favor the work of NGOs and indeed there are some people in Indonesia who themselves want to conserve forests and habitat and so forth. One of the more dramatic that crossed my desk anyway was the plight of the orangutan and specifically in the Indonesian part of Borneo there is a sanctuary for orangutans directed by a woman, Dr. Birute Galdikas, who I think is Latvian in origin, a Canadian citizen. She draws much of her funding however from sources in the United States. She is to orangutans what Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey were to other primates.

Galdikas and her sanctuary came under threat. The Provincial Governor wanted to take over the land I suppose for plantation crops and Galdikas and her supporters mounted a very effective campaign of letter writing about the scientific merit of keeping orangutans safe and under study. They sent letters to leading academics and institutions in the United States which in turn would write to us forwarding the letters and so forth. What we did mainly was to redirect a lot of that to the Indonesians, to the embassy and direct to the Government in Djakarta, which for all its failings nevertheless had some sense of public relations and I think was under retreat from all this scientific eminence. It wasn't only from the U.S., I'm sure, but from the Netherlands, UK and elsewhere. Finally it called the Governor off and I think Galdikas was left pretty much with what she had to start with and was spared.

Q: Were there any problems with American tourists going there? This was a prime spot, Bali and other places, for people who wanted to get a little away from the normal tourist spas and all that.

TEARE: I don't remember any particular problems apart from Timor from November '91

onwards. I'm not sure we even had to adjust any Travel Advisories up until then, the first two years I was there.

Q: We weren't losing our tourists, having problems or anything like that?

TEARE: No, I don't think so. There may have been occasional incidents but Indonesia is not a bad place for crime. No. No particular problems.

Q: Were we a prime mover in the international world or was Australia sort of a co-equal or other countries at putting pressure or more sway or whatever you call it on the Suharto Government?

TEARE: I think we were probably the biggest single factor on Indonesia. But Indonesia was never more than a relatively minor preoccupation for us whereas for Australia it's the big neighbor and potentially the threat immediately to the North. I suppose you could say that for somewhat different reasons Indonesia occupied about as much of Australia's time and attention as the Soviet Union did of ours. But I'm not likening Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

Q: No. No. But I would think with a population you say exploding there, and you've got this big empty coast to the South in Australia, that can't help but someone looking down the road to feel a bit nervous.

TEARE: Yes, of course that begs the question that who would want to live in most of Northern Australia, its swamp or desert and no facilities, no nothing. But theoretically, yes, it would be *Lebensraum* for Indonesians. In fact most of the immediate contact had to do with fishing and with Indonesian crews coming in searching for mother-of-pearl and that sort of thing. The Australian approach typically when they confiscated or seized an Indonesian fishing boat in their waters was to bring it in to Darwin or another port. Burn it down to the water line and send the crew home by air, but they might be back again in a few months in another boat.

I think I also mentioned in a previous session that because, among other things, of the Australian journalists who were killed in Timor in 1975, Indonesia was a big issue for Australia. During the time I was there, and then on the desk, there was that article about the Suharto family by David Jenkins in the Sydney Morning Herald in '86 that led Indonesia to suspend ministerial visits for a couple of years.

But Australia has an approach toward Indonesia I think rather like ours and, of course, more developed and nuanced because their relations are denser and that is to try to encourage the better tendencies in Indonesia and ignore or discourage the worse ones.

Q: How effective do you think the Indonesian embassy was in Washington?

TEARE: Quite ineffective. I'm glad you brought that up because the contrast between Indonesia and Singapore could not have been starker. Singapore had, I think, only eight or nine substantive officers in the embassy but they were all of them hyperactive. They covered State, Pentagon, NSC, and the Hill with terrific energy and great effectiveness. Indonesia, on the other hand, was shy, shrank from confrontation, and sometimes took refuge in the language although I think that

virtually everybody assigned here spoke English reasonably well. Indonesia simply wouldn't do it. They took refuge behind their lawyers, as I mentioned. I think they had a public relations firm for awhile. They were whatever the opposite of proactive is, usually inactive I guess.

Q: You say one of the great factors in Indonesia when you look at it down the road is the birth rate. This is the Bush Administration and there is a strong force, in the Republican Congress anyway, opposed to efforts toward birth control basically. Did you find yourself up against this particular problem?

TEARE: No we didn't. The Indonesians are considered to have been quite successful themselves in family planning, to the point where President Suharto got an award from the United Nations, I think in 1989 shortly before I joined the desk, for his efforts in that direction. So if we think the population is enormous today think what it might have been without the efforts of the Suharto regime in the '70s or '80s. It might be 300 million! That is probably an exaggeration. But Indonesia had a pretty successful program of its own which was relatively quiet. I don't know that it was dependent on U.S. help to any significant degree. The rate of growth has declined from whatever it was...3.5 down to 2.2 or something like that. But with a population base that size you are going to keep on growing for quite some time.

Similarly, perhaps, it is worth noting that a specific cabinet minister, Emil Salim, got an award in 1990 from the World Wildlife Fund for his efforts at environmental protection.

So the picture with Indonesia was never all bad and in many respects it was pretty good. There was certainly growing prosperity. You could see it by '89 in the clogged streets of Djakarta and Surabaya. But it is also true that the distribution of income was not all that good and that too much of it was going to the Suharto family. Of course a lot of the economy was in the hands of that and the Chinese.

Q: What was our estimate of 'whither Suharto at this particular time?

TEARE: Our estimate was that Suharto would stay as long as he chose to. He probably wanted to die with his boots on. By the late '80s or early '90s, anyway, when the problem of family corruption had become so evident and so serious, he probably wanted to remain in office if only to protect his children from prosecution and retribution for their money-grubbing ways. Their illegal practices, their kickbacks and forced acquisition of equity in companies with no investment by them and so forth.

All of this suggested of course that there was a day of reckoning for which Suharto was not really planning effectively. That is, he could protect the family as long as he was alive and in office but when he died what would happen? Also it was quite evident that he was not grooming a successor. He didn't want anybody out there that could conceivably challenge him. Thus he tended to change Vice Presidents each term and also to sidetrack other people who showed signs of getting too strong.

The people he kept around him, people like Foreign Minister Alafas who is I think a brilliant man and a very skilled diplomat, or Merdeonjo, who was the State Secretary I think from '87 through

'97. These were people who would serve him faithfully and skillfully who weren't necessarily totally committed to him ideologically, who would recognize at least when pressed that there were faults in the regime. But they did not threaten him and continued to serve him loyally.

Somebody else, like the last Vice President, Try Sutrisno, not a charismatic figure at all but apparently acceptable to all and not unacceptable to anyone with considerable support in the armed forces, was dropped after one term. Suharto then brought in Rudy "B J" Habibie as Vice President and now Habibie is the President upon Suharto's resignation.

Q: What about financial matters? Today in 1998 we are looking at sort of a collapse of almost the whole Asian system and Indonesia is certainly one of those. Bad investments, banks, resorting to cronyism, just basically a mess. Were you getting much on the economic concerns during this time?

TEARE: I think we knew for example that a lot of the banks were closely tied in with the Suharto family or with cronies of the President. We certainly knew about cockamamie industrial projects and areas of potential corruption. For example, one of the Suharto sons had a company that was awarded a license to collect the annual tax on all television sets in the country. I think that contract was rather soon rescinded under pressure, but that was the sort of thing that went on.

We were certainly aware of the corruption and to some degree of the fragility but I don't think we then or indeed anyone in 1997 predicted the collapse that we have seen.

ROBERT L. BARRY
Ambassador
Indonesia (1992-1995)

Ambassador Robert L. Barry was born on August 28, 1934 in Pennsylvania. He received his AB from Dartmouth College in 1956 and his MA from Columbia University in 1962. He served in the US Navy from 1957 to 1960. His career has included positions in Zagreb, Munich, Moscow, Leningrad, and Jakarta. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 2, 1996.

Q: Today is the 14th of December, 2001. Bob, in the first place did you have any problems getting confirmed to Indonesia?

BARRY: No, not at all. It was not a country that was very high on the congressional screen at the time. In fact it still isn't despite all the things that have happened because it's sort of over the horizon. There were obviously some issues concerning Indonesia which the Congress had some interest in. Human rights, East Timor, the issue of military training, but you know in many ways Indonesia was kind of like Yugoslavia, that is the American relationship with Indonesia was forged in the Vietnam period where we were concerned about the growth of communism in Asia. So we had had a pretty good relationship going back to the immediate post war era. We had trained their military; we had provided lots of assistance to them. One of the reasons I picked Indonesia in

fact was because of ex-AID director for Indonesia was working with me on aid to Eastern Europe and when he heard that Indonesia was a possibility he said that that would be a very interesting place to go. As indeed it was. So, I guess to be honest about it, the greatest resistance I had was not from the Congress, but from the East Asia Bureau.

Q: Oh, yes.

BARRY: Because I was parachuted in on them by Eagleburger and they had had somebody in mind themselves to go out there.

Q: I can't remember, Bob, had you had any Asian experience at all?

BARRY: No, none whatever.

Q: Well, you'd been to Eastern Bulgaria I guess.

BARRY: That's about as far East as I got. But they were cordial in accepting me.

Q: Well, you were by the way in Indonesia from '92 to when?

BARRY: The summer of '95.

Q: Before you went out, you did your reading and getting briefed?

BARRY: Did some Indonesian language training and so forth, but I also spent a lot of time with the business community because I was in the process of remaking myself for the third time. I had remade myself from an arms control Soviet specialist into a transitional development assistance person and then the now third remaking was to be a promoter of American business. We had lots of big business interests there ranging from oil companies to mining companies and a lot of power companies and that kind of thing.

Q: When you were getting ready to go out did you sort of without anybody telling you or did you mentally have your own list of agenda in your portfolio when you went out there that you wanted to do?

BARRY: Well, having worked closely with Eagleburger, Eagleburger was very big on promoting American business. I didn't have to be told that that should be my central priority in Indonesia. Of course, the other things, questions like human rights, trying to get military training, the IMET program going again and the overall problem of trying to understand a very diverse huge country which I had never known anything about before. In fact, when I first came home to tell Peggy that we were going to Indonesia, I bought a book on the way home that told me for the first time that Bali was in Indonesia which rather delighted Peggy. Actually the first experience we had in Indonesia was a truly remarkable one because we got to know various people who had a long acquaintance with Indonesia and one of them called up one day and said oh you must go to the cremation. I didn't understand what she was talking about, I thought she meant coronation, but no, cremation. Indeed we did. It was the raja of Bali and they have periodically ritual cremations for

people who have died, not just one person, but hundreds of people at a time. So, even before presenting my credentials, we went off to Bali and went through this truly remarkable ceremony. Thousands and thousands of people and they build these huge cremation towers.

Q: Pyres?

BARRY: Well, not pyres. They are, well they are several stories high, depending upon the dignity of the person being cremated. Each one of them is carried by a thousand people because they are so huge. So, we went there and we went to the palace of the raja, a very educated person who had been the foreign minister of Indonesia back in the '50s and were welcomed into his family and we went through a ceremonial dinner for 5,000 people and then all of these pyres were carried up to a hill where they were burned. The raja invited me to the position of honor sitting next to him where he smoked a big Monte Cristo cigar watching the pyre go up; then all of the ashes were gathered together and taken down to the coast where they were put in outrigger canoes and sent out into the sea where they were scattered on the ocean. Going up the hills they had to zigzag because they wanted to make sure that the spirits got confused and didn't find their way back somehow. So, it was an amazing experience. That was my first lesson in the diversity of Indonesia. Of course, the Balinese are Hindu, not Muslim. There is a variety of Hinduism I had never quite experienced before.

Q: What was sort of the position the governmental position both just sort of as a government, Suharto I assume at the time, but also what was that position and then what was the financial situation when you got there?

BARRY: Well, the Indonesian government was at that point rather annoyed with the U.S. because we had cut off military training and had said a number of critical things about them. This was still the Bush administration that just became more pronounced during the presidential campaign. The relationship with the U.S. had always been a close one particularly with U.S. business. In addition to Mobile's big LNG operation and this mining operation, the copper mine in Irian Jaya and another big oil operation in Sumatra. We just had a very active business community, probably 10,000 American businessmen living there at the time. What was the rest of the question?

Q: Well, I was just wondering, Suharto's role was firm, I mean, as we saw it at that time?

BARRY: It was very authoritarian. There was no crack in the facade. There was an opposition lead by Megawati Sukharoputri, the current president, but it had no traction and periodically her headquarters were burned down or something like that because the Suharto's forces were not allowing any opposition to take place. I mean this was a period of prosperity for Indonesia and certainly the positive part for Suharto period was although there was a lot of corruption and businesses had to do some unpleasant things, it was quite profitable for American businesses to be there, so the business community was happy with things as they stood.

Q: Were there any at that time because we're very close to the time, it wasn't just Indonesia, but Thailand and other places, I mean, there had been too many cozy loans, I mean the economy was not on firm ground. I'm talking about throughout Asia.

BARRY: That was later. In '92 none of that had appeared.

Q: So, was anybody I mean your economic counselor was saying, "Boy, we may have a problem here" or something like that?

BARRY: There were problems with the banking system as there always are in countries like that, but the income was going up. Essentially a lot of the work that was being done was for investment coming in businesses, which had migrated south. In other words, you started out with having a lot of labor intensive stuff done in Japan and then it moves to Thailand or Southeast Asia and then labor becomes too expensive there and it moves south to Indonesia or China. A lot of the controversy about Indonesia at that time was about outfits like Nike and what they did for their workers, or were going to do for their workers and controversy about then human rights. We did investigate some of those issues at the time.

Q: How about what was the impression you gained both through meeting and dealing with and your embassy with Suharto at the time?

BARRY: Suharto was a typical Javanese prince, that is his whole aura was, he didn't say very much, it was hard to draw him out on any subject. You had to deal with him through the foreign minister or his great protégé, B.J. Habibí, who later became president. Habibí was treated by Suharto like a son. He was unpopular with the military. There was no question that he was a charismatic person and a modernizer in the sense that he set up an Islamic organization which was a modernizing outfit called the Association of Muslim Intellectuals. A lot of my dealings with Suharto were through Habibí and I would make a suggestion about something they ought to do and he would go see Suharto and come back and tell me the decision. Even though I did spend a number of times in conversation with Suharto I seldom got anything.

Q: So, he wasn't in a way the man to see really, I mean, he might be the man to make his decisions, but you dealt with others.

BARRY: The vice president was a former commander of the army, the minister of defense when I got there was Benny Moerdani who had close ties with the U.S., but was strongly nationalist. The state secretary was the sort of path of communications with Suharto himself and Habibí was then the minister of science and technology. Those were the people to see.

Q: How did you find your embassy?

BARRY: It was a good embassy. Many of the people there were repeaters. One of the things about Indonesia is it is sort of addictive. People who go there usually come back again a second or a third time. My predecessor as ambassador had had three assignments in Indonesia.

Q: Who was that?

BARRY: John Monjo. He spoke fluent Indonesian. The DCM was on his second tour, the political counselor was on his second tour, the defense attaché was on his third tour and that kind of thing.

Q: Well, did you have to spend a bit of time sort of establishing yourself?

BARRY: Well, I did have to spend a lot of time traveling when I first got there. One of the first trips I made was from one end of Indonesia to the other. I was in Aceh first because it was the key place both in terms of the longstanding separatist trends in Aceh, but it was also where we had a major oil company interest. Then with Habibi on one of his airplanes I flew from Aceh all the way to Irion Jaya. A distance of some 4,000 miles. We had an attaché aircraft there we used that liberally to get around the country to get to know as many people as possible and to take with the embassy with you on all those trips.

Q: You mention Aceh, was there a rebellion going on at that time?

BARRY: There has been a constant state of rebellion going on in Aceh since the time of the Dutch. The Dutch lost more soldiers in Aceh than any other war the Dutch ever fought. So, all of those centrifugal forces were present then, but kept under control by Suharto.

Q: What was our thinking, were we concerned that some of these centrifugal forces might actually take place, in other words in Sumatra or at least part of Sumatra might peel off or something or was this?

BARRY: Well, I think it was a worry because of the example of Yugoslavia. When I came there it was known to Indonesians that I had previously been destined to go to Yugoslavia and so the press was saying oh well the Americans think we are going the way of Yugoslavia, that's why they're sending this guy here. Of course, later on we sent Bob Gelbard there after he had been the czar of the Balkans and that sort of underlined that idea. It wasn't anything we particularly wanted to see happen. We could foresee if there were such an event that would take place, it would be very bloody.

Q: But, we didn't see it, I mean when you look at Yugoslavia, you know this is going to be a very destabilizing within that part of Europe all over, at least that's the potential. Did we see if Indonesia fell apart, this would cause problems?

BARRY: Well, we certainly saw it that way, but the Australians saw it a lot more clearly because if there were an event in that country ten times as large as Yugoslavia, the nearest place for the refugees to end up would be Australia.

Q: So, the concern was really more refugees?

BARRY: Well, no, the concern was, I mean, we knew that it would be very bloody. There would be lots of killing that would take place. You go back to 1965 the "Year of Living Dangerously," the word amok is the loan word that we have from Bahasa Indonesia and you'd still go around to the villages and you'd find somebody in a wooden cage in the middle of the village and the explanation was this was somebody who had run amok. Once an Indonesia runs amok he reaches for his machete and goes after the neighbors. As we saw and as we see now in places like Mallaca.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the business community. What did they want from the embassy and what

could the embassy do for them?

BARRY: Well, concretely we could give them lots of advice, we could intervene on their behalf with the key players to get permission for various things to be done. For example, the idea of private electric power generation was just getting started and there was an American company called Mission Energy that wanted to build a very large combined cycle power plant. When it came to getting permission to do that kind of thing there was potentially a lot of corruption involved. There was potentially the idea that you had to get one of Suharto's children involved in the thing so we were called on in that case to try to run interference for them. This was GE who was ready to put some capital into this, but they wanted some assurances that this was going to work out all right, so Jack Welch came to Indonesia and asked.

Q: He was the CEO of General Electric?

BARRY: CEO of General Electric. He wanted my advice about whether he ought to go ahead with this thing or not. This was the inception of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC and the first APEC summit had been held I think in Malaysia, but the APEC summit was scheduled for Indonesia in 1993 and Clinton came to that summit. We were active in trying to promote APEC and trying to insure that the climate for business was improved and the corruption was kept under control and so forth.

Q: How did American business particularly at the top level deal with the fact that Suharto's family, the sons and daughters were seen to be involved in everything? I mean it was a form of, it was corruption, I mean, but.

BARRY: Well, they dealt with it very carefully because of the foreign corrupt practices legislation. Take for example, Mission Energy, they would not allow any Suharto relatives to get in on the deal, but their coal contract was with a company which had Suharto's children's involvement in it. Probably they paid an excessive price for the coal, but it was that kind of arm's length relationship. One of the biggest interests was the Freeport Macmoran copper and gold mine in Irian Jaya, truly remarkable thing. Irian Jaya is very mountainous and this particular copper mine was about 3,500 meters. There was even a glacier there almost on the equator. The CEO of Freeport Macmoran was sort of a remarkable figure from Louisiana, best known for his Elvis interpretations.

Q: Elvis Presley, yes, deceased star, rock and roll star.

BARRY: Anyhow, he would periodically come out in his private 767 and distribute liberal gifts around to everybody, but not of the kind that was sort of an envelope full of money, but he was sort of skating along the edge of foreign corrupt practices act I suspect.

Q: For one thing, we're talking about the foreign corrupt practices act which we were the first to put this sort of thing in and it was considered to make us operate at a considerable disadvantage?

BARRY: Oh, well, that's quite true, it did because none of our major competitors were under the same kind of constraints. The OECD finally did put into place a requirement that bribing be

criminalized, but that was well after I left, so say the French Total Oil Company or the Siemens which also had many interests in the country, they were certainly actively into corruption.

Q: In a way, say the Indonesians and this probably worked in other countries, sort of understand the rules we operated in, I'm talking about at the bigger level and we were still getting contracts because we could come up with a pretty good deal or not?

BARRY: Yes, I mean, when we told them several times that yes, you can get a deal from Siemens, for example, and there will be some payback for you, but the deal will be much more expensive because there is no free lunch. The money for the bribes gets added onto the contract price. Also, I think for political reasons the Indonesians felt it was desirable to have the Americans involved as much as possible in the country. The business connection was valuable.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Suharto family, the sons and daughters and all?

BARRY: I stayed away from them. I did know the son-in-law Prabowo who was a general in the army and had been the commander in East Timor for some time and we did run into some of the children at social occasions, but I never entertained them.

Q: I mean, was this sort of a deliberate thing? I mean, these people, there was an odor about them that you wanted to watch out for?

BARRY: Absolutely.

Q: How about the East Timor situation? What was it when you arrived?

BARRY: There had been an outbreak of violence in East Timor occasioned by a visit by an American ambassador a couple or three years before. Ambassadors had not visited East Timor for the last couple of years before I arrived and I thought it was important to get out there and see it for myself. I went there early in my tour of duty and went back several times, three or four times. I traveled around the country and got to know the bishop and some of the missionaries that were working there. Of course I got to know the military commander both in East Timor and in Denpasar because the regional military command was there in Bali. Actually one of the things that I was proudest of during my tour of duty was the project we got started in East Timor which had been under the Portuguese. They had a lot of coffee plantations, but these coffee plantations had been neglected. The army was in charge of the Timorese economy, that's how they supplemented their income and they paid very little to the coffee growers for coffee and then sold it on the world market for much higher prices. Somebody who was a long term resident of Indonesia gave us the idea of organic coffee growing because they hadn't had fertilizers because they were too poor and the kind of coffee grown there was a high value coffee so in fact with some funding from AID we got this thing started and it grew very fast. We bypassed the army for marketing. Eventually Starbucks, for example, began to buy some of this organically grown Timorese coffee.

Q: Just for the record, Starbucks being an American coffeehouse chain, extensive coffeehouse chain.

BARRY: Anyhow, several thousand people eventually got involved in this and I understand that it

is thriving today in independent East Timor. So, we were looking around for things like that, projects that were going to generate income for the Timorese and loosen the grip of the army on the economy out there. Also, we were constantly on the backs of the army about excessive force being used in trying to deal with the Timorese insurgency. The head of that insurgency Xanana Gusmao was captured or surrendered to the Indonesian military in '94 I guess it was and jailed. Eventually with a visiting congressman we went to see him in prison to insure that he was being well treated. Of course, he is now the president of East Timor. One of the highlights of my time there was just on the eve of Clinton's arrival for the APEC summit when a whole bunch of Timorese jumped over the fence of the embassy and set up camp on the embassy grounds. We had to intervene quite vigorously to keep the army from trying to come into the embassy grounds and haul these guys out. Eventually when Clinton came they were still on embassy territory and they were demanding to meet with Clinton and talk about East Timor.

Q: These were East Timorese?

BARRY: Yes. Then after Clinton left we had the issue of trying to make sure that they did not leave the embassy grounds and go directly to jail. Eventually, they were allowed to leave and many of them went to Portugal.

Q: How were we getting news? Did we get much news about what was happening in East Timor?

BARRY: Well, this was the age of the Internet so a lot of the information came through the Timorese émigrés, some of them from Australia and some from Portugal. We had embassy people there quite often. The Australians had somebody in residence there who worked on aid issues. Of course we had the largest intelligence organization in the world there, the Catholic church and spent a lot of time talking to the papal nuncio, who traveled back and forth fairly often. Of course Bishop Belo was one of the leading pro-independence people in East Timor and we had a lot of contacts with him. I knew the governor pretty well and when the governor would come to Jakarta he would call on me and when I went there I would talk to him. He had been educated under the Portuguese, the first governor, and the second governor, and came from more proletarian class. I guess he had been a truck driver before, but in time he became sort of a confidant and would come to me despite what he had to say publicly about the magnificent Indonesia rule and would talk about what needed to be done to give them more running room.

Q: As you were there, where did you see East Timor going? Independence, war, sovereignty, get the army out, I mean what?

BARRY: Well, I tried to persuade the Indonesians that it was much in their interest to let East Timor go, that it was clearly a drain on the economy that was damaging their reputation internationally and the foreign minister certainly agreed with that and periodically would try to intervene with Suharto to try to make that case to him, but the military felt very differently about it partly because they were so much involved in the economy. The military budget of Indonesia is about 30% of the cost of the military and so the military commanders were required to make up the rest of their expenses from the local economy. East Timor was a leading source of income. The army argued and Suharto believed that once you let one province of Indonesia go, the rest of them were going to want to break away, too. This goes back to the 1950s when the CIA was involved

with an operation in support of Mallacan independence and a federated Indonesia. In fact, we got caught with a CIA person flying a bombing mission a la the Bay of Pigs and that whole episode was still fresh in the minds of many.

Q: Which brings up a topic, how well do you feel you were served by your station?

BARRY: Quite fine. We didn't have any kind of major operation going on there. We were involved in some intelligence collection, but there was no policy difference of any kind. The defense attaché was a very experienced person with lots of ties. One of the most respected Americans in Indonesia had been a three time defense attaché named George Benson who had very, very close ties with all of the military. He was at that point a retired colonel and he was involved in advising oil companies and other businesses. He came all the time to see the generals. He would come and talk to me and talk to John Hazeman who was the defense attaché then at my time. When it came time to try to get a message across to the military it was often most effective to send our defense attaché over and say, "Look, now I'm on your side. I've been trying to get military training restarted, I've been trying to improve ties with the defense department, but you've got to understand that if you do this, the reaction is going to be that" and I think that restraining the military, for example, from trying to break into the embassy and seize the East Timorese.

Q: What was the training issue? You've mentioned this a number of times.

BARRY: Well, ever since 1948 we've been involved in a close relationship with the Indonesian military. We were of course in 1946 or '47 leading advocates of Indonesian independence from the Netherlands. Then because of the domino theory, we were involved in the strengthening of the Indonesian military, sending them equipment such as C-130s and training many of their officers here in both military and political military issues. It was the so-called International Military Education and Training, IMET. The year before I got there we had canceled IMET because of the human rights issue.

Q: The human rights issue being focused on East Timor?

BARRY: No, in general the military was involved in governments at the provincial level and they were heavy handed, not only in East Timor, but also in Aceh and Sumatra and anyplace where there was sort of rumbling of dissent, the military often went in with excessive force. This caused a great deal of unhappiness especially among outfits like Amnesty and in the congress there was a move to cut this off and by the time I got there it had been cut off and there was a lot of resentment on the Indonesian side. The U.S. military was unhappy about it, too. Of course, that was the age of the CINCs and CINCPAC, commander-in-chief, Pacific came frequently to Indonesia. The right of passage of U.S. war ships through Indonesian waters was very important to us and of course we had our special forces that came and trained in Indonesia and so trying to restart the relationship was a priority of mine. One of my predecessors twice removed was Paul Wolfowitz who was at that point Under Secretary of Defense in the Bush administration and of course he had an active interest in this whole thing.

Q: Well, while you were there in the '92 to '95 period were you ever able to get it restarted?

BARRY: Partly. We got something called expanded IMET, which concentrated, on training in human rights. So, they would come to a war college or something like that, but they would take a curriculum that had a lot of international military law and stuff like that.

Q: Did you see while you were there the Indonesian military changing its approach? Do you think they were getting the message?

BARRY: Several of them did. The younger generation of people I think were beginning to reform, but there was a category of people around Moerdani who had been the previous head of the army who were very nationalist and they were very afraid that any kind of loosening of the ties would end up in the disintegration of the country.

Q: What about Australia? It was the other.

BARRY: Well, the Australians and the Japanese were the two other major countries involved. Japan had, as you can imagine, very extensive investments and the Japanese sent some of their most able diplomats there. Their ambassadors there were top notch and likewise the Australians. Of course, they were all knit together in APEC.

Q: Well, I would imagine that the Japanese would be completely, almost completely focused on trade?

BARRY: Well, of course they were interested in protecting their investments and the Indonesians were heavily in debt to Japan so they wanted to make sure that the debt service was taken care of. But, in order to do that they had to be interested in the politics of the situation in order to make sure and there was really no difference in outlook between say myself and the Japanese ambassadors there about need of some kind of reform process.

Q: The Australians, how did you see their role in it?

BARRY: Australia unlike the United States recognized the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia back in '75 and so they were inclined to downplay the Timorese issue although quite conscious of the fact that it was something that might come an issue in the longer term. I don't think their outlook was much different from our own.

Q: How did the when you shortly after you arrived there they had the APEC?

BARRY: It was a year after I arrived.

Q: And Clinton came and all, what was your impression even beforehand of the Clinton administration approach? Was there a different one?

BARRY: Well, initially of course the issue of human rights was greater than it had been, Clinton had said some things during the campaign about independence for East Timor and things like that, but there was an interesting sidebar here because when Clinton had been governor of Arkansas,

one of the leading Indonesian business banking families (I should say Indonesian Chinese because they were like many of the rich people in Indonesia a Chinese family), the Riadys had bought a bank in Little Rock and became quite close to Clinton. So, James Riady went to the inauguration and I remember seeing a film clip of himself with Clinton. He emerged as a channel to the Clinton White House which later turned into a scandal because the Riadys contributed money to the campaign. That was one of the things that was investigated during one of the many investigations going on in the Clinton period. The Riadys, being Chinese, were critical of a lot of the things that Suharto and the military did, but they were critical quietly and they were in the meantime doing deals for example with Wal-Mart to open a big retail outlet in Indonesia and building big housing developments and things like that. I guess when Clinton was there for the summit he had an unpublicized side meeting with the Riadys, went to their house and so forth. It caused the Suharto government to treat the Riadys more leniently than they might have otherwise.

Q: Oh, the games. Did you have, Winston Lord I guess was Assistant Secretary for East Asia. What did he have, did he have much interest in East Asia?

BARRY: Well, he did, but he was I think never quite pleased with his own role in Indonesia. He had been on the trip that Ford made to Indonesia in 1975 and Henry Kissinger had been on the same trip when Lord was Kissinger's executive assistant. It was widely rumored, but never admitted, that in 1975 the Indonesians had given Ford and Kissinger and Lord advance notice of their intention to move into East Timor. They had gotten if not a green light at least a yellow light. Now it has come out as some of the papers from that period have been released that the response of Kissinger or Ford was, "Well, if you're going to do it, do it quickly and get it over with." Of course, subsequently, Lord and his wife in particular had become major human rights activists and so the issue of what had transpired then was a sensitive one and I think colored some of his approach to Indonesia.

Q: He didn't want to get too involved?

BARRY: There weren't really any big geopolitical issues at the time that would have required this. It was kind of as I would say off the beaten track in terms of congress and things like that.

Q: What about Islamic fundamentalism. Was that a concern or not?

BARRY: No, not much. This is a very syncretic form of Islam. Much of Indonesia has got Islam late, in its period of decline. Much of Islam came to Indonesia from China, not from Saudi Arabia or places like that. One of my good friends at the time was Abdurahman Wahid, who later became president of Indonesia. He was the head of the largest Islamic organization. He was a graduate of the University in Cairo and so forth, but a very moderate person. I remember once that he and I were meeting with a bunch of Islamic youth and they were going on about the terrible things in Israel and how awful the Jews were and he took out after them in no uncertain terms and called them all stupid and said, "If you people were half as creative and well educated as the people your age in Israel, this country would be a lot better off." There had been a period back in the '50s when the Islamic political parties wanted to do things like bring in sharia law, but that was stopped by both Sukarno and later Suharto. The military was a very secular organization and was very cautious about political power of the Islamic parties. In Aceh there was some movement in the

direction of fundamentalist Islam, but again it was suppressed by the military.

Q: What about the indigenous Chinese? What was the situation of them?

BARRY: Well, I remember in '65 when 500,000 of them were killed. Most people think of overseas Chinese as being the rich businessmen and indeed among the rich businessmen most of them were Chinese, but there are also poor Chinese and you can go to any of the provinces around the country and find, the Chinese may be involved in trade, but they certainly weren't doing well by it. They ran the kiosks and things like that. So, there was a lot of resentment and periodically when I was there, there was a big riot in Sumatra where the people went out and burned the Chinese stores and houses.

Q: Were the Chinese important politically, the rich Chinese or did they keep out of it?

BARRY: Only behind the scenes. They were important because they were closely tied to the Suharto family and most of the things that were done with the Chinese was in partnership with somebody in the Suharto clan, but they couldn't pretend to any kind of public political position because it was too unpopular.

Q: Were you still having to deal with the allegation that we supplied the Indonesians with a death list in '65?

BARRY: It came up occasionally from one source or another, but you know, I had it on good advice that even by a person who was primarily accused of this, Bob Martens, that there was no truth to this. There are some people in the U.S. who still held that view.

Q: What about Cornell during that Sukarno period and for a while afterwards, Cornell was one of the major intellectual centers regarding Indonesia and the United States, the university and usually cast a very critical eye on what we were doing and all. Was the Cornell syndrome still going or not?

BARRY: Well, my Deputy Barbara Harvey was a product of Cornell. She had studied at Cornell and later taught in Australia and she was somebody I particularly selected as somebody who really knew her way around. She'd done a lot of research on that period.

Q: I mean was Cornell still kind of the powerhouse regarding American intellectuals?

BARRY: Well, no, by this time the graduates of Cornell had spread out around the country I guess there was an important center at Northwestern. There were of course the people in Indonesia, the technocrats, who were in charge of the economy were known as the Berkeley mafia because they had studied at Berkeley and the leading people of academics who came out were, yes, there were Cornell people among them, but they were not predominant.

Q: How about the Philippines? Did the Philippines play much of a role I mean they are both two large island nations and all, did they clash at all?

BARRY: Well, they weren't clashing, they were in APEC together, but, well you have to understand that Suharto he felt his role as the senior person of the largest country in the region gave him the right to be the leader of Asan in which he often clashed with Mahatir in particular.

Q: In Malaysia.

BARRY: There was absolutely no love lost between them. It goes back of course to the period of confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia, Mahatir was on the verge of boycotting the APEC summit in Indonesia and there was a lot of criticism flying back and forth between the two. As far as the Philippines were concerned, there wasn't much going on.

Q: You weren't having to, I mean nobody was, there were no big island disputes or anything like that?

BARRY: Not really. There were some with Malaysia, particularly concerning the border between Northern Borneo and Kalimantan.

Q: Was this the time when we were beginning or had withdrawn from the Philippines?

BARRY: Yes, we had withdrawn and that was one of the reasons why over flight and naval port visits and so forth in Indonesia were important to the U.S. military. We had some ships that used to come into Indonesian shipyards for repair, mostly to keep the Indonesian shipyards busy. On one occasion we had a carrier in the area so we flew a lot of the senior Indonesians to the carrier and they got to watch our carrier flight operations and so forth. That kind of military to military and political military contact was important.

Q: Were we thinking of perhaps in time of some crisis that we couldn't even think about at that time but keeping the relationship up with Indonesia because it might be occupying a good piece of real estate?

BARRY: Oh yes, that had been a consistent factor of our relationship with Indonesia for 50 years and it occupied a huge piece of real estate and it was very important to us to be able to use that for innocent passage at least.

Q: Were there any other things, issues that I haven't?

BARRY: There was a period there soon after the Clinton administration when Clinton had the idea of appointing the ex-governor of Hawaii to my job and they had even asked for agreement from him and then it turned out to be politically undoable because he had gotten into a big fuss with Jesse Helms before about flying the Hawaiian flag above the American flag at the capital and there were issues about the money and so forth. So, that all went away, but there was a period when I thought my term of duty was going to be cut short.

Q: There's nothing more satisfying than being an ambassador and having a new president come in and pick somebody whose going to hang around for a while and become controversial.

BARRY: Well, in the event one of my old colleagues and friends, Stape Roy was ambassador in China at the time. He had been scheduled to go on to Thailand, but as my tour of duty came to an end they decided to send him to Indonesia instead, so it was a very amicable turnover.

Q: Well, then you left there in 1995?

BARRY: Yes, and by that time I had been career minister for something like 12 years so failing another appointment that I had to retire and so I did and got involved in some business operations with Ivan Selin.

Q: Who had been the former?

BARRY: Under Secretary for Management and head of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, but he wanted to do some power projects in Indonesia and so I got involved in that. I got involved in some consulting work and became a member of the board of directors of an oil company, Union, Texas Petroleum and was sort of going along happily involved in these things when I got a call in the end of '97 from Bob Gelbard who ended up being the ambassador to Indonesia saying, "How would you like to take over the OSCE Mission in Sarajevo?" Well, my initial reaction was, "Well, no I wouldn't thank you because I've got a lot of other things I have to do and I'd have to give them up if I went off and did this." But eventually they found a way where I could maintain my directorship and so forth and be on a personal services contract to go out and do the OSCE thing. I was reluctant to do it because I didn't anticipate that Peggy would want to come with me, but in the event she did. I was only asked to do it for six months until we had the 1998 elections. So, I said all right I'll do it and when I got out there I found it to be a fascinating job and the final analysis stayed there for three and a half years. The OSCE of course, started out as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and produced the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. My friend and mentor George Vest told me the other day that Kissinger kept saying, "Well, what do you want to be involved in the CSCE thing for? It's just a nuisance." George always felt that it had a lot of potential for various things and felt certainly justified by the role that OSCE has taken and put into the field these very large field missions. My mission was the first large field mission and of course, its role was specified in the Dayton Peace Agreement. The UN had fallen into very bad odor at that time after the UNPROFOR mission in Bosnia which failed to protect any so-called safe areas including Srebrenica so they wanted to put another organization in there. So, a lot of the civilian implementation was assigned to OSCE including the administration of elections, the drafting of election regulations, the protection of human rights, military restructuring and military verification and the effort to try to democratize political parties. So, it was a mission when I arrived of about 1,000 people, 27 offices around the country, headquarters in Sarajevo, some 30 countries involved in the staff of the mission; my deputy was German and the political director was Russian. The heads of the regional offices were variously Italian, German and French and so forth, so it was a very multinational operation. Each country seconded its own personnel to this. The U.S. had the largest contingent. This had been a huge dispute at the Dayton Agreement period because the U.S. and France both wanted the job of head of mission this and finally it came to a discussion between Clinton and Chirac that decided that the issue in favor of the Americans, but then we did live with some resentment about that.

Q: Who would be the head of the?

BARRY: Well, it would be an American or a Frenchman.

Q: I would have thought the French as far as the Bosnians were concerned be rather bad odor because they hadn't performed very well when they were part of the UN- peacekeeping force.

BARRY: Well, they also were seen as being very pro-Serb. The French didn't see it that way.

EDMUND MCWILLIAMS

Political Counselor

Jakarta (1996-1999)

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Mr. Greenwald earned degrees for Princeton University and Harvard Law School. His first government assignment was General Counsel in the Department of the Air Force. He later transferred to the Department of State, where he served as legal advisor as well as Political Officer, both in Washington and in various assignments abroad. His foreign posts include Germany (East and West Berlin), Yugoslavia, Hungary and Belgium. He also had assignments concerning anti-terrorism.

Q: Yes. Well, I have to say I parallel you. I was not a conservative but on that I felt that we were stopping something. I'm not completely convinced we didn't stop something. I mean, you know, the old domino theory, I don't think was, I mean, it's been pooh poohed and discredited but there was something going on there that if we had not been there things, other things would have happened in Indonesia and other places.

MCWILLIAMS: There's one analysis that suggests that we bought time for the rest of Southeast Asia. I think at a minimum you could make a case for that. On the other hand, you mention Indonesia, we supported some pretty awful dictatorships and that's also part of the legacy of the Cold War.

Just one other aspect of that, I recall as Mort Abramowitz left very highly regarded in Washington because he'd handled a very difficult tour extremely well, was to be rewarded by getting an ambassadorship in Indonesia. And he didn't get it because essentially the Indonesians said they didn't want him. The street story back in Washington initially was that the Indonesians had rejected him because he was Jewish. I know for, I know quite securely that in fact he was rejected because the Thais warned the Indonesians that he was a difficult ambassador, that he would insist on things very strongly. I've always thought in retrospect, having subsequently gone to Indonesia that this is unfortunate in many ways because I think Mort Abramowitz in the early Suharto years, well middle Suharto years would have been a very good ambassador to have had there because he would have, I think, been tough. And unfortunately we had a string of ambassadors in Indonesia who basically went along with the Suharto regime and did not question some things the Suharto regime was doing. I think Mort, given his instinct for human rights and so on would have been a very useful man to have had there. Unfortunately he didn't get that job.

Q: Well did we have a policy of ignoring the Sandinistas or going on and saying okay, they're a force here, we're going to deal with them as we would in any democratic country?

MCWILLIAMS: More the former than the latter. One of the great debates in the embassy at that time was the relationship that we would have with the Indonesian (sic) military. And we had a defense attaché who rather bravely but I think in many ways in an unfortunate way sought notwithstanding out politics to maintain and even expand slightly the relationship that the defense attaché's office had with Umberto Ortega, who remained minister of defense, at least in charge of the army, we should say. And his, I think his rather narrow perspective was that military should deal with other militaries, the problem being that the Ortega brothers, both Daniel and Umberto, were I think pretty genuinely and correctly regarded as rogues. The Sandinista movement consisted of very well meaning, well motivated people who simply wanted to help the poor and then a leadership which was quite corrupt in many ways. And I think Umberto and Daniel both were and remain to some extent corrupt leaders. But nonetheless there was a structure within the Sandinistas below that leadership that accounted for the fact that so many people still valued their Sandinista ties.

Q: I take it, please correct me if I'm wrong, that because the election was a real election and it wasn't a complete takeover, that there wasn't sort of revenge, that there wasn't much room for revenge time and that sort of thing.

MCWILLIAMS: One of the great debates, and it's a good question because we faced it somewhat in Afghanistan as well and in Indonesia, is the debate as to whether or not we should be or the society should be seeking justice or whether in the interest of peace just allow those things to pass. And that was, I recall, a pretty fierce debate within Nicaraguan society. I think the only thing I walked away from that, at least reflecting back was with the notion that this is a question for the society and should not be a question over which we would seek to have any influence. I would say that's the same in, subsequently in East Timor and Indonesia but essentially it's for the society to make that decision. If the international community not knowing all of the implications of that decision, the consequences of that decision shouldn't be involved, it's a societal question.

Q: Well, before we leave this thing were there incidents, developments or something that you think of?

MCWILLIAMS: I think the only thing that was important for me in that assignment, which was really an out of area assignment, I had no experience going in to that area, to that region but I think again, as I tried to describe this earlier, I began to be a little bit more sensitive to criticism or critique of U.S. policy based upon the reactions to that policy of the people themselves. And again, a sensitivity to a need to look at our policy and how it was impacting not only the elites but the local population. This became much more important to me in a subsequent assignment to Indonesia and I drew on that experience in Nicaragua I think very much to shape my role in that position in Indonesia subsequently, which was important for my career.

Q: So you took Indonesia?

MCWILLIAMS: Right, Bahasa for six months I guess it was, six-seven months. And I've got to

say I focused on the language to some extent, I didn't do terribly well with it but what I failed to do was really to, I think responsibly approach the problems of, the political problem that were emerging. Because I went out there not as well prepared as I should have been and I fault myself, not FSI for that. At that time I was helping to integrate some of these people from Tajikistan into American society, I was tied up with that. I was also writing memos and dissents about our policy in Afghanistan and things of that sort and I didn't focus sufficiently, I think, in preparation for that assignment in Jakarta. I regret that but it emerged as probably the best assignment in my career.

Q: How about taking Indonesia. Did you get any feel for the multitude of peoples in that area?

MCWILLIAMS: Not sufficiently. Not sufficiently. And this is just part of where I feel that as a student I failed. FSI I think does a very good job generally and I think particularly with the Indonesian preparation a good, sophisticated program but I didn't do enough work before I went out to Indonesia. And as a result as political consular I went out there with less knowledge than I should have had. Again, my fault.

Q: Well did you find you were joining a club, the Indonesian club? You know, there's the Soviet, I guess now Russian club, there's the China club, etcetera, etcetera.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes, yes, very much. Yes, there's very much, there was very much an Indonesian club and I unfortunately, I shouldn't say unfortunately, I wound up having a lot of problems with the perspective that they offered for our policy out there. It was an interesting situation. I walked into a political section which turned over completely, there's no one left, a brand new team which was initially a little bit hobbling because we had to sort of begin to make the contacts all over again. But it was a stellar team, just a hell of a good bunch of people. And ironically I had been in, of course, in Bahasa preparation with most of them because we, so we had a good knowledge of each other. But I would say that my team probably, because they were better students were first of all better with the Bahasa and also I think better in terms of understanding what was going on in Indonesia. But fortunately I think it gave us a chance to take a new look.

I remember when I went out there the ambassador's first advice to me-

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCWILLIAMS: Ambassador Stapleton Roy out of China experience. And he'd been there I guess four months or so before we arrived so he also was new. But I remember him telling me, sitting down with me and saying what I want from this team is production. I want a report from every single officer at least once a week. And I sort of scowled, I said well yes. Because I always was a great reporter in terms of volume at least and my team, it turned out, was very much the same. So I always found it ironic because less than a year later for various reasons which I'll get into he was arguing that we needed to slow down our production. Because the team before had been very circumspect in their reporting and I don't mean to fault them in terms of the notion that they might have been lazy because I don't think they were, they made great contacts and so on. But I think it was an embassy that sought very much to control what Washington knew and understood about a very, very complicated situation in Indonesia.

If I could just as background, we had been, U.S. government had been very close to Suharto since the coup back in 1965 and he had been a very close ally in the war against the Soviets, the Cold War and so on. But what I found was it was as if our policy were on autopilot. When I arrived it was as if the Soviet Union were still out there, we were still basically in need of a dictator who was in fact for many reasons not a good ally for U.S. policy in the region or certainly in Indonesia. But what I began to do or what my team I should say began to do was report reality, to report elements about human rights abuse by the Indonesia military which was rampant, the corruption in the system, lack of democracy, repression of human rights activists and democratic activists and so on. The embassy was not welcoming to this kind of reporting because for years it had been essentially a defender, an advocate for the regime against both journalistic criticism but also congressional criticism that was prompted especially by the Indonesian military's human rights abuse. So we basically began producing reports that were sympathetic to the perspective that this was a dictatorship, that we ought to be concerned about the human rights abuses out there and so on. And we wound up in pretty stiff competition for the picture of Indonesia, what we were trying to portray. The ambassador, because he was new, was sort of Solomon-like. He was prepared to accept whatever perspective seemed to be initially to him correct but the military attaché's office which is very active and very close to the Indonesian military and the DCM and some other elements in the leadership of the embassy who were part of the old Indonesia network were very reluctant to see our reporting go out. I can recall when we sought to write the human rights report in the fall for Indonesia my embassy, my section, had pretty much come to the conclusion we had to have a new human rights perspective and we fought very hard for a hard, honest perspective and were pleased to find Washington receptive to this message because I think just in the three or four months of our reporting we had begun to indicate there were some problems that had gone unaddressed previously. And again, butting heads largely with the defense attaché office and the old DCM.

Q: How about the CIA?

MCWILLIAMS: CIA out there, strangely, did take a very assertive role on domestic issues like that. I guess I can say this, in those days the diplomat community was very broad in Jakarta. You had North Koreans there, you had Palestinians there, Libyans were there, Iraqis were there, of course Iranians, and I believe that the CIA's focus was much more in monitoring and having contact, if you know what I mean, with some of those elements. So they did not play a policy role to any great extent in terms of what we were doing. They obviously acquiesced to what had been the think at the embassy, basically to support the Suharto regime.

Q: Well, can you talk- first place, could you talk about the regime, who was in charge, who was doing what?

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. Well Suharto had taken over in a strange coup environment back in 1965. There is still historical debate as to who initiated the coup and how it was that Suharto became the great victor in this coup scenario but there's no question about the fact that it was an extremely bloody affair where over half-a-million people probably died in this coup attempt, principally victims of the military and some Islamic militias that they had formed. And we proceeded to work very closely with Suharto in two senses. Certainly we helped his military, had a very close relationship with his military through the years but also we saw this as a great platform for

development by U.S. companies. Big U.S. companies went in, extractive industries principally, oil and gas but also of gold and copper and so on. So it was a very friendly environment for the major corporations, it was a very close military-to-military relationship. Things began to become difficult only in 1991 when there was a massacre in East Timor involving the Indonesian military where they killed well over 270 peaceful students. And it turned out that a couple of American journalists were actually there and there was a German who was filming this. And it became kind of a cause celebre back here and finally I think what had been a longstanding concern about human rights generally in Indonesia came to a head and restrictions were put upon our ability to work with the Indonesian military. And this came in 1992. And really from 1992 until just a few months ago, in late 2005, there have been restrictions on our cooperation which I very much supported.

But this takes us to say, late '96, I'd been there about six months and the embassy wrote a message arguing very strongly for a reinstitution of the military-to-military relationship, specifically with the IMET program, International Military Education and Training program for the Indonesian military. And I felt this was wrong, I felt that we hadn't seen any real reform and I wrote a dissent on that and it was initially, I thought, well received by the ambassador, not by his DCM but the message went out as a dissent. It was a Friday night I recall and I thought well this was pretty good, the ambassador was true to his word, that he would allow dissenting perspectives to go out as he had allowed a lot of our reporting to go out that was essentially setting a new picture for Indonesia. But at the end of the day I got word from his secretary that he wanted me and my team to stay in the office past closing time. And he came down and pulled us all into my deputy's room and began a ranting lecture saying that he was very dissatisfied with the political section, that it wasn't reporting what he felt needed to be reported and so on and so on, loud and intimidating. And he was very clear this was a consequence of my dissent earlier in the day. So we listened to this for three or four minutes of this I said Mr. Roy, I think you don't want to talk to my team, you want to talk to me. So let's go over to my office and talk this out. And he sort of said well okay. And as I went out I remember I slammed the door and then slammed my own door behind him and essentially lectured him and said this isn't right, this is not right. This is, first of all, this is not the way you respond to dissent and number two, you don't intimidate my team which has done a great job, you talk to me, you deal with me. And that, I think established a good relationship because we became well, I took evermore a dissenting perspective there on lots of issues but I think there was sort of a baseline respect between the two of us from that moment forward.

I might say my team, after he left our suite, was very shook up and I remember one of the members of my team saying, you know, in the future if I ever want to dissent I should talk it out with the team and I think I took the position essentially that, you know, they or I could and should dissent when we felt it was necessary because they agreed with my perspective on this but they hadn't anticipated the consequences. But it was just one of a series, I think I've had four or five major dissents in my career and each one has been problematic but I think that was the most confrontational that I encountered.

Q: Well did you find, I mean when you look at this, I mean we're talking about aging regimes and all you do is look across, you know, look over to your right or whatever, look to your east and see the Philippines where you had a parallel. I mean, I understand Mrs. Suharto was Mrs. Five Percent or something.

MCWILLIAMS: Ten percent.

Q: Excuse me, ten percent.

MCWILLIAMS: Ibu Tien.

Q: I mean, corrupt as all hell. I don't know as she went for shoes the way Imelda Marcos did.

MCWILLIAMS: No, that wasn't the problem.

Q: But the point being that here were regimes that started out rather promising and over periods of time just got worse and-

MCWILLIAMS: I guess-

Q: Maybe it isn't promising.

MCWILLIAMS: I think frankly when you consider the regime, the Suharto regime, began with a bloodbath, which we overlooked essentially, and of course this was the Cold War period, we were just getting involved in Vietnam and so on, but I'm not sure that the Suharto regime was ever a good regime. It was good in the sense that it made space for our firms and it worked with us in an anti-communist way. When it invaded East Timor it was done in the context of overthrowing an incipient leftist regime in East Timor and so on. But I'm not sure it was ever a good regime. You've made reference to Ibu Tien, Suharto's wife. I just wrote a review of a book about the presidency in Indonesia and I make the argument, and it's not my own it's one that I picked up from Indonesians that Ibu Tien, who died in 1996 or late '95 really was the one who held the regime together because what happened after her death was that the children of Suharto and Ibu Tien became rampantly corrupt, blatantly corrupt. They'd always been corrupt but she'd always sort of held it in, to some extent held the reigns so that they wouldn't compete with one another, that it wouldn't be too blatant, that it wouldn't be scandalous. She kept sort of a bit of a hold on them. When she disappeared Suharto was not able to restrain his own kids and they became blatantly corrupt, competing with one another in various sectors and I think first of all it was known among the local population but it became ever more an irritant. But what Suharto had relied on all those years was an elite within Jakarta, business elite essentially, that he had basically promoted and helped and so on but I think even they became scandalized at what the family was doing. So I think in the very brief period from her death in late '95, early '96 until his fall in '98 the corruption became a very critical problem. Of course there was also the financial crash in '97 to which he did not respond well, nor did we I might add. And so I think the combination of definite economic downturn for Indonesia plus the scandal-ridden regime that he was operating, that prompted his removal. But again Ibu Tien I think was sort of a critical player. Had she lingered on she might have been in a position to keep some of the scandals off the front page that was essentially prompted by her family.

Q: Well let's take a look at our attitude. By '90- you got there in '90-

MCWILLIAMS: Six.

Q: Six. So we're talking about the Cold War was definitely over.

MCWILLIAMS: Oh yes. Totally over.

Q: And we were making nice to Vietnam at that time or at least-

MCWILLIAMS: Clinton clearly was trying to restore a relationship.

Q: Yes. And so there weren't external pressures and also terrorism was not-

MCWILLIAMS: Terrorism was not an issue.

Q: -was not an issue so what was there- you see what I'm getting at.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. Well, you know, I think, as I said earlier, to some extent it was autopilot. I think that the old Indonesia clique in the State Department and to some extent in the Pentagon genuinely liked working with the Suharto regime, they knew how to deal with these people. As corrupt as they were it was an old relationship, often personal relationships, that things just kind of kept going on autopilot. In addition there was a think called the U.S. Indonesia Society, still is, in Washington, heavily financed by corporations who are invested in Indonesia. They acted as an ally to the old Indonesia network in the State Department and the Pentagon to sort of keep things as they are. It was a comfortable relationship for them. I think they didn't take into full account and what we were trying to do with our reporting was to reveal the incredible discrepancy between the wealthy and the poor in Indonesia, the abysmal record of the military which was truly a human rights abuser of enormous proportions like in East Timor and so on. I think it was, as I say, autopilot but also, and this I think was an addition from Ambassador Roy drawing from his China experience, he saw Indonesia, as did I think some people in Washington, as a potential ally in a possible confrontation with China. A rising China might constitute a genuine threat to the region and we're looking for allies particularly an Asian and Indonesia was a logical counterbalance, counterweight to Chinese influence in Southeast Asia particularly given the fact that Indonesians were basically not very fond of the Chinese even on an ethnic level.

Q: Yes well, I mean, of course, you know, they had these riots again and again.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: I mean, as in the Philippines.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: Which were basically anti-Chinese.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. Well, when we speak about that massacre in 1965-67 at the time of the coup most of the victims were Chinese.

Q: Yes.

MCWILLIAMS: Anyhow.

Q: Well let's talk a bit about your relations with the attachés or lack thereof. How did this work?

MCWILLIAMS: Pretty confrontational. They had an agenda and very specifically it was to promote relations with Aubry, which is the military then, since to be known as the TNI. They would defend its reputation against our claims of human rights abuse. It was a constant challenging of our reporting versus their reporting. I can remember in the beginning, as I say in '96 we sought to change the tenor and tone of the human rights report, the annual human rights report, and we're dealing with Papua, West Papua or then called Irian Jaya. And I recall we had reporting of tremendous human rights abuse by the military from the ICRC and from local NGOs and church people out there, and they would produce reporting from their sources which were the military saying oh but the military is not doing these things. And they would approach, I can recall debating in front of the ambassador, well we have this report from the ICRC and they'll say well we've got a report from Aubry saying it's not doing these things so it's he said, she said, you know, you can't really draw a conclusion so we can't do anything in the way of reporting. That basically didn't fly with the ambassador who I think, as I say, in that first year was pretty honest in terms of reporting the facts as they came to his desk. I think that that began to change over time.

Q: What happened?

MCWILLIAMS: I think he and the embassy reverted to type, which is to say began to support the Suharto regime more and more against our criticism but then, of course, in the fall of '97 we had the economic crash and the embassy itself, I think, was forced to take a new position because it was clear the Suharto regime was in deep trouble. It was not coming out of this financial crunch very well, it was going to be in need of outside assistance and the embassy sought to put conditions on IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank assistance as did the IMF and World Bank, in early- late '97, early '98 as they sought to develop a solution for Jakarta. Again, there was some contention over that because they were putting economic, financial conditionality on any money that would go to Suharto's regime that would salvage him, basically, constraints which were part of the Washington consensus, which is to say not particularly friendly to the lower classes but essentially to the institutions, they had to salvage those institutions. We were making the argument at the time that there ought to be also political pressure upon the regime to make reforms in the political area, in human rights area, that this should be part of the package. We didn't get very far with that. But in a sense our policy almost became irrelevant as the situation in Indonesia simply developed much faster than any of us had expected. You began to have massive demonstrations, particularly by students, against the regime. The regime responded with great force, shooting down students and so on. It was a particularly interesting period, this is the first six months of '98 or going to May of '98. I had, as I said before, a really, really good team. We were out on the streets daily, we were in the demonstrations reporting using cell phones and so on to report back not only to the embassy but at night sometimes back to Washington via cell phone exactly what was happening in the streets.

Q: There's something with the new-

MCWILLIAMS: It was astounding to me. You know, I had been in places where you didn't have a telephone to Washington. But here literally you'd be in the streets and of course you always wait until the shooting started or the pepper gas or the tear gas began to spray and people started to scream, then you make your phone call because you've got great background noise. I did this repeatedly. But- and I hate to say it but we had, of course, some problems, as we had throughout my three years there, in getting some of the reporting out. There'd be restrictions, oh you can't say that, we're not sure of that and so on, anything that was too negative about the regime. But with those phone calls I was able to report to the watch office back at State exactly what was happening with essentially no controls. And I was never criticized for that because it was ongoing and had to be covered well past the time the embassy had closed and so on. So I think, very frankly, we were able to give Washington a moment-by-moment description of what was happening in the streets in Jakarta, for example, that was very useful for them.

I recall one instance where just before the big riots in Jakarta, the night before, they had, the police as it turned out, had shot down, killed four students and I reported this, again from the scene on my cell phone. And I got a call back saying Mrs. Albright is not sure that those four people are really dead, there's some question about that. She wants to know if you've seen the bodies. So I went to the morgue at the university where the kids had been laid out and went into the room where the kids were and gave a report back, I'm now standing in front of the four bodies, yes they're dead. But I mean, again it was the immediacy that little cell phone gave you that really made it very, very powerful.

Q: Was there any call within the State Department or the embassy or something, getting a little bit concerned about the cell phone business?

MCWILLIAMS: No. Oddly enough no. Very strange, I always wondered why they didn't figure that out because again, of course I was honest, I was telling them what was going on in the street and they wanted to know because this of course, there were thousands of American citizens in Indonesia so I mean, there was great concern about day-by-day, minute-by-minute almost coverage of these events. But no, I never ran into problems with that. I think in fact they welcomed that.

Q: Alright, before this all happened when you got there, how did, where were your contacts? How did the political section work?

MCWILLIAMS: I think, what I found when I got out there, most of the contacts were essentially the old elite in Jakarta I referred to earlier, I recall being graciously invited by the DCM to several dinners and so on where she sought to share her contacts with this incoming political consular. They were all elderly, for the most part, all of a fixed view, mostly ex-military and it became very clear that this was one element of the society but it wasn't the whole game. What we began early on was a program whereby each of my officers had a specific area of Indonesia to be responsible for covering so that we're not Jakarta focused as I felt the reporting had been. I had somebody assigned to Kalimantan, somebody assigned to Aceh. And I said now you got to get out there, you got to get in the local people and report what's going on outside of Jakarta. So that was one contact development scheme we had.

But beyond that, and I've not always been a great friend of AID but I think USAID, through the middle '90s in Jakarta had done a wonderful job in sponsoring the development of small NGOs, local NGOs, that were local in environmental issues, human rights issues, in democracy promotion; these NGOs were often under threat from the Suharto regime, of course, from the military but because of their connection to USAID they were somewhat protected. And again, I'm very grateful that USAID made available to us a lot of these little NGOs, introduced us to these people and as a consequence we had much more of a people's perspective on what was happening around us than I think the previous generation of reporters had. So again, very grateful to USAID, which not only developed this NGO network and protected it to a very real extent but also shared that with us so that we could get some good reporting out. And I might say although we had lots of contention within the embassy, much like my experience in Islamabad, I found that we had friends within a very large mission who wanted us to know things that basically had not been previously reported.

I recall shortly after I arrived a newly arriving agriculture, somebody from the Department of Agriculture, had just been sent out and I heard it discussed at a team meeting saying well, he was a tree hugger so he had a two-month assignment. Well, I came to know that there were lots of tree huggers, lots of people concerned about the environment out in mission, they simply couldn't report what they were seeing. So we tapped into some of that for our reporting.

Q: Yes, because trees became quite an issue there about- over logging to put it mildly.

MCWILLIAMS: Well that, I mean, the thing about Indonesia was that it, for example, particularly in the New Guinea area, this is Papua, New Guinea, it was the second largest tropical rain forest in the world after the Amazon and it was being assaulted, as you suggest, mercilessly by illegal logging often run by the military. But I, for the hell of it, did a little search on embassy reporting to see what number of environment reports had been sent out of the economic section which had responsibility in those days for environmental reporting and as I recall the tag was "senv," s-e-n-v. So I typed in senv to see what was being reported and there's nothing reported with that tagline, which is to say there'd been no environmental reporting. So we sort of took that over, claiming it sort of as a human rights issue and began doing some of that ourselves.

...in Indonesia. There was a transition to actually the, a woman took over who was the wife of my deputy and she was very bright and although I think still prepared to sort of parrot the old line was more open to, I think, the points we were making as were some members of her team. So there was some cooperation on that. I recall I did a series of reporting, messages that sought to develop the theme of gaps, gaps in health care, gaps in access to education between the rich and the poor, trying to illustrate the fact that there were real social tensions out there based on access to services and so on. And it was really a difficult series of five reports, five different sectors I addressed but it had to be worked out with the economic section, each one of them, and it was bruising but ultimately I think the messages that went out were consensus messages were pretty good and frankly better by virtue of the fact that I had been very carefully pressed by the economic section to get it right and not simply to go off with some of my political thinking.

Q: Who was the DCM?

MCWILLIAMS: Initially it was a woman named Barbara Harvey, very much from the old school and then subsequently Mike Owens.

Q: What was military coming from? How did they recruit and what was, how did you see them?

MCWILLIAMS: Now this is the Indonesian military?

Q: Yes.

MCWILLIAMS: It was, the Indonesian military has a very special role in Indonesia based upon the fact that in 1945, '46, '47 the military really took the lead in freeing themselves from the Indonesians, that the political leadership was seen to be somewhat compromising. And as a consequence the military, the first generation felt and probably deservedly so that they had a great deal to do with the winning of independence. But they overplayed their hand and I think after the coup, Suharto's coup in '65, that military was his military, it was corrupt and it remained so actually. I mean, there's much can be said about that today.

Q: What- can you talk about during your time, East Timor?

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. I think probably, at least in the early stages, the first year or two, that was the principle bone of contention between myself, my section I should say, and the military in the embassy. Because it was a horrific story, tremendous abuses going on out there. And for many years there had been I think growing concern in Congress, certainly in the press about what the Indonesians were doing to East Timor and the embassy for many years had acted as a defender, an advocate for the regime, trying to basically defeat these arguments that in fact Indonesia was guilty of human rights abuse on a grand scale in East Timor. Our reporting, and I had a particularly good officer, Gary Gray, who was out there, spoke Portuguese which helped a lot, as well as great Bahasa, and his reporting was particularly well done and I think established a baseline of much better understanding what was going on in Indonesia for Washington. There was in the summer of '97, excuse me, summer of '98 an opportunity to write another dissent in which I proposed that we begin thinking about advocating a referendum in East Timor. Not well received at the embassy, not well in Washington. I had a conversation subsequently with the assistant secretary in the fall of '98 in which he said look, I agree with what you've said, I've agreed you know, morally, historically you're right, but I just don't believe East Timor is economically viable and therefore I think an argument for a referendum which might lead to independence is just not going to work. And I undertook to write for him a long message which looked at the economic question, viability of East Timor, anticipating oil and gas revenues and so on. Oddly enough I published this, I sent out this very long report, 20-some pages on the very day that, in January that President Habibie announced that he was going to allow a referendum in East Timor. And I know there was great thinking in the embassy and I understand subsequently in Washington that somehow I had advance word of that; it was just a coincidence. But it was from that point forward, January, that we began to look to a referendum that would be monitored by the United Nations in East Timor which along with the fall of Suharto was one of the two great events of those three years that I had there.

Q: Keep with the Timor thing, I want to come back to the political thing.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: What about the Australians and this because they played quite a role? I mean, they, I mean it was a border town, a border city, a border country.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. Australia had been, even more than I think we had been, a supporter of the Jakarta policy in East Timor. They had made a deal in the '70s whereby they drew a line between their oil and Indonesia's oil which was quite beneficial to them but the quid pro quo for that was essentially a policy that would support Suharto's occupation of East Timor. So they were not friends of East Timor but essentially Habibie, who was not highly regarded by anybody, changed the game because here was Indonesia finally saying well, let's have a referendum. So you had U.S. policy and Australian policy which had long essentially acquiesced in Suharto's occupation of East Timor now looking at a very new situation in which a referendum was coming.

I think the critical issue as it emerged up until that referendum was actually held in September of '99 was how we would deal with the growing military repression in East Timor in advance of the referendum, the intimidation, the killing and so on. Again, I had a reporter, Gary Gray out there much of the time who did a wonderful job talking about what was in fact growing militia attacks against civilians, militias obviously organized by the military against civilians. I went out there quite frequently also to support his reporting but unfortunately what we needed to that point was a strong U.S. position essentially telling the military to knock it off, that we were aware that they were setting up these militias basically as cat's paw to intimidate the local population into voting the way Jakarta wanting them to vote and so on, and we had massacres of over 50 people in this period, a very, very rough situation. But unfortunately the U.S. never actually took a hard line with the Indonesian military about stopping these militias which were conducting these killings. Our arguments was, in the political section, you've got to disband these militias and get rid of them whereas the embassy took the line favored by the DAT's office, the defense attaché's office that well, we just have to counsel with these people and you know, encourage Aubry, TNI as it became to be more responsible here and get the facts and so on. And as a consequence the United States didn't take an opportunity to require the military to reign in these militias in advance of what happened in September which was a mass killing of East Timoris as a consequence of their vote for independence.

Q: How did you find in East Timor and also in West Irian, the role of the NGOs, various UN and all of that? I mean, were these kind of essential elements in monitoring this vast island empire?

MCWILLIAMS: Very much so. Again, because we were so limited in terms of what we could do on the ground, especially in Papua, because getting there was 13 hour flight and frankly was very expensive and there were limitations on how often I could go out there. I had given myself responsibility for West Papua on the team so as a consequence we relied very much on local NGOs. The Indonesians had pretty much prevented international NGOs from operating in places like Aceh or East Timor or West Papua. As a consequence we relied very much on local organizations which were often harassed and the ICRC which in East Timor played a very important role.

Q: Why would they be an International Red Cross?

MCWILLIAMS: The International Committee of the Red Cross, they had a very shaky position in East Timor essentially at international community insistence, basically hanging on by their fingertips but they did a good job there. They were, and of course we would rely on contacts with journalists. There was a particularly good- as things began to fall apart in Indonesia you had more and more international journalists based in Jakarta and we had a very good relationship with them in the political section and fed off each other very much, frankly, for what was going on. So we were able to use NGOs and journalists and I might say also local clergy very extensively. In East Timor, of course, you had Bishop Bello and the Church, which we were tightly tied in with. In West Papua it's essentially Animus Christian and both the Catholic and the Protestant churches there were very active on the human rights side and we had very beneficial contacts with people who had credible reporting. You know, it's funny when you're reporting from an outpost like that if you can quote a doctor or a church person, any kind of religious clergy, somehow that gives you some authenticity. So we would seek out medical people or religious people for interviews.

Q: What about Ache?

MCWILLIAMS: Ache again, I had one officer assigned, actually two officers, there was a split, one went home and one stayed, working in Ache and again, it was a very difficult area for us because there was a burgeoning, well an ongoing conflict there but I think from our perspective East Timor had the higher draw on our reporting assets.

Q: What about Islam at that time? It was an Islamic state but I mean, how did this play from your perspective?

MCWILLIAMS: Islamic, in Indonesia Islam is not the aggressive political force, at least it wasn't then, that it has been and continues to be in much of the rest of the world. I think that's changing now. But for the most part it was a syncretic approach to religion and we were not dealing with fanatical Islam to any great extent. Just at the end of my tour that began to be apparent as the military began to develop some militias, as I've said like in East Timor and other places, which were specifically Islamic fundamentalist. In one instance particularly in a place called the Maluku Islands just as I was leaving the military sponsored the movement of several thousand Islamic militants to this largely Christian island enclave. As a consequence we had communal fighting there for several years which has led to the deaths of thousands of people. That was an example of the Indonesian military specifically lined to Islamic fundamentalism. But since my departure, of course, you've had a growth in Islam and political Islam in Indonesia. It was interesting, one of the young people on my, a very young person on my team, a woman took an interest in this and began exploring the pesantren, which is to say sort of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, actually visiting them, interestingly, as a woman and frankly as a Jewish woman. I always thought rather innovative and brave on her part but she did some very good groundbreaking, I think, really reporting on what was becoming then a more political approach to Islamic teaching in these essentially grade and middle level school scenarios. At the time we didn't recognize it well enough but I think we did a little reporting on it. Because of the financial crash the education system was very, very much weakened. Although nominally free people had to pay for their kids to be educated, to bribe teachers, to buy books, to buy uniforms and so on, it wasn't free as the Suharto

regime contended. And the real crash for the economy meant that a lot of parents couldn't really fund the education of the children. So what happened was a lot of money came from the Middle East to establish these Islamic schools, these pesantren, and many of them were quite radical.

Q: Was this sort of a replica of the madrassa?

MCWILLIAMS: It's sort of like, yes.

Q: You know, the Saudis apparently had a lot of-

MCWILLIAMS: Yes. Madrassa generally is thought to be sort of upper level education, virtually colleges whereas the pesantren would take you from the age of six. It's more primary school and middle school. Now some madrassa would actually have also very early education but for the most part when I speak of pesantren I'm talking about primary school, middle school. And that's where the money came in to essentially fund the set up of small schools, often in urban areas, usually led by fairly radical Islamic teachers, not particularly well-schooled teachers. But as a consequence you had a generation of Indonesians that were moving through these rather radical schools in much greater numbers than previously, I think to some extent as we look at the increasing Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia this was a source for some of that.

Q: Well were we able, you mentioned the young lady, Foreign Service officer who went, were we able to monitor this? Because my understanding is often a movement like this can sort of pass by-

MCWILLIAMS: No.

Q: -the knowledge of an embassy or a political section.

MCWILLIAMS: I think to a significant extent it did pass us by except for her reporting. Because she would actually sit down with students and talk with them--she had good Bahasa--and with the teachers and so on. And she picked up the fact that we were seeing this movement. And I, I forget whether it was her reporting or some of the reporting I had done, talking to scholars and so on because we had good contact with a number of religious teachers there including a former- the future president who had some of these concerns about radicalism sort of beginning to take shape in Indonesian Islamic society.

Q: Who's the name of this officer?

MCWILLIAMS: Shawn Dorman. She's retired. She retired early. She's now working as the deputy editor of the AFSA magazine, Foreign Service Journal. Oddly enough, all of my team members now, well now, four of the five of them, three of the five of them have retired early and I think it's particularly sad because every single one of them were superb.

It was interesting, just to give you one example of how things work in the Foreign Service, I guess. One of my officers, the one who had covered East Timor, at great personal risk because it was a very, very dicey situation out there, I had nominated for the political reporter of the year award and he got it. He was notified he'd won and he was invited back to Washington to accept the award, he

notified his parents and so on and then four or five days later a message came out saying no, we've made a mistake, you didn't win. And I forget now what the screw up was but it was a political decision in Washington, not related to this particular individual or even his set of reporting but he had already of course informed his family he was coming back to accept this great award and that's how things work sometimes in the Foreign Service. We were aghast and we wrote petitions back saying this is absurd, make it a dual award, he deserves this. But anyway, he has since left the Foreign Service. And a stellar fellow who worked for me on politics in Indonesia has left the Foreign Service and Shawn has left the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, to put this in more specific terms, do you feel this is because of the change in administration? We're now in the fifth or sixth year of the Bush II administration which seems to be far more oriented the way you say.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes, there's very much a perspective that this is politics really drive promotions, particularly at senior level. That policy is set in Washington and you basically, there should not be reporting that challenges that policy in any sense. But I don't think this is only the problem of this administration. Again, my own experience which has been rather bloody in the '90s, well the late '80s, in Islamabad and subsequently in Indonesia, suggests to me that this is a system that, as I say, is not open to dissent, either formal dissent or even reporting that seems to go against the grain. I know I've been in touch with some people who actually monitor dissent in the formal sense and there are very few dissents now that are offered. You know, you think back to Vietnam and the scores of dissents that came from the Foreign Service about- and I mean these were dissents that were career enders in many cases. But the Iraq war, notwithstanding the very broad and I think well founded opposition to that war and to the way it was conducted, has produced nowhere near as many dissents. And I think that, from my perspective reflects on first of all the atmosphere, the environment that doesn't welcome dissent and I think also perhaps a change in the kinds of people who are in. Ever more now I think people don't come into the Foreign Service with the expectation of spending a full career here. They're going to punch a ticket in the sense in their broader careers and of course coming from the Foreign Service is great for lots of careers. But the people like myself and perhaps yourself that envisaged staying for their entire careers, that's rather rare now in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well let's go back to the political situation in Indonesia, I mean, basically the regime. Did you come out, I mean with the, I mean you were the new boy on the block-

MCWILLIAMS: Very much so.

Q: -in Indonesia politics, but you know, all of us look around and you couldn't help but look at the Philippines and some other places and aging dictators go, you know?

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: I mean, you know, and usually there's something that follows that's not necessarily a replica of the regime before. Did you sort of come out with the idea well, you know, this guy's probably, Suharto's maybe on his way out or something like that?

MCWILLIAMS: Well again, I sort of described it earlier as events taking control. We were only, by I'd say early '98 monitoring the situation, I had proposed, our section had proposed that we begin to insist on some democratic reform just prior to the end but in point of fact that didn't happen. But I think the people were insisting on democratic reform. And Suharto was out. Not only that but I think for the first time there was really a flowering of criticism of what the old elite had done to Indonesia including the military, obviously very critical of the military and the military was very much on the defensive within Indonesia. I think also by virtue of what it did in East Timor in September, now this is after I left, in September of '99, destroying over 70 percent of the infrastructure of East Timor, killing 1,500 people, killing some foreigners, ex-pats died as well in this, as a consequence of that I think that in Washington there was a willingness and a readiness to basically shut off our cooperation with the Indonesian military. But what I found stunning was, now this is sitting back in Washington in a different job but monitoring the situation in Indonesia very closely, notwithstanding what had happened in September before the end of the year in '99, the Pentagon was again petitioning for reestablishing a relationship with the military. That basically has never not been the mindset in the Pentagon. This is the Clinton white house, of course. But I think essentially those people who had dominated our policy for years and years and years in Washington towards Indonesia essentially retained the same interests. That is to say to maintain as good a relationship as possible with the military and secure the environment for U.S. investment, major U.S. investment. And I think to this day that continues to be the dominating interests of our administration.

Obviously in the post-9/11 world a new element came into that which is to say concern about terrorism. Terrorism has become a growing problem in Indonesia, the Bali bombings twice now and bombings in Jakarta. And the Pentagon and the Bush administration generally have made the argument well, we need to work with the army to crush terrorism. Well, as the problem presents itself in Indonesia terrorism is a police problem, it's small cells, it's not like in the Philippines and the southern Philippines where you have armies roaming and so on where you need military _____. This essentially is a police problem and we've worked with the police, I think well, to develop their forensic skills and so on but nonetheless, and it's been defective in Congress to some extent, the Pentagon and the administration have argued that well we have this terrorism problem that means we have to work with the military. And a number of us who are on the NGO side now continue to argue that that really doesn't make sense, it's a police problem and number two we argue as well, that the Indonesian military itself has ties to Islamic fundamentalists which should give us pause.

Q: Talk about you arrived in what, '96?

MCWILLIAMS: '96 in January.

Q: And you were there until when?

MCWILLIAMS: Until July of '99.

Q: Okay. When you arrived can you talk about the political situation, leadership and all and what developed there?

MCWILLIAMS: Okay. When I arrived the Suharto regime was intact, there were no challengers or challenges to its rule, the only question being his health, he was in his middle to late 70s at that point but I think no one anticipated that he would not actually seek a new term, which he did, of office, extending his rule in '98. But I think what essentially changed that scenario, that understanding was the financial crisis in '97 and-

Q: This by the way was a crisis that hit from Japan to Thailand.

MCWILLIAMS: Right. All of Southeast Asia was affected. But I think Indonesia probably crashed lower and took longer to come back. And it was to some extent a house of cards. You know, you'd fly into Jakarta and you'd see a very modern city with skyscrapers and so on but of course as soon as you left Jakarta you would see some real poverty. And even inside the city there was poverty. But it was a house of cards, it collapsed and as a consequence what really turned things for Suharto in '98 was the elite itself recognized that it couldn't continue with Suharto, it had to find a new option and he was gone very quickly. I recall there was a meeting that he had with former Vice President Mondale who had been sent out in early '98 to give him the word that you have to start reforming, you've got to do what the IMF says and what the World Bank says, which by the way turned out to be pretty bad advice, but nothing on the political side as I say, no political reform. But in his meeting with Mondale, Mondale said to him listen, if you do what IMF and World Bank and we are telling you to do, within six months you will have this thing turned around. And Suharto said to Mondale I don't have six months. And that was a lightening bolt for all of us, even those of us who had been his critics. I mean if he now acknowledges that he doesn't have, is that close to the end here. And I think that shook up a lot of policymakers. But that was from him in probably February-March of '98. And he was right, he was gone in May.

Q: Well what was bringing, I mean what were the forces that were bringing this about?

MCWILLIAMS: I think ultimately, ultimately I think the turning point was the elite. Because of the scandals perpetrated by his family, by him himself and the realization that he wasn't going to pull this thing out, the elite itself turned against him. It was his own ministers, his own cabinet, which in the final analysis said no, this isn't going to work and we're resigning, I think that was the final blow to him. And suddenly he was gone.

Q: I mean, did it, were we playing games of if Suharto leaves what happens? I mean, were we-

MCWILLIAMS: Well, there wasn't a lot of that. '98 was a very interesting time. I had this rather strange relationship with my ambassador as I've described before whom I had respect for almost up until the end because for example I had been very close to some of the democrats, particularly Megawati, the daughter of Sukarno, who I saw as genuinely popular. It was clear in the streets that she had support. As I say, my team spent a lot of time in the streets, a lot of time with her at the rallies and so on and I had been preaching that you know, this was a political force that we should consider. She on the other hand within the embassy was a joke, she was not highly regarded, a simple housewife, how can we, you know, take her seriously. And I felt that both she and people around her had political strength that we were not evaluating fairly. And I recall in January of '98 she was having a rally and she told me that this was going to be very important, I'm going to be saying some very important things, I want you there. And then at the last minute she said can you

bring your ambassador. And I said oh shit. Because I knew that he wouldn't cross the city to go out to an evening presentation at her house with thousands of her screaming people and so on but I put it to her- to the ambassador. And remember the DCM was there, Beth Jones, and I argued-

Q: Was it Beth Jones?

MCWILLIAMS: I'm trying to remember if it was Mike Owens or Beth Jones. Excuse me, Barbara Harvey. I'm confusing them. I'm pretty sure it was Barbara Harvey at that point. But it was a three-way conversation between the DCM, the ambassador and myself and this was after work and I said I'm heading out there, would you consider going out, she's asked me to ask you? And he was sort of hesitating and I said look. She has not done anything that we consider to be wrong. She's played her hand carefully, she's kept her people out of the violence, there's been no violent demonstrations by her people, we owe her this. And he said well you know, you've got a point. So anyway I went out there not expecting him to come and I recall I was one of maybe five or six diplomats sitting in the front row, there was a Yugoslav ambassador, how he showed up I still don't know. But suddenly midway through the evening events but before she began to speak my ambassador shows up and tremendous attention, the U.S. ambassador has shown up. And so I quickly get up from the front row seat that I had and have him sit down and Megawati catches him from the stage, that he has shown up and she's beaming broadly and she walks across the stage as someone else is making a speech and takes him by the hand and pulls him onto the stage to sit by her. And I recall the glare that I got from the ambassador as he is sort of forced to sit through this. And what the speech was that she gave was the first explicit public denunciation of Suharto, saying he had to go. And it was indeed a fiery, incredible speech. But I figured the next morning I am in shit and this is going to be really, really bad. But the ambassador, and I give him credit for this, he said you know, this is helpful to me. Because when I get criticized back in Washington for not being sensitive to the democrats and what they're trying to do here I can say I went to that speech. And he did use that subsequently I recall many times. So he was an interesting fellow and I don't think he got in trouble from the Suharto administration for having done that. Just an episode.

Q: Yes. Well, how did this play out? I mean, what were we saying? What was going to happen? I mean, Suharto is teetering.

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: And what were our concerns?

MCWILLIAMS: Well, I think our concerns were sort of fundamental, basic stuff. I mean, we were concerned about the safety of Americans, of course, in an increasingly violent environment. We were concerned that the military not stage a coup. Even though it was Suharto's military there was deep concern and I think frankly came very close that there might be a military coup to install another military leader which would essentially end what we hoped to be a democratic evolution there. But what sort of took things out of our hands was the killings that I referred to earlier of four students at a university in Jakarta on the night of, it was in May, I can't remember the exact date now. But that was sort of-

Q: This is '98?

MCWILLIAMS: This is '98. And we recognized that this is perhaps going to be the spark that sets things off and that's why there's tremendous interest in the State Department that night about what was going on. But the next morning the riots began and this is the riots, principally in Jakarta but also in Malang and elsewhere and it was three days of rioting, burning of buildings in which the military played a very interesting role, apparently actually organizing some of the rioting, which leads me still to think that the military did have in mind a situation in which there would be rioting- by the way, President Suharto was out of the country at that time at a meeting in Cairo, which was again very suspicious in my mind. But we had three days of terrible rioting and I remember in the first day our embassy switchboard started getting calls from Chinese residents of the city pleading for the U.S. embassy to help them, that they were being attacked in their rather Chinese compounds, Chinese sections of the city, women were being raped and killed and so on. And I recall having the secretary at the switchboard send the messages up to the political section so we're talking to people who are screaming for help and so on. Meanwhile most of us of course are out in the city trying to report what was going on as best we could. And I got a couple of these calls and I said, especially the English speaking ones, I said forward this up to the ambassador's office. He got a couple of these calls. And I went up at that point, I said you know, we've got a situation that's coming out of control here, can't we contact the military here to at least go into these Chinese quadrants of the city to sort of establish some control there because it seems to be worse there? So he said yes and moreover I'm concerned about Americans living in certain sections, try to get the military out there to, you know, defend these areas against what is just wide scale rampant rioting.

Anyway. We started making the phone calls, couldn't reach any of our military contacts, no one would answer the phone. And it was at that point, I think I had said to him, sir if we can't reach the military then we basically cannot defend Americans in the city and, you know, this is the time we need to start talking about evacuation. So in the middle of this growing rioting in the city we began evacuation of the city of all Americans including the embassy staff, cutting way back on the embassy staff. But the thinking was that if we can't reach our supposed good friends in the military to act even to defend American citizens then this is not a stable situation for us.

Q: Well what was the reaction of our military attaché's office?

MCWILLIAMS: Interestingly they nominally were the ones attempting to contact the other military and not being successful at it. But some months after that I had been invited to a reception for the incoming new military attaché, a rather good fellow, and in making small talk with a lot of the senior military, this is post rioting, practically post Suharto regime, this is some months later, I had talked about, I was talking about the new fellow coming in, speaks good Bahasa but of course, I said to this one particular general, he doesn't have the great language skills of his predecessor, who really knew your society and knew the language and so on. And I got sort of a noncommittal response from him. And I sort of said well you worked with him I'm sure. He says well we never really knew him very well. And what the take was, was that first of all he was always very close to Suharto's son-in-law, a guy named Prabowo, who was a general, very corrupt fellow, and he was sort of a rising star because of his relationship to Suharto, very much disliked within the ranks of the military but to which our military attaché office essentially had attached itself. And this general said not only did we not know him well because he basically did his business through this one fellow but during the days of the rioting, did you know that he was with Prabowo in civilian

clothes through most of the day, going from place to place? And frankly I didn't know that but I do recall him not being in the embassy during this critical first day of the riot. So the thinking was that unfortunately we had allied ourselves with elements within the military very close to this one commander, the son-in-law of the president, which might have seemed like a good idea but which alienated a lot of the other elements of the military who frankly resented the fact that this young son-of-a-bitch, forgive me for saying it, was rising so fast by virtue of his ties to the Suharto family. Anyway, it was a very complex environment.

Q: What happened?

MCWILLIAMS: Essentially the military belatedly stepped in. I think frankly the rioters simply got tired. After three days it began to quiet down. And the vice president, for whom no one had any respect, a fellow named Habibie, was moved in as the caretaker and did a reasonably good job.

Q: He was blind wasn't he?

MCWILLIAMS: No.

Q: No, this wasn't-

MCWILLIAMS: No, you're thinking of Wahid Gus Dur, who subsequently, yes, he was blind. But it was funny, people felt that when Habibie ran for president just before the rioting and so on took place, when I say ran for president, it's a parliamentary decision essentially, he had nominated this fellow Habibie, who nobody had respect for, who had frankly people felt he might even be a little crazy, and the thought was that Suharto, being clever politically, recognizing in '98 he was in trouble, decided to put someone in as vice president whom they'd never want to succeed him but nonetheless he did. And he was a very strange fellow but ultimately I think a rather good caretaker and of course as I mentioned earlier he made that critical decision to subsequent in January of '99 to allow a referendum in East Timor to the great disgust of the military and many of the nationalists in Indonesia but ultimately I think a wise decision.

Q: And how did we respond to Habibie? He won the election or?

MCWILLIAMS: Well it wasn't- he basically moved up on virtue of having been vice president and we wanted a transition that would be constitutional and so on. So we, who had personally been sniping at him viciously for years in our embassy reporting suddenly had him as a president. But as I say I think he was something of a surprise. He was a radic and said crazy things. And I can remember some CODELs that went very badly with him. But he basically held the fort and held things together and we didn't have a military transition, thank goodness, and although he didn't make it in the next reelection, he was succeeded by the cleric, Abdurrahman Wahid Gus Dur, he was an interesting fellow who basically held things together.

Q: You mentioned congressional delegations. Particularly in areas like Indonesia, the Philippines and all, Congress plays quite a role and they have interests and-

MCWILLIAMS: Very much so.

Q: -often concerns about human rights and this sort of thing that embassies would almost prefer-

MCWILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: -not to deal with.

MCWILLIAMS: Very much the case.

Q: What was happening here.

MCWILLIAMS: Very much the case, very much the case in Indonesia. And the interesting thing that I found, and I've continued to work the Indonesia case really since '96, is that within Congress you have a very significant body of expertise about Indonesia, people who've gone to East Timor, gone to Indonesia, repeated trips sometimes, and there is, as you suggest, a very deep concern about human rights out there in the Congress and what I found striking and continue to be very pleasantly surprised about is that it goes across partisan lines. You have some of the very best friends of human rights in Indonesia, very conservative Republicans. At the same time you also have some very liberal democrats, progressive democrats, who are also dependable contacts and supporters for human rights in Indonesia, opponents of assistance to the military and so on. So it's frankly for me it was quite a revelation having always sort of been part of the executive administration to find first of all the degree of expertise on Indonesia that in fact was there in Congress but also the compassion, the concern, a willingness even to this day of significant Republican players in Congress to buck the administration vis-à-vis its policies of supporting the military for example in Indonesia. So I come away, I think from my years of government experience with a lot of respect for Congress, notwithstanding the problems that we all know too well of corruption and so on.

Q: What about congressional delegations during this critical time, this series of changes in the Indonesian government?

MCWILLIAMS: Well of course as you know when things get tough, when things are becoming unstable there is an effort by the State Department to sort of limit the number of CODELs, wisely I think, going out. So we didn't have in the really critical period too many staff dels or CODELs coming out. I do recall one though in particular, Chris Smith, who was a significant player on the House International Relations Committee then and now, a very conservative Republican out of New Jersey, had come out, had a long reputation of interest in human rights situation in Indonesia and I was able to put him together with Megawati and that went very well. They, I think he got- had a good impression of the kind of person she was and the people around her. I remember Mitch McConnell, another Republican coming out at that period. Again, I put them- put him together, I was his control officer, with Megawati's people, so that he had some sense that there is an alternative leadership that's not necessarily crazy, there's an alternative political future for Indonesia that's not necessarily military or Suharto family. I remember Madeleine Albright, now this is not a CODEL or staff del, coming out in, actually she came out in '99, this is after the change but she had a useful impact I think on our policy out there in that she had an opportunity to sit down with the East Timor leader, Xanana Gusmão, who was still in prison at that point, and I

think had a very good impression of him, and as a consequence I think went back to Washington feeling that if in fact East Timor were to become independent there was a leadership there with which we could deal. Which was, I think, a pretty important understanding to have at the senior levels.

Q: Back on East Timor, as things developed, were you in consultation with the Australians?

MCWILLIAMS: There's an interesting episode there. Yes. Frankly, I had been very close to the Australians. I might add also the Canadians had a great embassy in Jakarta; small but great. But the Australians and this isn't so much a Jakarta problem, but actually the Australians had superb intelligence on what was developing in East Timor which for various reasons was not entirely shared with the U.S., which was really a breach of the confidential relationship we had at the international level for many years. There's a very involved story in which a defense attaché for Australian embassy here in D.C. was accused of having shared more than he should have shared with his American counterparts and as a consequence he was being called on the carpet for this, being pulled back, and he committed suicide here in Jakarta- here in Washington. Frankly I don't know the background of this because it wasn't set in Jakarta but although we had close relations with our friends in the Australians embassy there were problems in the relationship at that time.

Q: By the time you left what had happened?

MCWILLIAMS: Well, I left, unfortunately, just as things were breaking loose in July of '99. What I had done before I left my very good East Timor fellow, Gary Gray, had been reporting, I think very accurately, of the growing threat of the militias so I made one last trip out there in which I sought to see what was going on across the East Timor border in West Timor and made a trip from Dili, actually commandeering a taxi to do it to get me across the border because no one was moving at that time in East Timor on the roads. But I went into West Timor and then along the border back into East Timor, trying to see if I could see military build up or something that was going on on the other side of the border and I did see some things and I got that reporting out. But I think I didn't anticipate and I don't think certainly Washington didn't anticipate fully what the military had in mind if the referendum went against them.

I just was looking at some notes last night that I had written up. I did report, on the basis of that trip in, I guess June of '99, talk of a Plan B, which is to say what the military would do if they lost the referendum and it was pretty ominous. And that all got reported but Washington and the embassy didn't take it seriously enough and very frankly, to be fair, I don't think I fully anticipated how bad it would be.

Q: Yes. This was when they went in with- under the cover of militias-

MCWILLIAMS: Yes, exactly.

Q: Was this a, you know, there were cartoons, an awful lot of interest among those involved in almost public affairs and the media and the entertainment and all about who made shoes.

MCWILLIAMS: Sure, Nike and so on. In point of fact, in the late '90s, shortly before I assumed

this job, the AFL-CIO had spearheaded an effort within State Department to constitute a commission that would look at the role of labor in State with the intention, I think, of reasserting the importance of labor in U.S. diplomacy and trying to place it obviously in a new context, not simply as a warrior in the Cold War effort but rather to see itself as a new way of energizing labor diplomacy in the U.S. government.

Again, I came to all this very new. I'd never really worked on labor issues although I'd been involved in human rights issues. Except in the context of Indonesia I'd worked on behalf of a couple of union officials who were under the gun, almost literally, from the Suharto regime. As a consequence of that effort, which had a lot of visibility in Washington I came to this job, although without labor experience, nonetheless with something of a reputation with the AFL-CIO, which welcomed me into this position. But again, I would say and I would sort of emphasize this position, I really wasn't- I didn't have the experience really to take the job.

WILLIAM A. PIERCE
Consul General
Surabaya (1995-1999)

Temporary Duty
Medan (2000)

Mr. Pierce was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Davidson College and the University of Georgia Law School. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, he was first posted to Surabaya, Indonesia, followed by a tour at Damascus, Syria. After completing Arabic language studies in Washington and Tunis, Mr. Pierce was assigned as Political Officer to a number of Arabic speaking posts, including Khartoum, Jeddah and Riyadh. In Washington, Mr. Pierce dealt primarily with Middle East Affairs. His final post was Surabaya, where he was Consul General. Mr. Pierce was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Speaking of assignments though, after two years in '95 where did you get somebody to assign you?

PIERCE: I aspired at that time to a number of principal officer and DCM jobs and I found out one day – I put down Surabaya as one of them – that I'd been paneled to it and it was somewhat of a shock. It had never been discussed with me by anyone and I did some investigation and it seemed that on that bid list no one had prior Indonesian experience, and the requisite supervisory background was present, so I got paneled for the job.

Q: So you went to Surabaya?

PIERCE: Yes.

Q: You were there when?

PIERCE: In 1973 and then I went back in 1996.

Q: So you were there three years? Could you explain both where is Surabaya and what was its importance?

PIERCE: Surabaya is the second largest city in Indonesia; it's on the eastern part of the island of Java in Indonesia. Jakarta being on the western side. It is the second most important city within the country. It is within the Javanese ethnic heartland as opposed to Jakarta, which is not. It was the second largest, by far, commercial center in the country; well developed infrastructure, an awful lot of money being pumped in and a lot of exports. At the time it was a growing foreign investment center and modernization had made a dramatic impact there. In essence it had become almost an international – at least a Southeast Asian – center with direct airline transport coming in and going out. We were able to make the case for having a consulate there in terms of advancing commercial interests. A number of firms had set up their regional headquarters there given its location, given its transportation infrastructure, given its direct access into the market of millions of people, as well as its proximity to natural resources.

The consular district was large. It began in Central Java, went into East Java where Surabaya was, and then extended all the way out to West Timor, not East Timor. It then went up north and included the island of Sulawesi and the Maluku Islands, now undergoing such tremendous ethnic religious turmoil. It had the old traditional cultural Javanese capital of Yogyakarta. So it was very, very large.

One of the wonderful things about that job is that you had basically – not an inexhaustible – but a very sufficient amount of travel funds. I approached that position in a way that though you live in Surabaya, your job was to find out what was going on, see it, and develop contacts in the eastern half, virtually, of Indonesia, about 90 million people. It was a tremendous challenge. I like to think I had all of the best places in the country to visit from a sense of sheer beauty, but also by far some of the most interesting developments from a political standpoint.

There were two things about the job. Firstly, prior to my getting to the position, in respect to how it related to the embassy, there had been little interest in developing political contacts. That changed just prior to my coming with the arrival of Ambassador Stapleton Roy. I was charged with developing political contacts, which I did much to my great benefit ultimately. The other thing, of course, was the dramatic rise in the economy there and our tremendous commitment towards strengthening the commercial side of things across Indonesia. And Surabaya had an excellent potential for that up until the economic collapse.

Q: I can't remember, have you had Indonesian before?

PIERCE: I have a 4/4 in Indonesian.

Q: How did you find your political contacts? What was your impression of them as political leaders, how the political system worked?

PIERCE: This was in the last year of Suharto's complete control of the system. At the end of my first year is when he became loose and then ultimately fell.

Q: When you first arrived.

PIERCE: Developing political contacts at that time was difficult. Firstly, virtually everyone in the system was co-opted. I was able to begin to have some small contacts with political leaders, political party people, who had the potential – which was proven out – to get beyond that. But aside from that you basically began to expand your contacts in the human rights area. The other thing – and this was mainly on Java that I'd do this – you would do is to talk with people at Gadjah Mada, perhaps the best university in the country. It's in Yogyakarta. Not the most renowned; that's the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, but it's a close second. But the embassy had, for years, had interlocutors amongst the academics there and you began to develop those. And from that you find others. We had long-standing academic contacts in the local universities in Surabaya. You developed those again. They were pretty well disposed to the consulate; it was very easy to maintain the dialogue. But you expand them; you look at people that traditionally the consulate hasn't had contact with.

It's amazing that the academics ended up being critical in the fall of Suharto. When I first got there I would've never imagined that, but the key ones were invaluable in propelling the student movement which was the beginning of the erosion of his base. In Sulawesi it was far more difficult. The first year I was there, it was very, very difficult in the city of Makassar – at the time called Ujung Pandang – which is the key city in Sulawesi. I went there several times. It was under much tighter control; the political process was more tightly enforced; people were far more wary of talking; and the military was far more interested in me than I like for them to be.

Whenever I went anywhere in the district I always tried to make contact with the local regional commander, normally a two-star general, the governor, and the chief of police. Just as a protocolary measure. I didn't expect much to come out of those conversations. The military invariably, at that time, would see me. Later it got more difficult when they began insisting that we had to go through a rigid, almost impossibly difficult, protocolary arrangement to pay calls on some military leaders.

The first year I had some interesting conversations, did a lot of commercial promotion; and then began to open contact in as broad a way as possible with religious leaders. In the past, consul generals had always paid courtesy calls on certain local key religious leaders, called "kiyayi," and almost invariably they control religious schools. And there were about three that were extremely important and courtesy calls were always placed on them. I expanded that; one of the first things I did was sought out the East Java leadership of something called "Nahdlatul Ulama," NU, which we did not have an awful lot of contact with. And I was most fortunate, after an initial sort of reservation on their part, to meet a man named Mr. Hasyim Muzadi, who was the head of NU in East Java and became a close friend. And through him I was able to be introduced, using his name, to other kiyayi in East Java as well as Central Java, and that has been one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.

Q: I would imagine that being of the Muslim faith must've been somewhat startling to them at the

beginning, wasn't it?

PIERCE: Not really. I think the way that Indonesians approach that is a very laissez faire ad hoc way. Once well after the time I met Mr. Hasyim Muzadi I was sitting with him and I had one of my employees with me whom I always took to see him and it came out that I was Muslim and Mr. Muzadi said, "That is no business of mine."

Q: When you arrived there obviously you were in close touch with our embassy and all. What was the consensus of whether Suharto and whither Indonesia when you got there in '96?

PIERCE: The embassy was going through an intense dialogue over the effectiveness of the Suharto regime and its future prospects. At the time the Suharto regime had been in place since '66. It was looked upon conventionally as bequeathing an economic miracle to the country, and admittedly, the prosperity of Indonesia and the average Indonesian had gone up. There was a trickle down affect, although those at the top got immensely richer than that. The dialogue was, from what I could tell, being in distant Surabaya, from time to time very sharp. But the challenges to that belief, inherited from thirty some odd years, were difficult to find formal expression of without an awful lot of proof. Therein the tension lay.

I, myself, one of the early things I did was attend a meeting, or a religious ceremony, by President Suharto at a famous pesantren not far from Surabaya in which Gus Dur, Abdurrahman Wahid, the current president, as national head of the NU, was coming as well as Suharto. It was expected that there would be serious tension, because they were not known as close. My reporting, describing a Javanese situation where the tension was subsurface, was looked upon with some skepticism. That was indicative –you're looking at signs, you're not looking at actualities, and you're trying to predict. Any time you do that in a situation like this you could be wrong. It's very difficult to meet the burden of proof to a degree that you would like to see. There are cracks in the feet of the statue; that tension was there. It was only as the student demonstrations began to get rowdier and rowdier, and more pointedly antagonistic to Suharto, that you began to sense with greater confidence that the ship of state was not being steered well. And you had a greater latitude to express the suggestion that maybe the end was closer than farther away, which happened in Jakarta, in Yogyakarta and in Surabaya. It also happened in other key cities. The student protest movement, particularly in Surabaya, was one that my junior officer and I followed with extreme care.

Q: Well it must've been a tricky situation. Did the students look upon us as the enemy? The helper? How did they look upon us, or were we looked upon at all?

PIERCE: We, from time to time, were looked upon. We were, unsurprisingly – it happens quite frequently – from time to time labeled the reason why Suharto had stayed around so long. We were labeled as the proppers-up of a regime that was immoral, that was bankrupt. At that time the economic collapse had already begun and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the basic loans were being put in place. And we were also looked upon, in some ways, as the destroyers of the Indonesian economy, as intent on seeing the nation fragment. Now these issues would come forth, wax and wane. There was no monolithic student view of things. There was no monolithic student leadership. That's one of the reasons why it succeeded. You cultivated contacts mainly through the academics but also through students. And through priests – that was another way that

we got into knowing what students were doing. Priests in Surabaya, because so many of the students who were spearheading the protest movement were Christians.

Q: Would this be a Catholic priest?

PIERCE: Catholic priests primarily. We found Catholic priests to be extremely good interlocutors. I think primarily – and it would be my guess and I always found this to be the case – because they had an organization. The Protestants were independent. We did latch into some Protestants. One was a heart surgeon who got upset in 1996 with the total burning of all of the churches in an area in East Java called “Situbondo” – burned out one day by mobs – and began establishing his own network to record and report religious intolerance and violence. He became an extremely close friend. I exchanged views with him. I was amazed at how quickly he was able to find concerned people, mainly Christians, who would be in a position to tell him anywhere in the country where an example of a church burning was happening or anything with a religious overtone that was erupting into violence.

Priests, I think were lower key. We are talking about workers on the ground, not higher officials within the church, who would gain impressions from their ministry to their communities at the grassroots level. This type of contact is a long, long process. You sit and you talk and you drink tea and you swap stories. You do it in January and then you come back and you do it in late February. You just develop a rapport, and it’s a laid back thing where you sit and you talk. You’ve picked up things, they’ve picked up things; you swap. And then you’re sitting with someone in a community just outside of Surabaya and say, “I’m going to southeast Central Java next week. Do you know anybody down there who I might stop by and say ‘hi’ to?” and a name will pop up, and you’ll try to see him.

And you’re going there for a number of reasons. Number one, it may be politically interesting, but number two, more importantly in this particular case, because I had had reports that there may be starvation down there. I was interested in finding out just what people were eating. There were pockets of hunger in 1998, ’99, that I took extremely seriously. One of the things you’d always look at is what poor people were eating. Were they eating rice? Were they relying more on traditional tubers? How much of their diet was cassava? And, from that, where did they get the nutrition from what you were looking at? You were trying to estimate visibly, and as well as by talking to people, how the staple of the diet had deteriorated in terms of nutrition. That was one reason why priests were always in a very good position to give us advice.

Q: Oh, yes.

PIERCE: You would feed that into the embassy. The south side of East Java always had these reports. We would go down there and look, and talk.

Q: As these student demonstrations and all went on, was it pretty soon apparent that the Suharto regime was not going to make it?

PIERCE: I don’t think you could say it was pretty soon apparent. Students were never going to be, in my view, the topplers of the regime. Whenever you would have the beginnings of student

protests you've got two different types of people. You've got the students, the youngish twenty-somethings who have become convinced that it's time for a change. They were extremely active in the '60s when change was what they wanted. Then you have this community of impoverished people who have absolutely nothing, who live in very impoverished conditions with no prospects and little to do. Those that worked, worked hard. Those are the ones who were looking for the basic staples. In cities with modernization producing so much you have increasing masses attracted into town. Sometimes they get income, sometimes they don't. When you began to have student protests, these people began to look. They began to crowd along the streets; they began to become attracted to the show. There's always a spirit of great show in the Javanese Indonesian tradition and participation. That's the element of disorder. When you begin to mix the two it moves into where control becomes questionable. Ultimately this is what happened in Jakarta in May of '98, which ultimately was the end of the Suharto regime. The students massed more and more people and had a sheer show of great numbers. The other test that happens, that begins to question the validity of the regime, is that you've got the military there. The military has two things to do. The military/police. They have to control. You do that through several ways; you do that through intimidation; you do that through negotiation; and ultimately you can do that through force. Excess force. And this is what began to happen.

The military could not withstand the pressure. The police could not withstand the pressure. You had the deaths of students. I would sit there in early '98 and say, "Who is going to be the first student to die?" At the time it was just an unthinkable thing. You knew leaders in universities and you just did not want to see that happen. You would see the beginning of pushing on the military – very dramatic pictures. You could either look or you would see them in the papers. Very dramatic pictures. And then fights; invariably the students would lose. Blood, beaten heads oozing blood. Very dramatic. Tear gas in the air. You could see that the test was there and as you began to see this test, you began to question whether the military and the police could control the situation and their own ability. That's what collapsed. And then the situation just went chaotic. That was in April or May. It happened in Yogyakarta, but not so much. It happened in Surabaya, but not so much. It happened in Jakarta terribly and it happened in Solo terribly. I know I was in Solo the day it happened.

I attribute the relative quiet in Surabaya to one thing: good, solid, strong academic leadership which inspired students. The academics were never directly involved but they exercised immense influence over students. And, oddly enough, an enlightened military commander who worked very closely to try to ensure that it didn't get too out of hand. It almost did, but it didn't. In Yogyakarta I attribute it to the university leadership at Gadjah Mada, and most importantly to the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwono.

Q: Did you feel that there was danger of mobs just going amok?

PIERCE: I don't use that word.

Q: Yes. You know, of things just getting really out of control?

PIERCE: I had seen this happen. You see it on a small scale; it happens from time to time. Over the least imaginable issue. You could take a perfectly calm marketplace – busy – and if you still shot

that every 30 seconds, you could have one 30 seconds in which it would be just a basic busy market, but the next 30 seconds you could have an incident. It could be anything. It could be some man saying, "He stole my bike." The next 30 seconds you could see that guy, whoever he is, the suspect, surrounded, and the next 30 seconds you could see him dead. It does happen. I saw this happen once in Ujung Pandang – just very shocking - where a student in junior high school was standing with other students waiting for a bus at six-thirty in the morning, and someone said, "He stole my wallet!" Suddenly he was being chased by seven, eight, a crowd up to 20 other boys. He had lost his shoes, he had fallen in the street, and they surrounded him and started kicking him and then quit. He was able to sneak away. But it was extremely hair-raising.

Q: While these things were going on, how did you sense, as a political officer by training, the attitude of the American leadership? Stapleton Roy, the ambassador, others, and also Washington. Suharto had been the general on the white charger as far as we were concerned back in '65 or so. Did you feel there was a time when we were beginning to write him off?

PIERCE: The problem with that is that I was not in that direct relationship with the embassy. Certainly writing him off is not the best way to express that. But certainly we began to see that the situation was changing and that there needed to be a dramatic realignment of power bases in the country. I began to sense that – again, not having direct access into embassy Country Team deliberations – in early April of '98. Suharto fell in May.

We were expressing our reservations and our concern over the security situation. As I recall we did not have major potential problems for foreigners, and certainly not in Surabaya. Foreigners were secondary, tertiary; they were not on the scope. A foreigner would be endangered only if by chance that person strayed into a demonstration and that demonstration resulted in turmoil. And most demonstrations didn't occur where foreigners went. You didn't have that problem; this was a constant message that I kept reinforcing with the foreign community in Surabaya, and in some cases in Bali. Bali was also in my district, where on any given day we could have a thousand Americans. Bali, at the time, was considered insulated from turmoil and there was a good reason for that.

We were very watchful, but there was not much we could do except as human rights violations were recorded and become obvious we took positions on them. That was our main focus during March and April, although the economy obviously was an underlying factor and another part of our policy. But in the political sense it's not anything for us to do; you don't want to become directly involved. You don't want even to be seen as directly trying to influence internal events.

Q: I would imagine that just when it really gets interesting would be the time when you really have to avoid your contacts.

PIERCE: I didn't avoid my contacts at all.

Q: Well what would they be doing? Would they be saying, "Where do you stand?" I mean, where do you, a representative of the United States, stand? Or did this come up?

PIERCE: The constant American position here is that we always support democratization; we

always support popular representation. We are not interested – and this is the traditional view – we have no role in getting out in front of the will of the people of Indonesia. We support the aspirations of the will of the people of Indonesia. The political will. That was our long-expressed view in the face of Suharto's autocracy. As their aspirations became more and more for change, our position was apparently more attractive. But we did not get beyond that. We weren't getting out in front of aspirations. There was no real clear purpose here except a 19-year-old student saying, "Topple Suharto," which is hardly a position. And certainly not anything that the United States... Again, we always support stability and orderly process and the rule of law. So these are our standards. No one quibbles with them. No one quarrels with them. We do not address ourselves to every shake and rumble that goes on in the country, except where human rights comes to the fore. Then we have a clear policy, which we did express.

Q: And of course we had the example of the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines in a way. We did not overly support Marcos. We backed away pretty quickly.

PIERCE: In a public way we're distanced from what's going on inside the country. To me, with my inner interlocutors, that was an extremely useful position. It's one that I was comfortable with, I could articulate, I could defend, and they almost invariably would appreciate it.

Q: Were you concerned or looking at who or what, if anything, takes Suharto's place? Before everything was in red or white because of the Communist thing, but this was no longer the main issue.

PIERCE: What happened is Suharto resigned. The term that was used was "lengser;" he went lengser keprabon. He stepped down to go into tranquility and aesthetic meditation. He was replaced by his vice president, which I think most students felt was not legitimate because the regime was illegitimate. But the institutions accepted that and Mr. Habibie came in. Mr. Habibie was astute enough to realize that he didn't have the full deck Suharto did to impose his will. He began a pretty decent process of "reformasi," which was what the students had called for, and had been taken up by the nation, trying to turn things around, more open, freer, in terms of the press, in terms of the right to free speech, and in terms of the political process. Which he did. And then also to arrange the elections in '99, which he lost and stepped down from. Also his other call, which many Indonesians question, is the plebiscite in East Timor. These were things that he did within a very short time. So it diffused a lot of the tension after the week or so of chaos surrounding Suharto's resignation.

Q: While this was happening, what were you observing in the vibrant, economic city?

PIERCE: Well the economy had begun collapsing before that.

Q: Yes.

PIERCE: It was freezing up. The downspin was rather dramatic in the economy. The poverty line, the amount of capital that people had, the potential for food. One of the things I investigated in East Java, particularly, as the price of rice skyrocketed, was the potential for rice traders to be attacked and rice mills to be raided by people – just the potential for violence – and whether this could begin

to produce a string of violent incidents that would all be interrelated. One of the things that Mr. Amien Rais – who’s somewhat notorious now, he’s the speaker of the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat); at the time he was the head of the “Muhammadiyah,” which is the reform movement of significance in Indonesia – used to say before this was that Indonesia was like a dry rice field waiting for a match, a spark. It would suddenly become inflamed and flames would whip across, and it would be before anyone knew.

I was always interested in seeing the wisdom of his remarks. If you began to have riots or a food incident of violence in Malang, would that occasion a string of incidents that could erupt in a conflagration. I had my doubts, but you just didn’t put it away as a minor issue. Always investigated it. Always went after that potential and talked to the people involved. You would drive along the sides of someplace on the roads of East Java near Tilomar, which was a city very ominous to me. I didn’t like it at all; I always felt it was potentially very, very violent. I would stop and talk to rice threshers and see what their situations were, how the attitudes of people around them would be – whether they could make rice deliveries unimpeded. You would investigate how “BULOG,” the national logistics command which distributed rice for poor people, was going, and it wasn’t going well. But there was a vast distribution network under BULOG for distribution of rice to borderline survival families. You would investigate; you would talk to people and see if it were happening. See if the deliveries were being made, how the rice was being distributed from delivery points, how much rice was there, how satisfying was it to people. You’d always go and look at that. You would also check constantly on the price of rice. You’d stop anywhere and you’d go in and you would ask, “How much is that kilo of rice?” Always looking. Trying to make sure if the conflagration, or if something resembling it were to occur, whether what you knew would gel with that reality. And it never occurred.

Q: What about Americans in business there; would they come and ask you, during this time, “Should we get out? Should we stay?” How would you treat that?

PIERCE: There were a few American businessmen there who had asked the question. Most of them would be at the beck and call of their headquarters in Jakarta or in the States. Of course, if they were in the States, much like the Department of State, they listen to CNN before they listen to the people on the ground. And CNN, being in the business of making breathless reports, was not, I could say, the most reliable place to get news.

Q: This is a problem.

PIERCE: There was one significant group of American businessmen who were reasonably content. Most others had left the country because of the economic downturn; they were involved in projects. We started looking very aggressively at where other Americans might be. We discovered a whole cache of TDYers. The companies would not send in families; they would send in temporaries to work for Indonesian companies and keep them in hotels. All of them had their own evacuation plans. With that said, we would also make sure they knew we had one as well. This is just something you would do. I mean it’s not like we were trying to say something is imminent; we were just trying to be prepared.

We also began canvassing the more isolated groups in the district. There were certain missionary

groups up in Sulawesi we wanted to make sure we knew where they were. We communicated our potential concern about the situation, always finding out that in places like Sulawesi in '98, in the more isolated parts, things just went along. You know, the birds sang in the morning and people cut their rice and they went home at night. But they also had their own contingency plans. This was also a good way for us to share impressions on local conditions.

We began to look more carefully at Bali – we had done this earlier – we had an office with an American there. We've had it since the mid-'80s, I believe. A small office, but he had a very good network of hotel connections, and again, Bali being considered reasonably safe from this type of thing just simply because of its environment. It was still very good, but we began to expand even more the hotel connections that he had there. We began also to expand our own connections with every three-star or better hotel in East Indonesia, on the premise that in a situation of this nature if something were to happen, we couldn't find every little nook and cranny the Americans might be in on every little island, but they would probably gravitate, in one form or another, to the most developed hotel just to find out what was happening.

Q: Yes.

PIERCE: So we began finding three-star hotels in Palau, Central Sulawesi, and in two or three more like Manado. We found some of them stuck in weird tourist havens in Central Java. Always making sure we had connections with them just in the event that they would be happy to post a sheet from us in certain situations. One of the things that we found out when the problems in Maluku exploded in 1999.

Q: This was after you'd left?

PIERCE: No, this was before I'd left. About six months before I left. This was in January of 1999.

We had always knew of two groups of Americans in Ambon – mainly missionary groups – and we presumed that the occasional person would come through who had heard about the beaches, wanted to experiment, that kind of stuff. Well, when Maluku first exploded it was very tumultuous, very difficult to communicate with. They got out; they had charter aircraft go up and they were gone. Both of them. I thought, that's finished. Then they started surfacing. It wasn't one, it wasn't two, it was 45 Americans. By then connections outside were severed and it was about a week of touch-and-go. It was even longer than that before we got the final ones out.

Q: What happened in Maluku?

PIERCE: Across the country, especially in places where ethnic mixes occur, especially when ethnic mixes are of different religious backgrounds, and an incoming group manages to get an economic toehold over the indigenous group. That's what happened in Maluku. It happened in Kupang, and there was some potential for it happening in some of the islands between Bali and West Timor. It's happening in Kalimantan now, although that's not the area that I specialized in. But whenever this happens you run the risk of having a religious ethnic clash, mainly brought about by some of the underworld that tends to permeate the fringes of the less privileged society of Indonesia – common gangsters and thugs. Oftentimes one, unfortunately the Christian in those

cases, is drunk and they get into a fight. It happens all the time. Most of these incidents go away, but if there is a sufficient combination of circumstance, if there is in the immediate vicinity enough grudges against one group over the other, it can get out of control. Now beyond getting out of control, you have to have another factor to make it into a Maluku situation, and that is a reasonable balance between the two conflicting groups. That's what you had in terms of the Christians and the Muslim newcomers that were quickly allied, more often than not, with some of the Muslim old timers.

In Kupang you had the same situation in late '98 – maybe November of '98 – but the issue there quickly went away because the incoming Muslims were outnumbered one to twenty. There was a quick accommodation there. But not in Maluku, for a variety of reasons but the primary one is that they weren't outnumbered one to twenty; it was maybe fifty-fifty. In Ambong you didn't have that and each side could make the point that the other side is destroying our way of life. There is a tendency amongst Christians, which I often thought of as alarmist, but I'm not Indonesian Christian, to fear that the Muslims were going to take over. They would express this in the most simplistic of ways to me. "They're going to run us out. They're going to cheat us. They're going to wipe out our way of life." Very, very hardcore alarm. I think that took fire especially in Maluku and impelled the Christians, who had a pretty good hand in terms of position and personnel, to fight much harder. Then it deteriorated into what we have today, which is just a constant battle.

Q: What was your reading on Indonesia – and maybe what you were getting from the embassy too – about this very diverse, large place, with lots of islands, lots of different ethnic groups? The ability of it to stay together?

PIERCE: Overt, open suggestions of questioning the integrity of the country in a political sense have always come from places such as Aceh, which has a durable separatist movement.

Q: That's in Sumatra.

PIERCE: Northern Sumatra. And in a smaller way in Irian although that's now progressed thanks to the Indonesian military's heavy hand there. When I started traveling in Sulawesi, even in '98, even during Suharto's "new order," as you talked to people who were co-opted into the system you could always detect the difference in the way they viewed the country as opposed to Javanese. But as you got further and further into the deterioration, and especially after it, you got more overt expression from people in Sulawesi. I think this has always been the case, but they were far more open about the need for northern Sulawesi in the most perfect of worlds, to become independent. Independence was their hypothetical perfect; they had no pretensions of that, but they would begin to express political initiatives about trying to decentralize the country. This was not a question before Suharto fell, but as he fell and afterwards, it was from these people, I think, that came the awareness that decentralization was not a priority years down the road; it would become a critical issue more quickly. It came specifically from Sulawesi first.

Q: Sulawesi is where?

PIERCE: Sulawesi is the crab-like island, Celebes is the old Dutch word, immediately to the north of Java, to the east of Kalimantan, Borneo. It's a rather large island and it's extremely populated,

especially South Sulawesi which is the home of the Bugis people who are one of the most significant ethnic groups in the country. They do a lot of roaming, traveling; you find them everywhere. It's a major rice producer; further north in Sulawesi. It has been a major source of extracted resources, but I don't think it economically has all the potential there as it used to. Sulawesi has its own very separate, and also quite diverse, sense of tradition, of history, of governance, that is quite contrary in many ways to the tiered sort of societal stability, layered social caste system with an unquestionable loyalty to the one on top that the Javanese seem to be most comfortable with.

Once you've been in Java you can appreciate the cultural habits of both. I enjoy those Javanese people who are very, very oblique in the way they talk; and it's quite an eye-opener when you come to Sulawesi and you find out that not everyone talks obliquely. They especially don't, but it is also the case in Sumatra. It's right to the point; so there's just a great difference. So the pull for decentralization became far more prominent more quickly. I think it was primarily from Sulawesi remarks first that it became evident to us that it was not going to go away, that it was an issue. And then of course it's taken on a life of its own as the government began to try to wrestle with it, being fully aware of the fact that decentralization had to be a success for the integrity of the country. The form of it is the other issue – whether it's really going to happen or not in a meaningful way.

Q: You were consul general there. Back to the consular side of things. With all these kids going out and enjoying the beaches and the surf and all of that, how about counselor problems? Did you have a lot and what were they like?

PIERCE: We had few. We had an occasional American citizen issue that had to be solved. I'm not aware of any that were starkly difficult. The major problem that consular operations had in Surabaya was visa applications – our rates of turn-down, our rates of refusal, and as the economy deteriorated and the politics deteriorated, the ballooning applications that would sometimes stretch us to the maximum with little hope for seeing a decline in applications. These were all visitor visas – tourist visa applications – we processed no immigrant visas, the criteria for issuing visas becomes a murkier problem. With a tourist visa you're going to enjoy the United States for a limited time and you're not going to work, and of course you have the money and the ability to come and spend and then return to your home country. And suddenly things get bad and you are spending all your time dealing with local Sino-Indonesians who from had been the victims of riots. And your refusal rates go up.

Q: (laughs) I'm sure that was a subject that nobody at the consulate could duck as far as people coming to you and asking.

PIERCE: It's a constant barrage, but the thing here is you've got, especially amongst the Sino-Indonesian community, the Indonesian Chinese community, some extremely wealthy individuals who have countless tens of hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure invested in the country and continue to do just fine. You rarely have a major problem with these people and their putting their children into the best universities in America. It's more a problem when you have small shopkeepers who have just seen their inventory burned out and now think it's time to go visit Disney World. That's the problem area and that's where you had the major issues.

Q: You left there when?

PIERCE: I left there in mid-'99.

PIERCE: That's when I did retire, but was asked to come back in early 2000 for a five or six month stay in Medan – which I had never been to – in Sumatra to sort put an American presence in Medan. Although we did not have an official office there, we had had a consulate there, which as you might recall was closed. We had sold the premises that the building was on. We still owned the old consul general's residence and had operated a makeshift presence there staffed permanently by a Foreign Service National. The Department and the embassy wanted to see someone American there in anticipation ultimately for us to restore an office, although this was not an official office, but simply a TDY assignment. The other issue that was specifically a priority for the embassy and the Department was to keep a closer watch on the province of Aceh and the separatist movement there.

Q: I would've thought that your just appearing there would've lent a certain perception of importance to this rebellion. Were you considered our man looking at the rebellion or not?

PIERCE: By whom?

Q: Well by the rebels, maybe, or something like that.

PIERCE: I don't know.

Q: I would've thought the Indonesian authorities would've wondered what the hell you were doing.

PIERCE: I didn't ask them.

Q: But did they?

PIERCE: No. When the consulate was there officially, and I think it was closed in '96 or '97 maybe...

Q: So it really wasn't that long ago.

PIERCE: No. And it was closed from the last exercise wrongfully, I think. We had been determined to restore our presence. Ambassador Roy had been fighting for it before he'd come, and had received the go-ahead for trying to pursue that. I think the logistics of it is the problem of trying to find the appropriate office space. This is beyond my knowledge; this is more an FBO/ADMIN issue. We had kept people up there for long periods of time, in the gap, when there was no American, looking at Aceh. We've made no secret of our concern over the place – and the major American presence there of course being the Mobil facility. Even when we had no American in Medan, we had TDYers from Jakarta who would stop in Medan mainly for the economic

interests there, and the small American community, but then also go on to Aceh. We've had a very long relationship up there. It's amazing to me when I first got there to find out that in Banda Aceh, the capitol of Aceh, the American alumni club in that most remote, most violence-torn place in the country, has in excess of a hundred members. Long, long cultural and educational ties. Aceh was what we were most interested in and what I focused my attentions on.

Q: Well what was your reading of it? You hadn't been there before. When you got there, what was your reading of what was happening there?

PIERCE: Initially you come very fresh to it. I didn't have any acquaintance with Sumatra whatsoever, and knew of Aceh simply from books. This was in the year 2000. What had happened is that Aceh, which is rich in natural gas, has been a cash cow for Central Indonesia. Basically what we're talking about is for the last decade, plus, it's been a major source of income. The primary fields near a town called Lhokseumawe spawned a development area all around it utilizing the presence of the natural gas facilities. Then as well it is an exporter of natural gas.

Aceh has a very checkered history; they never really officially surrendered to the Dutch. I think it was a forty year war before the Dutch declared that Aceh was part of the Indies. It was a bloody time. It was I think the only place the Dutch ever lost generals. They are very good fighters and they have a very fierce streak of independence. They joined the country in the revolution against the Dutch but became quickly disillusioned. I don't want to go into Aceh's history, but they always sensed that they were deprived of their rightful place as a nation; a significant portion of them have that feeling. That said, another significant portion have strong ties to the concept of Indonesia.

The use of their natural resources by the central government, the obvious fact that the return in revenues was far less than what was extracted, and that most Acehnese live in borderline survival poverty all created conditions which spawned separatism. Most Acehnese – this was in '76 – did not give a damn for the separatists, but they were successful enough over the years to incur the wrath of the Indonesian military, to the extent that the Indonesian military in key parts of Aceh reacted too harshly, by far. An unfortunate fact of life is when you have a separatist group and you have a military from the centralized part of the country, they sometimes don't distinguish very well between who is a separatist and who is a common, ordinary person. The victims were innumerable. This started basically in the late '80s, and the human rights violations were atrocious. Through a variety of ill-conceived military principles and inept political maneuvers, the central government, especially since '97, '98, had taken what would be a 5 or 10% support for independence for Aceh amongst Acehnese to the overwhelming majority of people preferring to see Aceh independent. The GAM – that's the name of a separatist group – has been able to ride that wave. And that's where we are today.

Q: You mentioned human rights. Was that part of your brief, to go up there and check on human rights?

PIERCE: It's always the brief whenever you do reporting of this nature – to keep the government apprised of human rights and to articulate our positions on human rights. We had already made them well-known before; our great concern over human rights abuses. It's not as though the military was the unilateral infractor of human rights in Aceh. The GAM is a brutal, heartless, quite

bloody organization and it has taken its toll amongst people that it does not consider loyal to its cause of independence. They consider them an impediment to their goals, sell-outs to the central government. The GAM has its fair share of blood on its hands as well. We've taken very strong stands ever since the emergence of extreme human rights abuses primarily by the military in the early '90s. It was egregious.

Q: I would imagine you would have problems getting around there because of the military, wouldn't you? They wouldn't want you around.

PIERCE: When I first started going I did take a plane flight – there's one a day from Medan to Banda Aceh, the capitol – and made the usual contacts and tried to broaden my contacts there. There's a road that goes up the northern coast from Medan to Banda Aceh and it was not considered the most secure option. I first traveled that way probably in late April, because I got there in March. It's basically a 12-hour trip broken by an overnight in the town of Lhokseumawe which is the major focal point of hostility.

At the time when I went last year, in Aceh itself there must've been 45 military checkpoints along that main road. Most of them were military armed checkpoints, almost all of them adjacent to police stations on the side of the road. What they would do on those is just look at the traffic as it went through. They would not stop it; rarely they would stop me. I never really engaged in conversation about traveling there with them. The Indonesian government had said that diplomats needed permission to travel to Aceh, as well as other provinces that they considered troublesome. I don't think we ever accepted the conditions for travel in country, so it didn't concern me one way or the other. The military or the police never expressed reservations about my travel.

As in Java I like to travel on roads. That's where you see things. You don't see things by flying. I'd travel most of the time by road to Banda Aceh; it would take two days up, two days back, and then maybe two or three days overnight in Banda Aceh in a decent hotel. I only got into about two conversations with military or police officials over the wisdom of what I had done. I would always try to talk to military commanders, but by that time most military commanders would insist on bureaucratic clearance in Jakarta before they would meet with me, so I no longer tried that. I talked to police officials in Banda Aceh on every occasion I could. Never got into their policy or my travels; I was perfectly comfortable if they raised the issue with me, but the subject never came up. The only time the subject ever came up was when I strayed away from the area of Lhokseumawe into sites maybe ten miles away in the interior where two communities of villagers had taken shelter, becoming internally displaced persons, in two mosque areas, and I went to see them. Unfortunately that got into the local press and the police reacted somewhat sensitively to my failure to coordinate my going to this place. I think they were stunned more by the press play than they were about anything else.

The only other time I ever got cautioned by a policeman was once I was in a wayside restaurant late at night in Lhokseumawe eating supper and a plainclothes policeman stopped, came in, and asked me where I was going, and told me in no uncertain terms that I should not travel outside of Lhokseumawe on the main highways at night – which I had no intention of doing. When I first took the road, one or two or three or four of these road-blocked police military checkpoints would be bombed by the GAM on a daily basis. Firefights would ensue and sometimes one, two, three,

four, five people would die. It was always targeted at the military or at the police, at the checkpoint, and pursuit would occur. These incidents mainly lasted perhaps a half an hour. Most of these GAM attacks would take place and you'd presume that the perpetrators, a limited number, would have motor bikes and would sneak away into the interior through the small infrastructural roads, through the rice paddies, within minutes after making their hit.

Q: Did you have contact with the leaders of GAM? Alright we're having a significant pause here.

PIERCE: *(laughs)* Well, let's just say I talked to a lot of strata in Acehnese society.

Q: What was your impression by the time you left there of what was going to happen? Was this going to be a subliminal – or maybe not subliminal, but an actual – war that would go on forever or what?

PIERCE: Let me tell you the first thing which happens over and over again, and one of the most important things I did. The first thing, obviously, was to find out what was going on in a more detailed way, which I did do. The dynamic of the situation had changed as GAM increased its hold on the villages outside the major cities, and there was a truce at the time which decreased in part some of the hostilities. The second thing, which was the most important thing in my view, was to continually iterate U.S. support for the integrity of Indonesia and our opposition, for lack of a better word – you don't say it quite that starkly in Indonesian – to an independent Aceh. Then of course you get into the need for dialogue and peaceful resolution in some way where Acehnese can express their aspirations within the structure of the country of Indonesia, and get more of the economic largess that is coming out of that province.

I don't think the situation is going to change much. Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, Gus Dur, was a positive selection as president of the country and tried to address the issue. The problem is that the GAM insists on independence and a significant portion now of Acehnese people support that idea, at least in principle. It's very hard for them to back away from that idea. The Indonesian government has on paper admitted that it needs to give the people of Aceh more of a share of the natural resources and more control over their local affairs. Yet finding a concrete way of letting that occur, especially on the economic side, is not easy in a country which needs as much revenue as this one does simply to finance its economic problems. So you have a standoff and you have no real movement to narrow the thought processes between one side and the other. In the interim what you have is the increasing bloodier and bloodier conflagration in which primarily neutral people are snuffed out in an oftentimes haphazardly way and the violence persists.

Now, as you might know, the natural gas fields are no longer operating. The Mobil/Exxon people pulled out in late March or early April because of security concerns. It is in the heart of the activity of separatists. You have an Indonesian government committed to reopening those fields but facing severe difficulty in doing so. You have a dialogue between the GAM and the Indonesian government, which started when I was there last year, which has been on-again, off-again, producing little but at least opening the possibility that these people can talk to each other. That's about all. Future prospects? Normally in Indonesia you have inertia producing status quo. You may have a collapse of government or local government responsibility. You may have events that continue to spiral off into turmoil in Maluku. The country is large enough that it will lumber on

even as the central government is paralyzed, or at least close to it, with President Wahid now in constant crisis with the parliament.

GRETA N. MORRIS
Public Affairs Officer
Jakarta (2000-2003)

Ambassador Morris was born and raised in California and educated at the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Redland and Claremont College. Before becoming a Foreign Service Officer she accompanied her FSO husband to Indonesia. In 1980 she entered the Foreign Service (USIA) following which she served variously as Public Affairs, Cultural, or Press Officer in Kenya, Uganda, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. Her Washington assignments at State and USIA concerned primarily African Affairs. She served as US Ambassador to the Marshall Islands from 2000 to 2006. Ambassador Morris was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

MORRIS: Off to Jakarta.

Q: How did your Indonesian come along? Was it an easy one to re pick up and all?

MORRIS: It was relatively easy, yes. Indonesian is not a terribly difficult language. I had lived in Indonesia before I joined the Foreign Service for about three and a half years and had studied some Indonesian before that so my Indonesian had gotten pretty good while I was there. Actually, when I was still in the Philippines, I had gone to Bali one Christmas and I had always hoped to be able to go back to Indonesia. I had not been back in basically in about 18 years. I went to Bali for Christmas and while I was there, I had a lot of interaction in Indonesian with the driver of my tour car and with other people that I met. I felt so happy that my Indonesian seemed to be coming back and this really furthered my desire to go to Indonesia again. So I was very thrilled when I was assigned to go to Indonesia. I was hoping to be able to have a little more time to study Indonesian and really get my Indonesian up to a very strong level, but in two months I worked very hard and my teachers at the Foreign Service Institute were absolutely wonderful and really helped me a lot so I was able to get up to a pretty good level by the time I got to Jakarta.

Q: You were in Indonesia from when to when?

MORRIS: I arrived on the 3rd of March in 2000 and I was there until July of 2003, so a little over three years.

Q: What was the political situation in Indonesia when you arrived?

MORRIS: When I arrived Abdurrahman Wahid (or Gus Dur) was the president of Indonesia. Again, it was a very confusing time in Indonesia because things were moving forward in many ways as far as trying to consolidate the democratic gains. On the other hand, there were still all

these issues connected with East Timor and trying to help East Timor move toward independence while at the same time trying to have some accountability for the militia groups and the elements of the Indonesian military that had been involved in helping the militia groups with the rampaging in East Timor; there was a lot of concern about that. There were concerns about the Suharto family about all of the millions and millions of dollars that the Suharto family had siphoned off from assistance money and other things.

Q: This is Madame fifteen percent?

MORRIS: Ten percent.

Q: Only ten percent.

MORRIS: Only ten percent, yes, but there were a lot of concerns about that; would there be any accountability at all for the Suharto family? Madame Suharto had passed away while Suharto was still president but Suharto was still living at the time and so there were a lot of concerns about whether or not there was going to be any accountability for his family and for some of his former colleagues. Then, of course, the events in Maluku were really heating up at the time.

Q: Could you explain what that was?

MORRIS: Maluku was formerly called the Moluccas or Moluccan Islands in Eastern Indonesia and this was a part of Indonesia where the Catholic element had always been quite strong. Gradually the population there, partly through the transmigration program of Suharto – taking people from overcrowded Java and trying to move them into other parts of the archipelago – as well as natural migration had increased the Islamic population in Maluku. Tensions had been building and finally things really started to break out – I believe it was in November or December of 1999 when the violence really started to become rather extreme and there were lots of massacres of Christian populations. Then, of course, the Muslim population said that the Christians would counter attack. There was a lot of violence there and President Wahid just did not seem to be able to get a handle on this or do anything about it. There were many charges that the former defense minister, General Wiranto, was very much behind this as well as other people who were in the Indonesian government.

It was a time when there was a lot of confusion or at least concern in the U.S. embassy and the U.S. government about where Indonesia was going. The Indonesian Government said it was our friend. President Wahid said he was really committed to democracy and yet there were all these issues: the lack of accountability for the folks involved in the East Timor situation, the feeling that there was an unwillingness to do something about this killing in Maluku. Then we started having some isolated incidents that appeared to be terrorist incidents, including an attack on the Philippine ambassador's car, in which his driver was killed and the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta was very badly injured. There was a lot of concern by the U.S. embassy and I would say the ambassador in particular – Robert Gelbard was the ambassador – that this was a terrorist incident and the Indonesians needed to be looking at this very seriously to try to get a handle on it.

There were some mixed signals in other words and we weren't really quite sure which way things

were going to go in Indonesia. Then, in 2001, the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States took place and those attacks really defined the U.S. relationship with Indonesia and the work with the embassy for the remaining time that I was there. I would say that that has continued: all of the ramifications and the fall out from September 11 have continued to be very definitive in terms of our relationship with Indonesia. In many ways at first it was very, very difficult. I remember the next day (September 12) I came in to the embassy; the embassy was basically closed but some of us came in. The country team came in to find out how we were going to deal with this situation; there were some wreaths out in front of the embassy that Indonesians had placed there to express their condolences. I think we felt that this was a wonderful sign that there was some sympathy, but almost within days there started to be these criticisms particularly from some of the hard line Islamic leaders when President Bush started talking about a war on terror and particularly when he started talking about the issue with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan – that the Afghan government needed to give up Al Qaeda or we would go in to find them ourselves. Of course, that met with a very strongly negative reaction on the part of many Indonesians. We were faced with a very serious problem of a resurgence in more militant Islam in Indonesia, just at a time when we were facing this extremely serious crisis in the United States and we needed all the support that we could get from the international community and particularly from the world's largest Islamic population. That issue really defined our relationship. When the new ambassador Skip Boyce came, he basically asked the embassy – and as the public affairs counselor I was in a leading position on this because so much of involved public diplomacy – to come up with a strategy for how we were going to engage the Islamic community and explain our position and try to win people over to what we were trying to do. Public diplomacy was a key part of it – but there were other parts also and our USAID mission was very much involved in this as well – from the full gamut from press availabilities for the ambassador and others on the country team.

In those days we had many visitors who came out. We did a lot of electronic interviews. For example, Paul Wolfowitz as the deputy secretary of defense and a former ambassador to Indonesia did a number of electronic interviews and also visited Indonesia at the time. So there was a very heavy press element to our strategy, but also we did a lot with outreach and dialogue. One of the things that I arranged was for Ambassador Boyce to go out to meet with the leaders of about 50 different Islamic organizations and they included some of the moderate organizations that wanted to have friendly relations with the United States even if they didn't always agree with us, but the group also included some of the much more radical organizations. It was, as I remember, a very hot day when we did this; we were in a non- air conditioned room and we were all sitting there just sweating, both from the heat but also from the emotional stress of the situation, as many of the Indonesians were attacking the United States. But the headlines in the paper the next day were essentially very complimentary: "Ambassador Boyce meets with key Muslim leaders for dialogue" – that was the sense of the headlines in almost all the papers. So it was very well received that we were willing to engage in this kind of dialogue.

But another very important part of our strategy was again through exchange programs and we were able to beef up our international visitor program and essentially double the size of our Fulbright program to send people to the United States, to learn more about the United States and to study in the United States.

Q: I would think there would be a certain amount of concern at that point to bring Muslims to the

United States. Were you sort of checking to find out how they were going to be received and that sort of thing? There was a lot of very anti-Islamic...I think the government worked very hard on this at all levels because making sure that Muslims in the United States weren't picked upon; I think it was done well. Early on there must have been concern on your part wasn't there?

MORRIS: Yes, and there was certainly concern on the part of some of the people who were going. In fact, there were some people who refused to go; they said they did not want to go to the United States at that time; there was a lot of concern. I think most of our visitors were treated pretty well – those who were able to go – though I remember we did have one person, quite a prominent person, who when he got back from his program called me up to say that he was taken to “secondary” – his way of describing his experience at the airport where when he went through security they took him over to a separate section and basically grilled him, went through all of his stuff and he was incensed that he had been treated like this. Now, this was also the time of the policy of having the extra check in the visa application process for all males between the ages of I think it was 21 and 45 from specified countries. They were all Islamic countries...

Q: If you are going to do it of course...

MORRIS: They were all Islamic countries and that just enraged so many Indonesians. They said this is insulting, it is discrimination, and it's anti-Muslim discrimination so we had a lot of bad press over that or that issue. I mean it made things quite challenging; in fact we even had a couple cases of Fulbright grantees who had names that maybe were similar to the name of somebody from Pakistan who had been on some black list at some point and because their name was the same it popped up on the screen and it was very difficult, it took a long time before these folks were able to get their visas. So there were a lot of challenges, no question about it.

I want to mention another experience that I had when I was in Indonesia that I think demonstrated the importance the State Department placed on dialogue with Islamic communities at the time. This was the “Engaging Islam” conference, which took place at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo in October 2002. The conference was organized by the Policy Office at the State Department, under the leadership of the Director of the Office, Richard Haas. U.S. Embassies in countries with significant Islamic populations were asked to prepare a “strategy” for engaging Islamic audiences. These embassies then were invited to send a participant to the Conference in Cairo. I was asked to represent our embassy in Jakarta and also to present our strategy at the Conference. It was a fascinating and stimulating conference, with lots of good ideas from Embassies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. It was also my first opportunity to visit a Middle Eastern country. While “dialogue” can't solve all problems, I think the idea of “engaging Islam” is an excellent one that I hope will be continued.

Q: How did we view Al Qaeda or its offshoots in Indonesia at the time?

MORRIS: We were certainly concerned that there were groups, shall we say, affiliated with Al Qaeda. The major one was the Jemaah Islamiyah, a group that had started in Malaysia but then moved to Indonesia when the leader of this group who actually was Indonesian moved back to Indonesia after several years of exile during the Suharto regime. This organization, we suspected immediately but learned quite definitively later, was directly responsible for the Bali bombing,

which occurred in October of 2002. So yes, there were these groups. As far as we know, they didn't originally start out as being part of Al Qaeda but certainly they shared goals and they had affiliations with Al Qaeda. Again, and I'm not an expert on Al Qaeda but some of the members of the Jemaah Islamiyah like some of the members of Al Qaeda had been fighters in Afghanistan during the period of the Soviet occupation and had gained some of their military skills as well as the more radical brand of Islam during that period in their formation and their development.

Q: I'm not sure I'm pronouncing it correctly but Aceh...

MORRIS: Aceh.

Q: ...Aceh did that play a part of this rhetoric...I don't know what was happening there and what were we concerned about?

MORRIS: Aceh, of course, was a part of Indonesia that had been at odds with the Indonesian government for many, many years. It was the last part of the whole archipelago that the Dutch were able to conquer. It had long been a very strong Islamic area of the country. The Acehnese and many other Indonesians called Banda Aceh "the front porch of Islam." It's very close to the Islamic world; it was a transit point often for people going on the Hajj, for example. So it had always been a very unique part of Indonesia. The guerrilla movement there had been going on and on and on for many, many years and it would flair up during different times: the Free Aceh movement, the "Aceh Merdeka" movement would go through very strong periods and then it would go underground for a while.

One of the things, of course, in this decentralization that the Indonesian government was trying to implement was to give Aceh a bit more autonomy but there were lots of disagreements about that because the Acehnese felt that they were providing a lot of the revenue of the country through all of their oil but they were having to give most of it to the government in Jakarta; they weren't able to keep the wealth from their natural resources. That movement again was another source of concern for the United States because there were certainly a lot of reports of very, very serious human rights violations there. It was an area of great instability in the country, it was an area too where we were concerned about certainly the possibility of Islamic terrorism. I think though that this Jemaah Islamiyah was really stronger in Java than it was in Aceh. Nonetheless, we were concerned about Aceh and both Ambassador Gelbard and then later Ambassador Boyce visited Aceh and I was able to go with both of them.

Q: Were you able to have any sort of program there?

MORRIS: Yes, we were. The Acehnese people in many ways were very friendly toward Americans and wanted us to help them. At the Syiah Kuala University, which is the main university in Aceh, there had been an American center for many years that we had provided books to and other kinds of modest support. When we went up there we visited this American center and met with some of the students and the teachers at Syiah Kuala at the American studies center. When Ambassador Boyce went he gave a speech at the Islamic University also. So we were able to do things there but obviously there were a lot of concerns on the security side because it was a very unstable area. There were always concerns that there could be attacks. In fact, when I went with

Ambassador Boyce our car was attacked by some students, or at least they looked like students, they might not have been students at the university; they may have been outsiders. The driver, in some very quick thinking was able to get out of the area of danger and take us to our destination.

Q: Was this rocks and things like that?

MORRIS: Well they hadn't thrown any rocks but they were clearly trying to block the car and we weren't sure what kind of...they didn't seem to have guns but we weren't sure if they had rocks or other kinds of weapons; clearly they were trying to keep the car from coming into the university grounds.

Q: Well now way at the other side what was happening in East Timor when you were there?

MORRIS: Of course East Timor was moving gradually toward independence. The UN transition authority for East Timor was there and I was able to visit East Timor I think three times during my time there, all before the actual independence. The first time was in June of 2000 so the territory, I guess I should call it, was still in very bad condition. Virtually all of the buildings were without real roofs but the UN had provided blue plastic sheeting to put over the roofs of the buildings so people could live in them. Many of the buildings had been burned out and were in very bad shape. It was certainly an area that was in shambles. People were starting to come back and the UN was extremely active. During my second visit I was able to meet with Sergio Vieira de Mello and I was very impressed with his commitment and energy...

Q: This is a UN diplomat killed in Iraq?

MORRIS: Yes, that is right and, of course, he was head of the UN mission in East Timor. He was very committed to trying to make East Timor work as an independent country and I think the UN really did very good work in East Timor.

Q: at a certain point did they cut you, our Jakarta embassy, off from East Timor and pass it on to somebody else?

MORRIS: Basically we were taking care of the U.S. diplomatic presence for East Timor including doing any kind of exchange programs for East Timor; we did do some exchange programs including one training program for ten future East Timorese diplomats who had been picked out by the Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta to be the future diplomats for East Timor. He wanted them to have some training in diplomacy skills in the U.S. So we did arrange a training program for them. But, yes eventually we did have a liaison office in Dili and then, of course, at the time of independence that became the U.S. embassy in Dili.

Q: Well now we've talked about Aceh, how about Irian is it called West Irian or East Irian?

MORRIS: Irian Jaya.

Q: Irian Jaya.

MORRIS: Irian Jaya.

Q: I mean we are talking about two or three thousand miles apart.

MORRIS: Right.

Q: But anyway I always think of it as West New Guinea but did we have much going there?

MORRIS: No we didn't but again that was another area of concern because there was an independence movement there. The people of Irian wanted to have more autonomy, the government in Jakarta was determined that it would not become independent, that neither Aceh nor Irian would become independent. Maintaining Indonesia's territorial integrity was of paramount concern to the Indonesian Government. So, of course, there were also charges and, in fact, there was one very serious case where one of the leaders of the autonomy movement in Irian was killed and it was linked to Indonesian security forces. That was certainly a very big concern.

Q: Do we have anything there public diplomacy wise?

MORRIS: The Fulbright program as well as the international visitors program and all of our exchange programs were open to everyone throughout the country. We did send people to Irian Jaya to interview for Fulbright fellowships. For the international visitor program it was mainly people, mainly folks in our political section who would get out there to do reporting tours and would meet people from Irian Jaya and then would nominate them for international visitor grants. So we did have public diplomacy programs but primarily exchange programs.

Q: The exchange programs did you find was there sort of a distinction between the New Guinea natives and the Indonesian settlers?

MORRIS: The Indonesian settlers in the Javanese settlers and...

Q: The Javanese settlers as opposed to the...

MORRIS: Irian...

Q: ...the New Guineans?

MORRIS: Oh yes, there certainly are differences, there is no question about that. The Irian people whom we selected for Fulbright grants or even for international visitor grants were people who were well educated because they would have to be people who had some English and be able to do well in the United States particularly those going on Fulbright grants because they would have to be able to function in a university setting. I would say in terms of their capability they were very capable people but it was clear that they had not had all the advantages of people say from Jakarta, Surabaya or Jogjakarta.

Q: Given your previous assignment how stood things between the Philippines and Indonesia during this time?

MORRIS: I would say that relations were generally pretty good, perhaps not as close as the relations were with Malaysia, which of course is another Islamic majority country. I think there are always some concerns in Manila about whether or not more radical elements in Indonesia were helping some of the more radical Islamic elements in Mindanao. Generally I would say that their relations were fairly good between the Philippines and Indonesia.

Q: This is right after say the amalgamation of USIS and State. How did you find it was playing in the field? Was there really much difference?

MORRIS: When I first arrived I noticed the public affairs section, the former USIS office was now down to just one administrative person (an Indonesian national), whereas before there had been a whole admin section. Now there was one admin person who was responsible for keeping track of our budget and then basically working with the various admin units, GSO over at the embassy. I think this was a difficult task for him because whereas before he had been the B&F person for USIS, now he was being asked to handle all the admin functions. I think he felt very much out of his depth; that was something that I noticed right away.

After the September 11th attacks certainly in Jakarta and I think probably in many countries but most definitely in Jakarta, we noticed that there was suddenly an awareness in the State Department and in other parts of the U.S. government that public diplomacy was very important, that we needed to be able to get our message out, we needed to engage with people that didn't see eye to eye with us and to try to help them understand our position, to try to help them understand our values and hopefully develop a relationship with these people. I think that in some ways, very ironically, the terrorist attacks made people aware of how important public diplomacy is.

At any rate, following those attacks we got a lot of additional resources. I already mentioned that the Fulbright program basically doubled in size; we got more international visitor grants. This was the period during which the undersecretary for public diplomacy was Charlotte Beers; she was coming out of the advertising, public relations world so she was very keen to work with some public relations organizations to try to help craft the message in a way that she thought would be very successful. I would say that the results were somewhat mixed in Indonesia; we were the guinea pigs for all of these things.

Among these projects were the Islam and America television spots. In many ways it was a good idea but I think it showed the limits of using advertising when you are getting into sensitive areas. These spots, for example; one was about an Islamic bakery in Dearborn, Michigan. Another was about an Indonesian, actually an Indonesian Fulbright student who was studying in the United States. These were very short little interviews and we were supposed to place them on Indonesian television. Well we did get a few television stations to carry them a couple of times, I think mainly just to be nice to us. It was a lot of money to spend for something that then a lot of the newspapers and others picked apart afterwards and said this is just propaganda, this is not really reflecting the views or the lives of Muslims in the United States.

I think we found that it was probably more effective when we were able to send people ourselves from Indonesia. For example, we sent several groups of Indonesian journalists to the United States,

sent them to Dearborn, Michigan, to interview Muslims living there, sent them to New York to talk to an Indonesian who was a preacher at a mosque in New York and then they could come back and write about it in their own words. This was a more effective way of getting the message across to Indonesians. But I think at this point there was a realization that public diplomacy was important and there was almost a desire to try to reinvent public diplomacy, how can we have a public diplomacy, and perhaps some of the ideas went a little overboard.

You will probably recall that this was also a time when the U.S. military got very involved in public diplomacy as well and sent teams of military public affairs people to several embassies (we did not have any at our embassy) to put together public diplomacy campaigns. There were some challenges at some embassies in coordinating work between these two sections.

Q: As part of an on-going attempt, particularly at a time when Donald Rumsfeld was in the military and the Pentagon was basically taking over our relations. How did you find the Indonesian Foreign Service national staff in public diplomacy?

MORRIS: They were a wonderful staff and they really rose to the occasion when we were faced with this very great challenge of developing a public diplomacy strategy to reach out to the Islamic population. The staff included mostly Muslims but there were also several Christians on the staff. Of course, you could tell from time to time there were some tensions – there were also people of Chinese ethnicity, Chinese-Indonesians – but particularly at times when there was a real need to work together they worked together and they worked together as a wonderful team. I've had very good staffs but they were truly outstanding and truly did rise to the occasion; they were just a wonderful, wonderful group of people.

Q: Did you feel that you were having to combat sort of the immigration authorities in the United States and some of the police and all? We were going through for obvious reasons great concern about anybody who was Islamic after 9/11. Did you find that this was something you had to deal with?

MORRIS: Oh yes, as I mentioned the regulation for the extra step for approving the visas for men between the ages of 21 and 45 from Indonesia and other Islamic countries; that was something that caused a lot of problems. It would include any of our male grantees who would have to go through this extra step. One of the projects that we developed which I think turned out to be very successful was to send leaders of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, a group of them, to the United States to learn about American education and Islam in America. We worked with an NGO in Amherst, Massachusetts, the Institute for Training and Development, on this. This involved taking – I think each group was about 14-15 people – Indonesian men all of this prime age and we had to get them cleared to be able to go to the United States on this program. So it was a big challenge and obviously there was some skepticism on whether or not these individuals were going with good intentions. In most cases, we were able to get them cleared to go to the United States and they really had a very, very successful program.

Q: Were we concerned that the Saudi's had funded a lot of Madrassas, the Islamic schools which at that time we hadn't paid much attention to them and then all of a sudden we were discovering that they were preaching pretty violent things including in schools right here in Northern Virginia.

MORRIS: Right, oh we were we were very concerned. In fact, there were many schools that the Saudi's had provided a lot of assistance to. They had provided books to them, they had provided scholarships, they were providing teachers and in some cases they had trained the teachers. There was a lot of concern the Saudi's had been very active in Indonesia.

Q: Do you know were we informing the Saudi embassy what they were doing like AFSA? I have a feeling this was going on without much adult supervision on the part of the Saudi government.

MORRIS: I know there was dialogue yes with the Saudi embassy. I think it was at the level of our ambassador and DCM. I don't know how much they had been involved frankly in those kinds of projects. I think a lot of them were done independently by Saudi NGOs and Saudi religious organizations rather than the Saudi government; I'm sure there was some Saudi government funding but a lot of it was more independent.

Q: Was there much overt support for Al Qaeda after 9/11?

MORRIS: Not a lot, but there was also an unwillingness to believe first of all that Al Qaeda really existed, that Muslims could be responsible for this dastardly deed, that Islam was being unfairly accused and certainly there was a great deal of skepticism – and this remained for a long time – that there could be any elements of this kind of radical Islam in Indonesia. The feeling was that the United States had declared war on Islam, this was opposition to Islam not opposition to terrorism, and that this was something that was very unfair particularly to link Indonesia with any of this, Indonesia was not responsible for this. So I think there was anger at the United States when they thought that we were accusing Muslims and particularly Indonesian Muslims of having anything to do with this kind of terrorism.

Q: Were you able to come up with publicized links?

MORRIS: Eventually yes after the Bali bombing.

Q: When was the Bali bombing?

MORRIS: It was in October of 2002, a year after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Q: This must have had a tremendous...a lot of Australians basically...it must have had quite a...

MORRIS: Well there were quite a number of Americans not as many as there were Australians but there were quite a number of Americans who were killed, others who were very badly injured. So yes, after that attack basically we had a mandatory draw down of the embassy. All families were evacuated and it was only essential staff. Essentially well over 50 percent of the embassy was evacuated and that occurred for the maximum six months period and then actually they made us go another week before they finally said that the situation had improved enough that our families could come back. It was obviously something that was of great concern to the embassy, a great concern to the State Department.

Q: Well then did this Bali bombing change public opinion in Indonesia? In other words did they feel that Islamic extremists were a problem?

MORRIS: Again it really did take a while before people were willing to accept that Indonesians could have anything to do with this. Finally, I think there was some acceptance of this. I think one of the things that first began to turn the tide, frankly I would hope that some of the things that we were doing helped, but I think one thing that really began to turn the tide was when Indonesians were seeing even in a place like Bali that in most of these terrorist attacks most of these people being killed were Muslims. So these attacks were very devastating to the Muslim community and to the Indonesian community. So many of the people who were killed in the Bali bombing, for example, were people who were working at this nightclub and so I think that that really started to turn the tide when people saw that wait a minute these things are starting to have a devastating impact on our own people. Of course, the other thing about the Bali bombing was that this was really destroying one of the greatest revenue sources for Indonesia, tourism. Particularly tourism in Bali, it really destroyed it for a very, very long period of time. At first there was a lot of anger at the United States and Australia and other countries for imposing these very, very strong travel warnings but then gradually there was a realization that they needed to do something about this situation if they were going to get the tourists back and they knew that they needed to have those tourists back.

Q: Well then you left then in 2003, is that right?

MORRIS: Yes, in July of 2003.

EDMUND McWILLIAMS
Retirement
Falls Church, Virginia (2001)

A native of Rhode Island, Mr. Mc Williams was educated at the University of Rhode Island and Ohio University. In the course of his diplomatic career he served in several South East Asia posts including Vientiane, Bangkok and Djakarta. Other assignments took him to Moscow, Managua, Kabul, and Islamabad. In 1992 Mr. McWilliams was engaged in opening US Embassies in the newly independent states of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. While his assignments were primarily in the Political and Economic fields, in Washington he dealt with Labor and Human Rights issues. Mr. McWilliams was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005-2006.

Q: Well then, you say you work off and on pro bono for various human rights organizations?

MCWILLIAMS: Mostly human rights organizations. I did a little traveling. I went over to, I went to Afghanistan in early 2002 essentially to sort of ground myself a little bit in what was going on over there and make old- renew old contacts and did a little bit of writing on the basis of my Afghan interests. But more I think I have been mostly involved essentially with human rights issues vis-à-vis Indonesia and East Timor where I work in some ways almost daily now, lobbying

issues related to Indonesia.

Q: Well what's happening in your particular field, human rights and all, in East Timor and Indonesia?

MCWILLIAMS: Well the great fight in Indonesia really just continues back from my tour there back to '96 of a concern that the Indonesian military is, has been and continues to be a rogue institution operating essentially with impunity before the Indonesian courts. Its abuses of human rights, its corrupt, terribly corrupt institution and we see it as a threat, not only to individual human rights but even to democracy out there. We're very distressed that this administration, not unlike the Clinton administration, sought to reestablish military to military ties between our military and their military which had been suspended way back into the '90s because of some particularly egregious abuses by the Indonesian military. Unfortunately just a few months ago Secretary of State Rice used a national security waiver to evade limitations on the mil-mil relationship and we now are in a situation where we have established, reestablished full military relations for the first time in over a decade, notwithstanding the fact that military remains unaccountable for a whole series of abuses and indeed is continuing to commit abuses.

Q: Well do you see establishing these military to military relations in your experience has that helped? In other words, you know, I mean, sort of getting inside the tent, can we work things so that things are better or not?

MCWILLIAMS: That's the argument that's made in this Indonesian case. We argue against that by observing that for many decades the U.S. had a very tight relationship with the Indonesian military. IMET, the International Military Education and Training was available to them. They had all sorts of people here in the United States training and in point of fact during those decades we saw terrible abuses which were uncontrolled. Most recently just in the newspapers today as a matter of fact it's reported that there is now proof that over 183,000 people died in East Timor thanks to Indonesian military actions, that they used napalm, by the way dropped from U.S.-provided aircraft against civilian targets. And this is all now very clear. It was clear, it's been clear for a long time. But that military relationship we had did nothing to reduce the abuses that we saw in the Indonesian military and indeed some of the officers within the Indonesian military with whom we had the closest relationships, who took the most training, spoke the best English and so on were among the worst abusers. So I think the notion, which is argued by the Pentagon, that well, this is the way we can reform them, if we simply get close to them and show them how we do things. Well I'm sorry but that didn't work in the past and I think they're hard put to demonstrate how it's going to work in the future.

Q: Having served there and all, do you have any feel for why the Indonesian military is so bad?

MCWILLIAMS: Well, it's a complex question. The situation is that the military essentially is not under civilian control and never really has been. Seventy percent, roughly 70 percent of its budget comes from offline funding sources. It runs businesses, some of them illegal businesses. It traffics in narcotics, it has illegal logging operations, it's involved in trafficking in people, runs prostitution rings and so on. It extorts money from U.S. and domestic other foreign companies. So it has essentially its own sources of funding and as a consequence is not answerable to the civilian

government. It had been answerable to the Suharto dictatorship because that was a military dictatorship. But when I say not answerable to it also is unaccountable as I said before. The justice system in Indonesia is extremely corrupt so that people who are within the military who commit terrible abuses simply aren't brought to the dock for what they've done. As a consequence they are, as I say, a rogue institution and our concern is that the only leverage that really had been available to try to constrain them was that military assistance from the United States was being withheld. And by virtue of the fact that we were withholding full cooperation other nations were holding back on cooperation. Now that that has been released our concern is that we have no leverage left and as a consequence we're concerned that this year of 2006, the first year where they have full military to military relations could be very bad. We met last week, a number of us, with deputy assistant secretary Eric Johns from the East Asian Pacific Bureau and of the NSC (National Security Council) and asked if they were at least going to quietly develop benchmarks against which they would release this assistance. That is to say they would have to meet some goals in terms of reform before we'd actually move forward in specific areas and State and NSC told us very candidly no, we have no benchmarks. So that's particularly worrying.

Q: Okay well, thank you very much.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
President, United States-Indonesia Society
Washington, DC (2004-2007)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

LA PORTA: My organization, the United States-Indonesia Society, USINDO, for example provides summer study programs for graduate school students to study language in Indonesia. We send them to Central Java for ten weeks and they live with an Indonesian family and are attached to the university there. On the other hand, I think that in terms of substantive preparation, Georgetown did have some truly outstanding professors at that time. Jules Davids was a professor of diplomatic history. He later published a first-rate diplomatic history in the 1970's. also there was J. Carroll Quigley, who was the notorious professor of a course called the development of civilizations that no one will ever forget. His book reputedly was one of Bill Clinton's favorites.

Q: Well, we're just about at the end here. You retired. What have you been up to since you retired in 2003?

LA PORTA: I worked for a couple of months on a study for PM Bureau on the deployment of POLADs around the world. Also, there are some implications for the State-Defense exchange program. Then I began in the very beginning of 2004 an association with the United States-Indonesian Society (USINDO) which is an NGO designed to improve awareness of United States-Indonesia policy issues and promote a greater awareness of Indonesia in the United States.

Q: Okay, well, Al, I thank you very much. You've gone a long way.

EPILOGUE

I am sure that everyone who does an oral history says that it is difficult to write a valedictory on one's career of any considerable duration. I am no different in that respect.

At the time I was being interviewed by Stuart Kennedy, I was serving as president of the United States-Indonesia Society, or USINDO. I remained in that position for nearly four years, resigning at the end of November 2007. Leaving USINDO was not my choice but there were differences in the vision for the Society: whether it should be more or less program-oriented; that it was becoming too "activist" in working with the Indonesians on congressional relations and other matters; and whether there should be more emphasis on income-earning activities to improve the investment base and long-term viability of the organization. Suffice to say that my views – pro-program, more pro-active and income diversification – were not fully shared by the chairman although they were supported by most members.

All that is behind me now. I still fully support USINDO's objectives and remain an ordinary member. What is important is for the United States to have a positive and accurate perspective on Indonesia and to take the right policy actions. I have recently had articles published on policy recommendations for Indonesia and Southeast Asia and I will not repeat them here. Nonetheless, Southeast Asia and Indonesia remain under-rated areas in U.S. policy and it is hoped, as I write this, that there will be improvement in the next administration, just as there has been some improvement in the last four years of the Bush Administration.

End of Reader