

## **PHILIPPINES**

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Charles J. Nelson	1952-1955	Public Administrative specialist, ICA, Manila

	1956-1958	Special Advisor to Mission Director for Rural Development/Deputy Chief, ICA, Manila
Ruth McLendon	1953-1955	Consular Officer, Manila
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Lester E. Edmond	1953-1956	International Economist, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Washington DC
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James M. Wilson, Jr.	1966-1970	Deputy Chief of Mission, Manila
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Ruth McLendon	1967-1969	Philippine Desk Officer, Washington DC
Francis M. Kinnelly	1967-1970	Economic/Commercial Officer, Manila
William Piez	1967-1971	Economic Officer, Manila

G. Mennen Williams	1968-1969	Ambassador, Philippines
Wilbur P. Chase	1968-1970	Consul General, Manila
Victor Wolf, Jr.	1968-1971	Principal Officer, Cebu
Gunther K. Rosinus	1968-1973	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Manila
Henry Byroade	1969-1973	Ambassador, Philippines
Ronald D. Palmer	1969-1971 1971-1975	Philippine Desk Officer, Washington DC Political/Military Officer, Manila
Richard B. Finn	1970-1971	Deputy Chief of Mission, Manila
Kenneth A. Stammerman	1970-1971	Commercial Officer, Manila
Frank D. Correl	1971-1972	Philippine Desk Officer, USAID, Washington DC
Joseph P. O'Neill	1971-1973	Consular/Political Officer, Manila/Cebu
Frank E. Maestrone	1971-1974	Political Officer, Manila
Terrell E. Arnold	1971-1976	Economic/Commercial Counselor, Manila
John Hummon	1973-1976	Deputy Mission Director, USAID, Manila
Maurice E. Lee	1973-1977	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Manila
Morton I. Abramowitz	1973-1974 1974-1978	Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Inter-American Affairs, Department of Defense
Helen Weinland	1974	Philippine Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Elizabeth Ann Swift	1974-1976	Political/Military Officer, Philippine Desk, Washington, DC
Robert S. Zigler	1975	Refugee Officer, USAID, Subic Bay
Charles C. Christian	1975-1978	Deputy Director, USAID, Manila

Theresa A. Tull	1975-1977 1977-1979	INR, Analyst-Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Washington, DC Principal Officer, Cebu
Howard H. Lange	1975-1979	Financial Economist, Manila
Peter M. Cody	1976-1979	Director, USAID, Manila
Howell S. Teeple	1976-1979	Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Cebu
Lane Holdcroft	1976-1980	Chief of Agriculture and Rural Development, USAID, Philippines
David D. Newsom	1977-1978	Ambassador, Philippines
Horace G. Dawson, Jr.	1977-1979	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Manila
Raymond Malley	1978	Investigation of Manila Mission, USAID, Washington, DC
Richard W. Teare	1978-1980	Deputy Director of Philippine Affairs, Washington, DC
David Rybak	1978-1981	Philippine Desk, USAID, Washington, DC
Lester E. Edmond	1979-1981	Asian Development Bank, US Executive Director, Manila
Bernard F. Shinkman	1979-1981	Director, American Center, USIS, Mindanao
Gilbert H. Sheinbaum	1979-1983	Principal Officer, Cebu
William Piez	1980-1982	Office Director, East Asia Bureau, Economic Policy, Washington, DC
Steven W. Sindig	1980-1983	Population, Health, and Nutrition Officer, USAID, Manila
Larry Colbert	1981-1984	Consular Officer, Manila
Ulrich A. Straus	1982-1984	Philippine Country Director, Washington, DC
Edward H. Wilkinson	1982-1985	Deputy Consul General, Manila
Stan Ifshin	1983-1985	Principal Officer, Cebu

James R. Meenan	1983-1987	Project Manager, USAID, Manila
G. Eugene Martin	1984-1985	Special Assistant, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington DC
William Lenderking	1984-1986	Public Affairs Officer, USIA, Washington, DC
Stephen Bosworth	1984-1987	Ambassador, Philippines
William Piez	1985-1989	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
Anthony C. Zinni	1987-1989	Commander, 9 <sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment; Commanding Officer 35 <sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa
G. Eugene Martin	1987-1990	Political/Military Officer, Manila
Nicholas Platt	1987-1991	Ambassador, Philippines
Sarah Horsey-Barr	1989-1990	Immigrant Visa Officer, Manila
G. Philip Hughes	1989-1990	Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, The White house, Washington, DC
Frank G. Wisner	1991-1992	Ambassador, Philippines
Alphonse F. La Porta	1991-1995	Executive Assistant to Special Representative for the Philippines, Washington, DC
Richard H. Solomon	1992-1993	Ambassador, Philippines
Aloysius M. O'Neill	1992-1993	Deputy Director, Philippine Desk, Washington, DC
	1993-1994	Deputy Director, Office of Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei & Singapore, Washington (PIMBS), DC
Donald McConville	1993-1996	Counselor for Economic Affairs, Manila
Aloysius M. O'Neill	1994-1997	Political Counselor, Manila
Greta N. Morris	1996-1998	Counselor for Public Affairs, USIS, Manila

G. Eugene Martin

1996-1999 Deputy Chief of Mission, Manila

**MERRIT N. COOTES**  
**Temporary Duty**  
**Manila (1935)**

*Merritt N. Cootes was born in Virginia in 1909. Educated in France and Austria as well as at Princeton University. Mr. Cootes joined the Foreign Service in 1931 and served in the Haiti, Hong Kong, Italy, Portugal, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Algeria, and Washington, DC. He retired in 1969. He was interviewed by Lillian Mullins in 1991-93.*

COOTES: After I'd been there [Hong Kong] for a while, in 1935 the Commonwealth of the Philippines was scheduled to be established. The U. S. Government sent over a delegation composed of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Vice President, John Nance Garner. This delegation of 16 from Congress came over to Hong Kong. In those days the Dollar Line used to stay over in Hong Kong for two days, ostensibly to favor the tourists who could go up to Canton or other places in China. Actually, the reason the ships stayed there was that they could get all of their maintenance work done with cheap Chinese labor in local shipyards. We had this delegation on our necks for two days. It was quite a job, entertaining them. Of course, we had very limited funds--I think the Consul General had the large sum of \$300 per year for entertainment. You can imagine how far that would go with a Congressional delegation. Of course, we had to have a reception to which the Governor, the senior military commander, the various Consuls and Consuls General, and important shipping people were invited. I remember that one of my sailing pals, a man who later became the head of Jardine Matheson, one of the big shipping firms on the China coast, attended the reception for our delegation.

The Commonwealth of the Philippines had just been inaugurated, and it was given an immigration quota, covering Filipinos who wished to emigrate to the United States. Well, in those days the Oriental Exclusion Act was still in effect, and the quota for the whole of China was 100. That was the minimum quota granted to any country. It had been decided that the Philippine quota would be 50. But we needed a vice consul down in Manila to administer this immigration. The first man who held this position was Henry Day, who had been Vice Consul in Hong Kong with me. They sent him down to Manila from Hong Kong. As he was a very energetic officer, he added political reporting to his immigration duties, which previously had only been done through the Governor General's office or through the military. He wanted to take some leave, so he asked if I would come down to Manila. Well, I was coming down anyhow--my mother was going to visit there. So I was assigned to the Philippine Islands for one month, while Henry Day went off on leave.

**STANLEY DONOVAN**

**U.S. Air Force, Bomber Pilot  
Philippine Islands 1936-1939**

*Stanley J. Donovan was born in Maine in 1910. He graduated from West Point in 1934 and served in the U.S. Air Force. His assignments abroad have included Buenos Aires, Madrid, and Turkey. In 1996 he was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

DONOVAN: At the flying training center at Kelly Field we were flying the old Keystone bomber, which is a biplane, and an open cockpit, really quite ancient. My first station was the Philippine Islands. When I arrived, the same old Keystone bombers greeted me. After about a year, they were replaced by the Martin B-10, which is a very fine airplane.

*Q: When you were in the Philippines, how did you view the defense of the Philippines and Japanese aspirations towards them? You and your colleagues.*

DONOVAN: I didn't have any contact at all with the Japanese, and very little contact with the Chinese. I made several trips to China during my two years in the Philippines, mostly to Hong Kong, and one time to Shanghai, and I must say I enjoyed my trips there very much. The first time I went to Japan was... My lord... 1963.

*Q: Oh, I see. When you were in the Philippines, you were in the Philippines from 1936 until when?*

DONOVAN: I was there 'till late 38. I mean, as you were, 39.

*Q: Was the prevailing view that the Japanese were the potential enemy at that time?*

DONOVAN: I would say... yes. At one time, we in the bomb squadron thought that we were going to be ordered over to China, and our airfield was going to be a golf course. Not unusual, because with the aircraft that we had at the time, the Keystone bombers, you could land them anyplace, you didn't have to have a runway.

**RUTH WALTER CROOK  
Overseas Branch Officer, Office of War Information  
Washington, DC (1940's)**

*Ruth Crock joined in 1941 what was then called the U.S. information service, which was later absorbed by the Office of War Information. Working in the Overseas Branch, she prepared employees for duty in various aspects of the Information Programs abroad during World War II. This involved programs in support of our military operations throughout the world. After the war, she joined the State Department's Foreign Press Liaison Office and worked there until*



*transferring to the Voice of America, where she worked, with minor interruption, until her retirement. Ms. Crock was interviewed by Cliff Groce in 1990.*

CROOK: Among the things I worked on was obtaining specialties which we shipped out to Australia and were then gotten into the Philippines by submarine. These included such things as chewing gum, sewing kits, pencils – that was before the advent of the ballpoint pen, cigarettes – oh, a great many different kinds of things, all with the slogan, I SHALL RETURN, on everything, because MacArthur insisted on it. These were prepared by the publications division as an adjunct to their work for MacArthur, and this became part of the same program where the leaflets were developed for dropping.

*Q: Were these dropped as well, or just distributed?*

CROOK: At this point, no. The leaflets came later, when we were based on Hollandia before we moved into the Philippines. Then, once we were in the Philippines, when we got a beachhead on Luzon, then they were dropped over the parts of the Philippines still held by the Japanese. So it was a very interesting time.

I remember one set of publications we did was a magazine called Free Philippines, which was the name of the newspaper that had been very popular in the Philippines before all this happened. We had to get a statement, I remember, in one of them, of encouragement from Cardinal Spellman, who was then the archbishop of New York. I remember going over to the cardinal's office and talking to him about it, and getting his letter and then having it incorporated into the magazine.

Once the team finally got into Luzon – they started at Leyte and then worked their way up; they were in the second wave with the troops going in there – they finally got into Manila and commandeered the printing press which had put out the Free Philippines before. Fritz Marquardt had worked on the Free Philippines before he moved back to Chicago. So they began issuing a daily newspaper, in English, called the Free Philippines – the name was kept. And that was publishing all through the rest of the war.

Another thing they did was to go to Santo Tomas University, which was a Japanese POW camp, as early as possible, and they found an NBC correspondent, Bert Silen, who had been broadcasting off the roof of the Manila Hotel as the last broadcaster from the Philippines before the Japanese took over Manila. So NBC was of course immediately interested, and he began his first broadcast again saying, "I take up my broadcasting after having been so rudely interrupted," etc., etc.

*Q: He had been interned?*

CROOK: He had been interned by the Japanese. His daughter had been shot. He had a lot of interesting but terrible experiences, as did all the Americans who were interned there. Of course they didn't suffer as much as the Bataan survivors, but they had a lot of problems getting food and medical attention. It seems that just before the war, Silen had been hired by OSS to continue broadcasting clandestinely once the war started, if it reached the Philippines. No one was sure

that was going to happen right away.

So he came out of the war without anything. Evidently he had resigned from NBC at that point. I had the job of reestablishing the fact that he had been hired by the government and got him back pay and all that. It was very interesting. I made several trips to Washington tracking that down. At that time Arsine Butts, who was our top administrative man, was very helpful, and Bert Silen, needless to say, was very grateful. He went back to work on – I think it was NBC – on the West Coast, and eventually he died very prematurely, and a lot of the things that happened to him during those war years were pretty much responsible for his early demise.

Another thing I worked on which was fascinating was the Phoenix. Did you ever hear of the Phoenix?

*Q: I don't think so.*

CROOK: This was an Italian ship. Remember when the Italian navy all went into Bari, and we got a lot of the cargo ships? I don't remember whether it was before or after the French navy, but anyway, we got a lot of ships at Bari. This was an old ship used to transport food or something, and it was given to the OWI. The purpose of that ship was to go to the coast of China and bombard the Chinese with VOA and other propaganda about the war effort: your friends are coming to relieve you, etc. Also, a leaflet operation was getting into China clandestinely.

*Q: How could they distribute the leaflets?*

CROOK: I don't know. These were people who somehow or other got into China. Don't ask me; I don't know the details. Anyway, there was to be a leaflet operation, because I know one of the things I had to buy was a Webendorfer printing press. Maybe that was to be done once we got on the coast of China.

So I remember OWI getting that ship. It had to go through the Panama Canal, and the crew was all Italian; nobody spoke English. Some of them got into trouble in Panama, and I had to get the Panamanians and the Americans at the Panama Canal to get them out of the jails. Finally we got the ship out to San Francisco, and I was working on the servicing of that ship – meaning getting people who were going to work on it. It had to be completely re-outfitted by the Navy; it was an old ship and needed a lot of work. Then getting rid of the Italian crew and sending them back to Italy, and putting on an American crew – it was a tremendous effort. Then one day word came down that we were abandoning the ship.

*Q: Why?*

CROOK: Because the plans were already afoot for us to drop the atom bomb, which of course none of us knew anything about. At the same time we were also beginning to stockpile for the Japan landings, and again the word came down: forget about it.

*Q: Overtaken by events.*

CROOK: Overtaken by events. But of course none of us knew what the main big event was. We all found out on August 6th, when the first atomic bomb was dropped.

*Q: I would think that the preparations for Japan would still continue.*

CROOK: Well, they were continuing so far as people were concerned, but the psy-warfare parts of the operation were dropped. And of course there were a lot more people that were to be hired than MacArthur wanted. Once he got control of Japan he wanted his own people every place. Then of course the Philippines became an information program, on which I worked.

**CLARENCE A. BOONSTRA**  
**Agricultural Officer**  
**Manila (1945-1947)**

*Mr. Boonstra was born in 1914 and raised in Michigan. He earned degrees from Michigan State College and Louisiana State University and later pursued studies at the Universities of Michigan, Wisconsin and Chicago. An agriculture specialist, Mr. Boonstra served in Havana, Manila Lima, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, variously as Agriculture Officer and Agricultural Attaché. He served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City, and from 1967 to 1969 Mr. Boonstra was the United States Ambassador to Costa Rica. Mr. Boonstra was first interviewed in 1989 by Donald Barnes and again in 2006 by Allan Mustard, W. Garth Thorburn and James E. Ross.*

*Q: Okay, well, then you went on to Manila. You stayed with State Department.*

BOONSTRA: Yes, the interesting thing about that was after MacArthur entered Manila, someone of the State Department immediately wanted to send some staff up there, but MacArthur wouldn't admit anyone except a couple of consular officers to help clear prisoners out of the Santo Tomas Prison. Then the State Department also decided, they set up someone to look after the emerging food supplies and agricultural policy for the Philippines, and MacArthur reluctantly – rather reluctantly, he didn't like civilians much, accepted that. So I went to the Philippines without much instructions of any sort, except to try to get along and do something useful there, I guess.

So when I arrived there, of course it was shortly after the takeover, so I arrived about the time the Japanese surrendered. And so I tried to be helpful, but we didn't have any organization. We had a couple of consular officers, so I helped them for a while to get prisoners out of Santo Tomas Prison, and then I gradually took over the responsibilities of trying to coordinate some of the agencies that were beginning to ship in food supplies. Fortunately, I was quite familiar with the main product, of course, which was rice. The rice industry had been messed up pretty badly by the Japanese. Particularly the sugar industry, which was concentrated on the island of Luzon, not far from Manila, had been totally destroyed by the Japanese. Completely and totally.

One of the big problems was what to do with rehabilitation policy, which everyone was in a hurry to rehabilitate. Manila was in total destruction. There was no place for me to live. I was located in the officers' barracks in the wreckage of the old Manila Hotel. In fact, when I moved into the hotel, there was still a Japanese machine gun in the closet. It had a big hole in the wall from a shell hole, which I closed with a zinc plate. I spent a day closing the hole, building myself a room, but then I was able to get my wife to come.

I had to make some trips back to Washington by plane, trying to find out whether my Cuban wife, who was now an American citizen, could come. The Department of Agriculture said whatever the State Department said was fine. So I went to the State Department and they said whatever the Army said was fine. They didn't know. The war was over and there weren't any women there, but no way to get a civilian woman there, so she joined the Red Cross and I got her on a troop ship, so she was one of the only wives in the Philippines at that time.

So, I moved her into the officers' quarters, which was against the rules, but we got away with it, and then MacArthur and the Army moved on to Japan, and they left me as the sole custodian of the wreckage of the Manila Hotel, since we turned that over to the emerging Philippine government, and so it took about two months before I could get rid of that and get someone else to occupy it, so we lived alone there. Although I did move in a Citibank representative to keep me company.

It was a pretty stormy time, and the main problems began to emerge as the time went on. Then Paul McNutt, who had been the prewar high commissioner of the Philippines came back as the postwar high commissioner. And his staff he recruited from all the old China hands and all the old Philippine colonial hands, and I began to run into a lot of trouble there, because among my other jobs, which were quite numerous around handling food things, was the big problem became what to do about the rehabilitation of the Philippines. And I did know enough about sugar, having had some experience both in Louisiana and Cuba, that sugar was not a good crop on the isle of Luzon. The soil was not good for it.

The Japanese had totally destroyed the whole structure of the industry – railroads, fields of cane. There was no seed cane, even. The mills had all been blown up. They were all gone. So there are good places in the Philippines to grow sugar, particularly the island of Negros, which is about the only one. But all MacArthur's friends and all McNutt's prewar colonial administration friends were there, and they had reinstalled all the old elite crowd, the old rulers, the old colonial rulers of the Philippines, who all wanted the sugar industry and the prewar structure done. So, quite different than his policy in Japan, MacArthur, who set up the post war structure, even though other people tried, but he was a dominant person, spent all of our rehabilitation money rehabilitating the sugar industry.

So I ran into a lot of trouble with McNutt's – actually, I was working for McNutt then. I wasn't even with the State Department. I was a State Department officer, but I had an office down the hall from Paul McNutt and the high commissioner's more or less rehabilitated office structure.

So I got into a very conflict with his economic man, who was named Ed Hester, and so Paul McNutt called me in after I'd been there only about a year and a half or so and he said he tended

to agree with me that agricultural policy, the money should not rehabilitate the sugar industry, which would further complicate, of course, our own industry. We were still having trouble about quotas. And that he had asked for my relief as agricultural attaché, and so he was very nice about it.

He said he was sorry for me to go, because I had become very good friends with Paul McNutt, but he said he had had Ed Hester working with him before the war, and Ed Hester wanted the sugar industry rehabilitated. And the Philippine government – after all, he had installed a fellow named Osmena, who had been the prewar president, and then had elected a new president, Manuel Roxas. And so I was honored really, because before I left, the president of the Philippines, Manuel Roxas, called me in for a private visit, and actually it was the most private visit I've ever had with a president. He took his shoes off and had his feet on the desk and it was very informal, indeed, in the old Malacañang Palace, which had been spared, by the way, by the Japanese and by MacArthur – in both cases, by the way, because it's next door to the San Miguel Brewery and both armies wanted to keep the brewery intact.

The moment when our troops came in Manila, the first objective was the Army Navy Club. The second objective was to take the San Miguel Brewery next to the Malacañang Palace so that it didn't get damaged in the takeover, one of the only undamaged places, the Malacañang Palace and the San Miguel Brewery.

President Roxas even told me, he said, "I know a good bit about agriculture. You're right, really. The best future for the Philippines is not to try to restore that industry," but, he said, "That's what all the political forces want and it's something that I have to do." He said, "High Commissioner McNutt has told me that you're leaving because he doesn't want this conflict in the embassy, which we had set up on July 4, 1946."

So I was sort of in a way fired, I guess, but it was interesting. But it was a matter of policy, and it was very interesting, because years later, about 1950s or so, there was a Bell committee, which called me back to Washington, and I testified. They were examining why we had made this bad decision in our War Damages Act and how it could be undone, and they had read one of my dispatches in those days, one of the dispatches in which I strongly pointed out that this was a bad rehabilitation strategy. So, suddenly, it all came out well, which helped my reputation a good bit.

**RICHARD P. BUTRICK**  
**Advisor to President**  
**Manila (1946-1947)**

*Richard P. Butrick was born in Lockport, New York in 1894. He joined the Consular Service in 1921. His career in the Foreign Service included positions in Chile, Ecuador, Canada, China, Brazil, and Washington, DC. Mr. Butrick was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.*

*Q: Then you went out to the Philippines.*

BUTRICK: I went out to the Philippines as advisor to the President of the Philippines.

Q: *Who was that?*

BUTRICK: At the time I went out there the President was Manuel Roxas and the Vice President was Elpidio Quirino. I was actually attached to Quirino's office. He was also Secretary of Foreign Affairs. That was automatic in the Philippine government at that time. The Vice President was automatically head of foreign affairs.

Q: *What were you doing?*

BUTRICK: I was setting up a foreign service for the Philippine government. I also advised Quirino on various matters as he requested.

Q: *What was your impression of how the Filipinos were going about this?*

BUTRICK: They were very good and very efficient. I had very little dealings with Roxas himself. I think he sort of in a way resented me a bit, but with Quirino everything went along fine. We had a Naval man out there too. He and I were the only foreigners who were ever invited to all of the local parties where they really took their hair down and the women were present. The two of us were always invited to those parties, but no other foreigners.

I had a very good impression of the Filipinos, except, of course, there were an awful lot of crooks in the Philippines, everywhere. After I had been there several months, the wife of one of the men said to me, "You ought to stay here with us. If you stay here for a year you will be a millionaire." They were selling all the goods that were left over, all the war surplus American supplies. Some of those things were sold three or four times and everybody who bought them made a big profit on the resale. After she said that to me I decided it was time for me to get out. So at the very first opportunity when Quirino decided he wanted to make a trip around the world coming across the Pacific, I said I would go with him as far as the United States. By that time the Philippine foreign service had been thoroughly well organized. They had opened offices here in the United States and a few other places. Some of the men in my instruction class eventually became ambassadors.

So when we got back to the United States I severed my connections with the Philippines and went back to the Department.

But that was an interesting assignment. All of my assignments were interesting.

**MARY CHIAVARINI**  
**Secretary**  
**Manila (1946-1947)**

*Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special “trouble shooter” in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.*

*Q: Mary, as I have it from the bio register you spent a little time in Manila in 1946. And then went to Seoul in 1947. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about Manila first, immediately after World War II. Was it completely devastated? What was the embassy’s operation like at that point?*

CHIAVARINI: It was quite an experience. I had never witnessed a city that was so devastated. In this instance, it was by the Japanese. A girl I lived with used to point out some of the non-existent houses. She said, “So-and-so lived here,” that she knew and had visited her. And she spent the war in Manila in a prisoner of war camp.

*Q: Do you remember her name?*

CHIAVARINI: She’s dead now. Ruth Lovell was her name.

*Q: Was she an American?*

CHIAVARINI: Yes. That was her married name.

*Q: Was she working at the embassy?*

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

*Q: Were you or Ms Lovell with Ambassador Jacobs?*

CHIAVARINI: No. She didn’t know him, and he had spent time in Manila but long before I had ever gotten there. He and another State Department man had written a full report that was taken up by a lot of people. It was a thing that they should do.

*Q: This was Ambassador Jacobs writing?*

CHIAVARINI: I don’t know who wrote it. But I think they both did.

*Q: What was your position at the embassy?*

CHIAVARINI: Oh, I was just a secretary. I didn’t have any position.

*Q: Were you working for anyone in particular?*

CHIAVARINI: No, anybody who needed a secretary would call me.

*Q: Did you get out into the countryside?*

CHIAVARINI: I did. That's where I saw this devastation. It was really heart-rendering. Ruth would tell me so-and-so who I knew lived there. That really brought it home. Ruth was a very caring person, but not overtly-so. I never knew how much she was affected by it.

*Q: Well, if she had spent the war in a prisoner of war camp she must have had a lot of unpleasant experiences.*

CHIAVARINI: Well, I don't know. She never talked about that. But Mr. Davis, Nat Davis, was a member of the embassy, he was a top officer. I don't whether he was badly treated or not. I don't know that. Ruth never really talked about it either. But I think that she witnessed a lot of things that she didn't want to talk about even though the Japanese were responsible.

*Q: Were there still any Japanese in the area?*

CHIAVARINI: I don't really recall whether there were. There probably were some.

*Q: Was the embassy set up very primitive? Were you working hand-to-mouth?*

CHIAVARINI: No. Well, I think when they were imprisoned under the Japanese it was more of that nature. But not afterwards.

*Q: The embassy took good care of you?*

CHIAVARINI: Oh yes, I never had any problems. I wasn't important enough.

**WILLIAM B. COBB, JR.**  
**Visa Officer**  
**Manila (1947-1949)**

*William B. Cobb was born in North Carolina in 1923. He received a B.A. from the University of North Carolina and an M.S. from George Washington University. His postings abroad included Managua, Havana, Manila, La Paz, Martinique, Stockholm, and Mexico City. Mr. Cobb was interviewed by Horace G. Torbert in 1990.*

*Q: This is a piece of useful flavor. It did not last very long, did it?*



COBB: No. When I arrived in Manila I found I was again to be a visa officer, an non-immigrant visa officer this time. This was a disappointment. I thought I was ready to keep going, but I was a visa officer in Manila for another year. At that time I was inspected by John Muccio and I told him I was disappointed and Muccio said he could understand, but just to ride it out that one of the great things about the Foreign Service system was that if you did not like your boss, or your boss did not like you, you could be sure that either you or he would go fairly soon. So to be patient.

I found that I could be patient for a few more months, but I got into a little trouble at the time. The non-immigrant visa load was extremely heavy in Manila. Everybody wanted to go to the States on a "visit". I turned down for a visitor's visa a professional boxer named "Little Ne-Ne" who was coming to Honolulu to fight an American. The reason I turned him down was because he was on our list of individuals who had cooperated with the Japanese and had been indicted for treason and had not been successfully tried. He was indicted along with another prominent Filipino and they could not get two witnesses who would agree to appear at the same time for a treason trial. There was a lot of that in the Philippines. The Army CID files and other files available to the embassy showed that this man had been a traitor. He had cooperated with the Japanese as more than ninety-five percent of the Filipinos did under duress. So I turned him down as an undesirable alien. It made the newspapers. One of the columnists in the big Manila Chronicle wrote a column that the American Consul General did not know what was going on in his office, otherwise Vice Consul Cobb would not have been allowed to k.o. "Little Ne Ne" the way he did. There appeared in the regular section of the newspaper a cartoon showing me in the ring with "Little Ne Ne" and he on the floor, and I was clothed in red, white and blue shorts. Getting caught up in the rise of Philippine nationalism, which was just beginning, ...

*Q: They were independent?*

COBB: Yes, I went to the second and third Philippine independence celebrations. Getting this publicity was enough to get me transferred to the political section of the embassy - it got me out of the non-immigrant visa section.

*Q: I think it is amazing they put you in the political section.*

COBB: I think they thought that Ed Rice would be a good supervisor, which he was. Ed Rice was a very fine officer who served in China, meticulous and extremely well educated, a good writer and a good analyst. It was under his leadership that I began to do political work. It meant being sent out to listen to the political candidates and report back on the size of the crowds and what the candidate was saying, what the position was, what it would mean to Philippine-American relations and the like.

*Q: You were covering internal politics?*

COBB: Internal politics. I did not have anything to do with international politics. I worked with a lot of other people, Keyes Beech from the Chicago Tribune, Benson Davis of AP and others who were covering Philippine internal politics.

*Q: Did you stay in the job - you were out there about three years.*

COBB: For a short time I was sort of - the original ambassador when I got there was Emmet O'Neal, the Congressman who had been defeated by Thurston Morton, but who was a close friend of Harry Truman, and who was the second American ambassador to the Philippines. McNutt was the first. O'Neal resigned and was not replaced for a long time - Tom Lockett was the *chargé d'affaires* for many, many months. Then Myron Melvin Cowen was assigned. When Lockett was there I was chief of chancery - read all the mail and routed the key mail to people in the embassy and followed up to make sure they answered it.

*Q: I did not realize we had the term chief of chancery which the British always used, a junior officer filled the position who was on the way up.*

COBB: At that time I was on the way up too. It was an informal thing, I don't think Washington was ever told I was chief of chancery. It was one of things that we were assigned to do as a junior political officer. It was to keep the substantive business going.

**JOHN F. MELBY**  
**Philippine Desk Officer**  
**Washington, DC (1948-1953)**

*John F. Melby was born in Oregon in 1913. He received a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan and a master's degree and doctorate degree from the University of Chicago. He entered the Foreign Service in 1937. His career included positions in Mexico, Venezuela, the Soviet Union, and China. He was interviewed in June of 1989 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: The truth might make you free, but not loved!*

*Moving to the Philippines, you were dealing with the Philippines until 1953?*

MELBY: Yes. And primarily the Philippines, the job being what do we about the Philippines, to keep the communists from taking over there.

*Q: What were you doing on that?*

MELBY: We were making Ramón Magsaysay president. Secretly.

*Q: Was Magsaysay identified to you all, and you were aware of him quite early in the game?*

MELBY: Oh, sure. Yes. He was incorruptible. The man had an enormous amount of energy. At this time, he was chairman of some committee of the Philippine Senate. We knew we had to get rid of [Elpidio] Quirino, because he was unbelievably corrupt and he didn't care one or the other about it. There were reasons why he didn't care.

The Philippines was just going to pieces. At one point, our best estimate was that the Huks actually had the military capability of taking over the Philippine government. Why they didn't know it and why they didn't do it is something that I will never understand. But they didn't.

*Q: Did we have contingency plans to put more troops in there?*

MELBY: The idea was not to put troops in. Not only not put troops in, but that the American presence was not to be seen. Nobody was to know what we were doing. It was a reassertion of American influence, sub rosa. We were not going to be put in another colonial position there.

*Q: How did you operate? What sort of things were you doing as the desk officer for the Philippines to promote Magsaysay and not be colonial?*

MELBY: We were paying for the Philippine Junior Chamber of Commerce, which was a group of very active young professional people in the Philippines who were embarrassed by Quirino and determined to get some political change. And they needed money. We were paying for it.

And we also had Ed Lansdale in, who was on loan to CIA, working on Magsaysay, to get him after he was finally named the Secretary of Defense. The way we had to get Magsaysay named the Secretary of Defense--Myron Cowen was the ambassador, didn't have quite the nerve to go and tell Quirino that he had to name Magsaysay Secretary of Defense. So he asked me to do it. Well, I was sort of back and forth between Manila and Washington. So I didn't get tainted with Philippines the way he did.

Well, I didn't mind. I went around to see Quirino. I said that I had a suggestion--I said it more nicely than this!--"We really must get rid of Roberto Kangleon who was a Moro from Mindanao, and who had been one of the great leaders of the Philippine constabulary, which had just gone to pot completely. I said, "You've got to get rid of Kangleon. And our suggestion is that you name Senator Magsaysay as Secretary of Defense."

He hedged a bit, and he said, "No, I can't really do that."

And I said, "Why can't you?"

"Well, I don't want any trouble."

I said, "Well, all I can say is that if you don't do it, there will be no more American aid. No more military aid. I'm prepared to recommend that it be cut off."

*Q: So this was something that had been duly considered by our--*

MELBY: Of course! I wasn't doing this on my own.

*Q: Who were some of the actors on our side?*

MELBY: Myron Cowen was the ambassador. Dean Acheson was Secretary of State. The President knew it. This was from the White House on down.

*Q: But you were the messenger with the bad news. So what happened?*

MELBY: He named Magsaysay Secretary of Defense. Magsaysay merely started getting the troops out in the field, getting them out of the garrison, getting them out chasing the Huks, and, primarily, also to stop some of the corruption among the Philippine troops. For this, he had to pull some drumhead court-martials, sentence a few people to death. But word got around pretty fast, and a new kind of Philippine Army was in existence.

The time came when Magsaysay resigned as Secretary of Defense and announced that he was no longer a member of the Liberal party. He was becoming a Conservative, and running to oppose Quirino in the next presidential election. But this happened after I was finished with it. And he won the election. He got 85% of the vote. And three years later he was dead, killed in an accident.

*Q: Back in Washington, who was looking over your shoulder, dealing with the Philippines?*

MELBY: Nobody. I had been called in by Dean Acheson and told that, "I've got a lot of things to do, a lot of things on my mind. You're on the Philippine desk now. You go ahead and decide what has to be done." He said, "Of course, keep me informed as to what you're doing. I want to know what you're doing."

Of course, that was one thing that was Acheson's great strong holding point with Truman: he always kept Mr. Truman informed of what he was doing.

"And if you get into trouble, come and see me." He said, "Otherwise, I don't want to be bothered. I don't want to know the details. I don't have time for it."

*Q: Who was Assistant Secretary for the Far East at that time?*

MELBY: Butterworth.

*Q: And you'd already worked with Butterworth before?*

MELBY: Oh, sure. He was in Nanking. And I'd worked with him back in Washington, too.

*Q: He had other things to worry about, too.*

MELBY: The main thing he had to worry about was getting confirmed as assistant secretary. Because the China lobby was after him because he'd failed, or so they said. He got his confirmation. Then all he wanted to do was to get out.

*Q: So he went to Canada?*

MELBY: No, this is much later. He went to Sweden as minister. And Dean Rusk was assistant secretary. I worked with Dean Rusk.

*Q: Was Dean Rusk concentrating on the China problem, or was he working closely on the Philippine thing with you?*

MELBY: No, he didn't bother with the Philippines either. None of them did. They just left it up to me and Myron Cowen. We'd run the show ourselves, as I said, keeping people informed. That we were very scrupulous about. That was one thing about the Truman Administration, a lot of people in the Truman Administration didn't want to be bothered with the details. But they didn't want to be caught not knowing what was going on. So long as you kept them fully informed, then they could read or not read whatever it was you sent them. Then you were covered, and they would cover you.

*Q: You did have the feeling that there was a trust between the political appointees and the professionals?*

MELBY: Oh, absolutely.

*Q: It was, "This is a matter for professionals to deal with. Let us know any political aspects, and we'll take care of that."*

MELBY: The only time I had any problem was, the Navy dug their heels in about the Subic Bay, something they didn't want to do. I forget what it was. The Filipinos wanted us to do something--cut some particular privilege at Subic, which seemed reasonable enough to me and to Myron. And the Navy was just flatly refusing. So I told Acheson that I was at this impasse with this thing. And Acheson said, "Well, I'd better send you over to see the President, because it's going to take a directive from the President to break this thing loose from the Joint Chiefs."

And he set up an appointment for me with Mr. Truman. I went over to see him. I walked into the Oval Office; he was working on something. He'd obviously read the memorandum that had been prepared for him. He looked up at me and said, "Mr. Melby, are you sure that this is the right thing to do?"

And I said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President, I am."

He said, "Well, you damn well better be. Or I'll have your head!" And he smiled, and laughed! [Laughter] And he signed it and handed it to me. And said, "Go on, get out now." And that was it.

I took that piece of paper and sent it over to the Joint Chiefs. And I got whatever it was I wanted.

That's the way you could deal with Mr. Truman. You didn't fool around with him. You just had to be sure that you knew what you were doing.

**EUGENE F. KARST**  
**Information Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1949-1950)**

*Eugene F. Karst joined the Office of War Information in 1942. He then joined the State Department in 1946 and worked in both the Far East Wireless File and the European Regional File. He served in many posts through the USIS in the Philippines, Argentina, El Salvador, Brazil and Paraguay. He was interviewed by himself in 1999.*

KARST: My next assignment was as information officer at the embassy in Manila. At the time the newspapers there, and American newspapers also, were constantly carrying stories about "graft and corruption" in the Filipino bureaucracy. Finally, the Foreign Office of the Philippine government asked the American ambassador to discuss the problem. As information officer, the ambassador took me and two or three other embassy people down to see Carlos Romulo, Foreign Minister.

Romulo complained about articles which had appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Readers Digest* and other periodicals and wanted us to "do something about it." I finally told Romulo that we could do absolutely nothing--that if we tried to tell any American newsman what to write or not write about, it would only make the matters worse--we would be accused of censorship, of trying to hide the truth, to deceive their readers. I suggested that if anyone could do anything about the situation it would be somebody like Romulo himself, a Filipino. He had traveled widely in the United States and was generally well respected.

**CLIFF FORSTER**  
**Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Davao (1949-1952)**

*Cliff Forster was born in Manila, the Philippines in 1924. His father was the field director for the American Red Cross in the Middle East. After serving in the U.S. Navy, Mr. Forster attended George Washington University and Stanford University. Mr. Forster served in the Foreign Service in the Philippines, Burma, and Israel. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on May 29, 1990.*

FORSTER: Nancy and I were married in July, and I reported back to Washington with Nancy as my wife, and we were off to the Philippines in September where I opened the post of Davao on Mindanao in the southern Philippines, which had been the largest Japanese overseas colony before the war. They were growing hemp in that area and we had a large Japanese concentration there before the war. The ravages of war were still evident when we arrived in Davao. The hemp fields had been the scene of bitter fighting between our forces and the Japanese.

Our PAO was a fine man, James Meader, whom I believe you know. The deputy, who had been interned up the Chinese Communists in Nanking just before that, was Harry Hudson. Earl Wilson and John Henderson had just opened the Regional Publications Center there. Manila was then one of our major posts in Asia and it was also our major counterinsurgency post at the time because of the Huk threat. We were confronted with a real challenge and conditions were difficult for us in the provinces.

We had some very fine people out there in the outposts that were being opened up. As I say, I opened Davao with responsibility for the Mindanao-Sulu region. Cebu had already been opened, and Bob McKinnon, a State Department officer, who later died in Ouagadougou, was there. Then our mutual friend Russ Lynch came into Iloilo, and after him, Jerry Novick, whom you also remember well. Milt Leavitt went into Legaspi. We had a large operation, as I recall now. In the northern area of Luzon, we had posts in Laoag and Tuguegarao. We also had one in San Fernando. All were manned by American officers.

There was a lot of unrest in different parts of Mindanao while we were there with Huk infiltration and the Moro or Moslem uprisings in the area. We had a fairly good-sized staff. It was an exciting time for both Nancy and myself, because at that time both husband and wife were very much involved in the work. You had to be. She would go with me on our mobile unit trips with our films and publications to reach the distant areas. She also helped on office chores, taught English and entertained constantly.

I should also mention that it was pretty rough politically under the Quirino regime. Voters were being beaten up at the polls if they did not vote for the party in power. What little democracy existed was going under fast along with the economy and the communist-led Huks were making the most of it.

*Q: This is the government?*

FORSTER: That's right. The Quirino administration, with the help of some of the constabulary and Philippine Army elements were violating the constitutional rights of the people. As time went on, however, many of the Philippine Army leaders and the constabulary were opposed to this kind of autocratic rule, but in the early years you had Quirino in charge with his political hooligans.

The answer to so much of the problem was Ramon Magsaysay, the Defense Minister in the Quirino government. He launched a movement to curb these excesses. He was a great leader and I wish he were still around. He was remarkable, going right out to the provinces to work with the disaffected, and promising the Huks that if they surrendered they would be given a piece of land in Mindanao to start fresh. He set up two very successful resettlement projects for surrenderees, one in northern Mindanao and another in Cotabato, southern Mindanao.

The whole operation was unusual in a way, because USIS was tasked with the job of providing information materials on the conduct of good government and how to educate voters on democratic processes including polling. We were sent around to give talks on these democratic procedures and to provide information on organizing groups modeled after the League of

Women Voters. We even went into the camps where the Huk surrenderees were located to assist on the re-education program. At the same time, information support was provided which could be used to counter the influence of the Huks as they moved towards Manila and other cities.

Looking back on that period, I would say that we were quite successful. We were working with so many good people, so many Filipinos who felt strongly about what was going on in the Philippines not only with a corrupt regime but also with an insurgency capitalizing on this corruption and the deterioration of the economy. We were involved in nation-building in a very real sense, in a country we had administered for many years and where Americans and Filipinos had fought and died together against the invaders in World War II. We were there only three or four years after the war and Manila, as you may remember from your own experience, was still in shambles. Davao was that way, too, when we arrived there in 1949 as were so many of the cities. But we were working with Filipinos who had served on Bataan and Corregidor and who had been on the Death March. We had a common experience and we did not want to see a newly-independent nation succumb to a totalitarian rule of the right or left. On my staff I had several ex-Philippine Scouts and fighters in the wartime resistance movement who were outstanding. We just had so much going for us at that time and I believe we contributed to the success of Magsaysay's effort to turn things around. When Magsaysay was finally elected President in a free election, we all felt, Americans and Filipinos, that we had entered a new era of freedom and democracy in the Philippines!

*Q: I want to discuss Magsaysay a little later, but I also want to ask you a couple of questions. The period you're describing now has been described from somewhat different angles by three of the other people I've interviewed. In the case of Milt Leavitt, when he was interned by the Japanese, several of the Filipinos who were interned with him later turned up in the Hukbalahap forces. He had the peculiar experience of having some of these people come to his office when he was Branch PAO and saying, "Look. We aren't going to hurt you and aren't going to hurt the Americans as long as you don't do certain things. Don't go out there and really get tough. But we don't have any objection to your showing these films of how to build the nation."*

*Then another thing that was brought up by Jim Halsema, Jim felt that Taruc was certainly a convinced communist, but that he was a convinced communist and nationalist, that he was not of the Chinese or Russian type of communist.*

FORSTER: I think Jim's right.

*Q: Taruc was a nationalist who had become convinced of the communist cause, but was not the puppet of those people. In that respect, the Huk insurgency differs very greatly from the group carrying out the insurgency now. Does this pretty much square with your...*

FORSTER: Yes, it does except that the Huks--like the NPA--were frequently guided by Marxist doctrine and could be pretty ruthless. At the time I went out to the Philippines, Luis Taruc was labeled as a communist as was his right hand man, Mateo del Castillo. I recall that Halsema had interviewed Taruc just after the war. But many of them were socialists first with a strong sense of nationalism. There had been an active socialist movement before the war and there were legitimate grievances since little had been done on agrarian reform and poverty was widespread



among the farmers. The NPA or New Peoples' Army is a far more radical organization in the Philippines today in very much the same way as the Sekigun or Red Army differs from the earlier Zengakuren movement in Japan.

In regard to Milt's experience, although I never experienced a situation like his, I find it most interesting. I do know of cases where Filipinos sided with the Huks because of agrarian unrest and their desire to do something about it. Agrarian reform was--and still is--a vital need in the Philippines. It remains a major issue for the Philippines today. They have not been able to get on top of agrarian discontent and it's a case of the very rich landowners and these very poor peasants who have been exploited through the years.

It's quite likely, I'm sure, that the Philippine veterans returning to Central Luzon after the war, where so much of this agrarian ferment existed, saw the Huks as a way of taking action, and they joined them in many cases, I would guess, not because of any deep communist sympathy but rather as a way to bring about change. A good example of this in recent years have been young Catholic priests who have gone up into the mountains to join the NPA. They see them as the lesser of two evils. If you are going to fight against corruption and agrarian discontent, you join this movement and this accounts for much of the present strength of the NPA.

*Q: Were you still in the Philippines when Magsaysay was elected?*

FORSTER: No. I had been transferred to Yale University for Japanese language training and then out to Japan where you and I first met in 1953. I was in Kobe as a regional public affairs officer when Magsaysay crashed into the side of a mountain on Cebu, and that was a terrible shock to so many of us who had been in the Philippines--Jerry Novick, Russ Lynch, Stan Moss, and Milt Leavitt. I assume Jim Halsema was also distressed by the news although I don't think Jim was there at the time.

*Q: He had left.*

FORSTER: All of us who had known of the sensitivities, the charisma and the leadership of that man were devastated when we heard the news of his early ending. The Philippines desperately needs that kind of leadership today. I have great respect for Cory Aquino, but Magsaysay was tough and he went out to the people. He was going to do something about agrarian reform. Had he lived long enough, I think we would have seen some substantial changes. It's one of the great tragedies of history, I think, Lew.

*Q: I feel the same way. I was in the hospital recovering from polio, of course, at the time.*

FORSTER: Yes, that's right.

*Q: In March or April.*

FORSTER: You were in Rio?

*Q: No, I had been in Rio and had gotten polio. This was in March or April of 1957 when he was killed. I was recovering from polio in Harborview Hospital's Respirator Center in Seattle at that time.*

FORSTER: In a way he was a Philippine Kennedy who had a great impact on all of us. He really wanted to do something for his people.

*Q: On the other hand, there are some people who say that both Magsaysay and Kennedy had their reputations preserved and enhanced by having their lives cut short, because they might not have been so successful.*

FORSTER: We'll never know, but both leaders will never be forgotten for their leadership at the time.

Many of us in the USIS Philippine program went on over to Saigon, as you may recall, and to Bangkok because of our counter-insurgency experience. The PAO in Manila, James Meader was also sent into Southeast Asia if I recall correctly. I was one of the few, along with Russ Lynch, who was sent in another direction--to Japan.

*Q: I don't remember whether Meader went into Southeast Asia at that time. I might mention here that Meader and I were classmates together in the first Far Eastern course for military government at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville during World War II.*

FORSTER: Oh, is that right?

*Q: He was taken out of the program about the end of the first month in Stanford. He and I both went to Stanford for follow-on training (Japanese language and area study) after Charlottesville. He was put in one of the Philippine civil affairs teams that went in with MacArthur when he liberated the Philippines in October of 1944.*

FORSTER: He was a fine man. You know the school he started here in downtown Honolulu after his retirement, the Hawaii Pacific University, is going like gangbusters now, and the Library is named after him. I don't know whether you've seen it.

*Q: I haven't been in it.*

FORSTER: His legacy is very much here in Hawaii.

*Q: When was it that you went into language training at Yale?*

FORSTER: I was among the guinea pigs when they were using that old system, where they would give you just a quick area kind of study at FSI and then put you into a university. In my case, I was sent to Yale for a year of language study, but it had been combined with area and evaluation studies. My last assignment in the Philippines had been to evaluate our program. I was called in by Dr. Meader to head up an evaluation team to take a good hard look at what kind of success we had had with our activities and our output in countering the Huk insurgency

propaganda. Some of that study was picked up by Wilbur Schramm later in his book. I forget the title now. But we had a good team working on that project. Lou Gleeck came out from the Voice of America to help us on the evaluation procedures. Doak Barnett, the well-known author and Chinese specialist, was then USIS evaluation officer in Hong Kong. He came down to Manila, too. So we worked on this together. Stan Moss, then assigned as BPAO in Cebu, was a member of my team in USIS. We went around asking questions to try to get as many answers as we could. It was a fascinating three-months study. We analyzed the final results in Washington.

**EARL WILSON**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1950-1952)**

*Earl Wilson was born in 1917 and raised in Washington, DC. He attended the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and George Washington University. Mr. Wilson joined the IICA (USIS) in 1947 and spent his career in China, the Philippines, France, Thailand, Mexico, Hong Kong, Spain, Malaysia, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1988.*

*Q: This is now the second part of the interview. We have finished the commentary on your experiences in Shanghai. You indicated that you were getting ready to try and start a regional printing center in Manila and had this idea for a magazine which would be a regional magazine for the Far East. What we are going to do now is take up the part of this experience which involves the regional center of Manila. Earl, will you take it from here?*

WILSON: We are talking about May of 1950. I reported in to Manila. I was not technically on the staff of the USIS in Manila, headed by Jim Meader at the time. The embassy was in the old High Commissioner's home on Dewey Boulevard on Manila Bay. It had a number of Quonset huts. USIS was mainly in one or two of these Quonset huts. They put me in a desk in the darkest, furthest corner of one of these. I was by myself, waiting for the printing presses and my printer, Ken Sayre, to arrive. But I'd only been there a day when the telephone rang. I didn't know who the heck would want me, so I picked up the phone and it was the American ambassador. He said he wanted to see me. It was Myron Cowan. Cowan had come back from consultation in Washington and was going to speak to some group. Brad Connors said would I write a speech for him. It would be a good way to get to know the ambassador. I did. When I went to see the ambassador in Manila, he asked me to be his speech writer. I said, "I'm sorry, I can't do that. I wasn't sent out here to do that." So he got mad at me and wouldn't speak to me for several months. (Laughs)

The Hukbalahap insurgents were very active. They had attacked a hospital and killed several people close to Manila in this particular incident. The Huks were trying to identify themselves with the day called "Cry of Valintawak," a cry of freedom, and somehow, I was asked what I thought we should do. USIS had a little press in a garage, with one man operating it. They printed the usual USIS handouts on it. I thought we ought to get photographs from the hospital of

the victims, which we did. I made a poster, called it "The cry of Balintawak." We printed several thousand. The Philippines Veterans Association took them and posted them all over.

I said, "I'm going to call this place the Far East Regional Production Center, RPC, for short." That was the very first product of the RPC, this poster showing results of this terrorist raid on this hospital.

I had brought from Washington an authentic story about what the Chinese Communists did when they took over a village, first, what they promised, later, when they won, what they actually did. I decided to make a cartoon book out of it.

*Q: Was this a story about the Philippines?*

WILSON: No, about China.

*Q: So you were transferring, in effect, their actions in China, saying, "This is what you can expect in the Philippines."*

WILSON: Exactly. So I got an artist, we worked together, and turned out this cartoon book which was, I believe, the first ever done by the U.S. Government. It was called "When the Communists Came." We printed 2,000 copies on that little press in the garage. This time I got another call from the ambassador. When I went to see him, he had a copy of my cartoon book in his hand. He was very excited. He said, "This is the kind of thing we need to combat the Huks." He said, "I have shown your cartoon book to the Philippine foreign minister, Carlos Romulo, ~to the Papal Nuncio, and to the Minister of Defense." They all, he said, shared his enthusiasm. He told me to print more. So we started a new press run of 10,000 copies. Jose Alvarez, the printer, ultimately, with lots of training, became the chief printer of the RPC. He's in the United States as a citizen now, retired.

*Q: Do you know what he's doing? He's printing the only genuine Philippine newspaper in California.*

WILSON: No kidding.

*Q: He sent me, last year, four copies. I wrote a story for the newsletter, but Mary didn't use it. I wrote a story about his having been an editor for the RPC out there. I hope she's going to print it in the next edition, because I think it's a great story.*

WILSON: Jose was a wonderful guy, and as the RPC grew and grew and grew, there were times when different ones thought he didn't have the training. I insisted, and we got him back to the States and got him trained. He turned in a wonderful job. He's a good friend. I haven't seen him for a while.

Anyhow, those 10,000 copies rapidly disappeared. They had no attribution to USIS. That's the other thing. Most of this stuff I'm going to talk about had no U.S. Government attribution.

We placed some of these cartoon books for sale on commercial newsstands, others we just gave them away. The demand seemed insatiable, schools, clubs, civic organizations, Catholic Church, veterans' organizations, everybody clamored for copies. This little press was being overwhelmed. Our output was an add-on to USIS/Manila regular production.

In the midst of this--and this is where it gets interesting--I got a cable from Washington ordering me to stop producing this comic book until it had been approved by the Agency. Because up until that time, every publication had to be first approved in Washington. It also indicated that some back there were shocked that the Department of State, which we were still under, was engaged in a cartoon or comic book business. More than that, the Agency's press and publications section and other media divisions had been operating in a highly centralized approach where only they could originate material which the field would then disseminate. Here I was, breaking every one of their rules.

Well, I revolted. I sent a cable back, objecting. I said the cartoon book followed policy guidelines, that the ambassador was behind it. I said the demand was great, I should be permitted to continue printing. So the cables went zinging back and forth. The fire got hotter. Cowan, the ambassador, cabled, too, said this is what he wanted, what was needed. We won the battle.

It was a watershed, because from that point on, USIS folks in the field were given flexibility to develop independent local material within broad policy guidelines. Over the next two years, that cartoon book was published in almost every language and dialect in the Far East. That first year alone, we printed over a million copies. Somebody estimated that if they had been placed in a single stack, it would be 12 times the height of the Washington monument. Then we adapted to countries like Vietnam and Korea. The Agency eventually used the script to make an animated cartoon shown all over the world.

War broke out June 25, 1950, in Korea. The one thing Washington wanted to do was to communicate the idea to other nations that the members of the United Nations were behind the Republic of Korea, not just the U.S. alone. Using this same contract artist, I developed a cartoon poster showing 53 nations standing shoulder-to-shoulder in Korea to stop the invasion, which had a hammer and sickle. The garage press was too small for this large poster. I cabled Washington for \$50,000. The DCM said to me, "Do you know what you're doing?"

I said, "Yes." He couldn't believe it, but \$50,000 came right back. I contracted with one of the big Manila print shops, air mailed the poster in English to all the Far East posts, asking them to translate it, paste it up in their language, and mail it back, that we would print a local version for them, which we did.

*Q: Did you have the presses out there then?*

WILSON: No. This was done commercially. We printed thousands of copies, and the poster was displayed all over the Far East. That was the first real multi-country product of the new RPC. By the time I left two years later, we would have produced over 75 million publications.

There was an area on Manila Bay called Seafront Compound. The Navy had it previously, and the admiral in charge of the area had his quarters there. There were some other living quarters for officers. Then the Navy was transferred over to Subic. The embassy and some other agencies took over this place. So they gave me a big Quonset hut there for our presses, and they gave me for my residence the admiral's old quarters, two Quonset huts joined together. It was quite comfortable. They also gave me a mansion. A bomb had knocked a hole in the roof, later repaired when the Navy made an enlisted man's club out of it, spent lots of money renovating it. So here I had this beautiful building which had what was essentially a dance hall on the ground floor with a bar at one end and a platform stage at the other for a band. There was a balcony all around this big room where we had the offices. Here I had a lovely office with a nice veranda, where I put a lot of tropical plants, orchids, a parrot, and that kind of thing. All other buildings were battleship gray. Before they could stop me, I had our editorial offices painted Chinese red and gold. (Laughs)

*Q: This was in the days before any government agency that was about to give up property had to notify General Services Administration which would have to put out a wire saying, "Does anybody want this material or this facility?" It would take about eight months before they could transfer anything, and half the time they never did get it transferred. So you were just lucky to be there early.*

WILSON: The embassy administrative officer was Jim Clore. He tried to give us a hard time, but I jumped too fast for Jim. He became a good friend of mine later.

So anyhow, there we were, and the presses arrived. But this is a curious thing. The very first press we got was my old Webb leaflet press from Shanghai, where they had bundled up a lot of U.S. Government property and shipped it to Hong Kong.

*Q: The Chinese had?*

WILSON: No, our people. Somehow, God knows how, it got to Hong Kong. And Hong Kong shipped it over to me, so it was the first little press. Not only that, but Loren Reeder had been assigned to RPC and arrived before Ken Sayre. So here Loren was with his beloved press. He put it together. On that press we began officially printing our very first stuff.

Incidentally, years later, when I went back to Manila on business, I found that little press, which had been used for years, was no longer used, retired to one corner of that vast plant. I had an artist do a Distinguished Service Cross of cardboard. We hung it on the little press for a photograph they later ran in our Agency paper.

I ran an ad for artists. My God, about 200 applicants turned up. I carefully selected a staff. They all stayed with RPC until retirement. Many of them had very distinguished art careers on the side in Philippines.

Then Ken Sayre came. He was the production chief. I had to give him credit. He really knew his stuff. He put a drawing board across a couple of trestles and became designing the plant. It took

45 days from the time he took out his slide rule until we were in operation. He was later given an award for doing this.

John Henderson, my old roommate from Shanghai, turned up as the first RPC director. My title was Director of Operations. I was basically the editor. Loren was there as the photo technician. Then we had Dorothy Boyce, who eventually came out as magazine editor. She married some ambassador. And Ruth Traurig, layout artist.

*Q: She's still around here.*

WILSON: Yes. Later, Billy Mason came out, Mildred--Billy--Mason, as magazine editor, and Mona Bennett on layout.

Let me talk about this magazine. I started it, called it Free World. I put on the first cover a composite United Nations photo, faces of people of different races. We called ourselves the Free World Publishing Company, thinking no U.S. attribution would increase credibility. I started the idea of the core magazine, made a dummy in English, called it the "base" model, sent it to the posts. They could reject any story they felt unsuitable, add any they had, translate to their language, typeset, paste in, and return all to us for printing. I was delighted, because a lot of people had said this thing wouldn't work, but here we were, soon publishing the magazine in seven or eight languages and dialects.

That idea, incidentally, was not done commercially in those days, and now it's very much a commercial idea. I was reading recently somebody came up with the unique idea of dividing the United States into about eight regions for localized magazines.

We tried to mix the stories. We had anti-Communist material, of course, against China, particularly, and the North Korean invasion. We ran stories on American support for the building of democracy; U.N. agencies; our combined military strength; stories on our economic and military aid; stories in support of friendly foreign governments; and of course, our foreign policy, and Americana.

It was hard in the beginning to get material from the posts. The Philippines had sent troops to Korea, one of the few countries that actually had troops there. I could not get any photographs of them. I finally talked to a Philippine Army friend who was going there. He took little home Kodak, took some pictures which I was finally able to use. Remarkable. And the magazines, getting them shipped was, in the beginning, also a problem. Sometimes we'd get them on a military flight, but mostly we had to go commercial air or on freighters.

Brad asked me to visit Saigon in 1950, write him what I thought of the USIS program. I found they really didn't have any USIS program of the type they had in other countries. The USIS officer in charge, more of a cultural than an information type, was one of the few people to speak French. He was being used as an interpreter constantly. He later was transferred. I think he went to Paris. He was hardly up the gangway before his information officer, Gene Gregory, who spoke Vietnamese, was placing large orders for our RPC products.

The Communist Chinese had entered the war in Korea, and there was some fear that with the U.S. engaged there, they would also move into Vietnam, their old stamping ground. So the French were trying to spread the word against this. Gene had a lot of leaflets made he wanted printed to warn the populace up north to be on their guard. We gave his order top priority. In three weeks we turned out 20 million leaflets. If laid end to end, they would have reached across the U.S. He didn't have any way to distribute these. (Laughs) But he gave them to the French. They used low-flying aircraft to shower them at key spots along the Chinese border. That was certainly a new one.

We gained familiarity with the area and talked to different posts. I took a fast tour, went down the east coast of Borneo to Indonesia, where I managed to visit Bali one weekend. President Sukarno had, unfortunately, just ordered the maidens to cover up their bosoms, part of a nationalistic thing.

One thought came to my mind as I went around these various places. Colonialism was, of course, after World War II, out or going out. The new independent governments were faced with a need to make their scattered people see they belonged to one country, had one government, and give it their support. Of course, the Communists, with their propaganda, were seeking to undermine these new governments. The U.S. was giving aid to help nation building. Undoubtedly, much of this was effective, and communications should be playing a significant role.

So back in Manila, I drew on my Shanghai poster experience, and I came up with a new product I called the World Photo Review. It was a poster with a bright colored background and five or six photographs on different themes. Our report of the Republic of Korea was a constant in this at that time. It was produced weekly. Photos came from Washington and from the posts. I wrote the captions, cabled them to the nine countries served, they translated the captions, mailed them back, and we printed and mailed the stuff out. We were soon producing over a quarter-million of these posters each week in 13 languages and dialects. To give you an idea, for the Philippines we printed in Bicolano, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Ilongo, Ilocano, Tagalog, Visayan, Pampango, and English. When a new language was added, circulation would spurt. USIS Saigon covered all of Indochina. They decided to put out a Cambodian edition. Buddhist monks volunteered to put up 9,000 copies on temple walls throughout the country. That made up a new audience of millions.

Luck was with me. I didn't have to clear any of this stuff with anybody. Even my boss was too busy with other things. Old Ken would come to my office, say his presses were hungry, running out of stuff. I'd think up something. I had this stable of artists and writers. I could get a new pilot model out overnight, and often did. It would have been impossible in Washington or anywhere else.

There were several fortuitous circumstances. First of all, when I arrived in Manila, being a new boy, I was told to go give a speech at a luncheon given by leaders of Filipino women's clubs. I was seated at the head table with five or six men. I understood were editors. They were to give a talk of a few minutes and tell what they thought was happening or going to happen in the Philippines. I had just come out of Communist China, and I felt I'd talk about that. A man on my right, who was to give the main address, was big and handsome and impressive. I thought he was another editor, but when he spoke, he turned out to be the Secretary of Defense, Raymond



Magsaysay, soon to become president of the Philippines. He had those ladies eating out of his hands. He said he was going to be a peso-a-year man. So anyhow, he and I hit it off very well. I became friends with the guy that became president.

His head of propaganda was Jose Crisol. I also became friendly with him. Jim Meader, who was in charge of USIS Philippines, couldn't care less at that time about publications. He was an academic man. The political officer, Jim Bell, later to be ambassador to Malaysia, was an activist. He and I became good friends. He liked this stuff I was turning out. I could go get it cleared through the embassy by Jim, then over at Magsaysay's place by Jose Crisol. We got the Philippine veterans to disseminate this stuff.

Once that was done, I had a pilot copy I could send to the other posts. Many of them picked up on it for local adaptation. It worked like a charm.

Actually, later, the Agency ran an informal survey of the posts. They had gotten the idea we were stuffing publications down their throats. They didn't give me a copy of the survey. They were going to use results to cut us off at the knees. But it turned out the posts came back in very strong support of us. So we went on. I found out in the first year I had personally written or edited, I believe, 80% of all publications in the Far East.

*Q: These days when everybody's wondering about evidence of effectiveness, this is certainly one of the early examples of extensive evidence of effectiveness. I wish we had more of this today.*

WILSON: In those days, as perhaps today, propaganda was divided into three categories--black, handled by the CIA, no attribution to the U.S.; white, with attribution to the U.S.; gray propaganda somewhere in between the other two, but with no U.S. attribution. Almost all of our products from RPC fell into the gray area.

We operated on different levels. We had stuff for the masses, of course, pictures and so on; then we had more sophisticated stuff in the magazines and later in books. Our propaganda materials moved out in different countries by jeeps, trains, ox carts, dug-out canoes, backs of human carriers, out to what's been called the rice roots. We learned more about how difficult it is to deal in simplicities than complexities. For example, to explain to an illiterate farmer, why his son was fighting in faraway Korea for peace or collective security, when the Communists would be quick to tell him his son was there to die for American imperialism.

*Continuation of interview: October 17, 1988*

*Q: We are picking up this morning where we left off last week. Earl will continue his discussions with reference to the Regional Service Center.*

WILSON: After I left, the Agency changed the name of these centers from Regional Production Center to Regional Service Center. I want to give just a few pieces of background explanation, because we were absolutely breaking new ground. I had come out of Communist China. The Chinese Communists, inside China, to consolidate their victories, were engaged in a massive propaganda campaign, using every conceivable means of communication, propagandizing their

own people. We got samples of many of their magazines and pamphlets through our Hong Kong office.

In looking at them, I got an idea that we could use some of this material against them, because this stuff was not meant to be seen outside of China. With the help of Ken Sayre, I could take photographs from these magazines, and he would copy then, use a process to match the dots, and we could get excellent reproduction. I turned out some sample pieces of material. The first one was very hard hitting anti-Communist document entitled "Red China, Red With Blood." You will recall the Communists had the children of parents turning against them, had trials in a stadium, with thousands upon thousands of people present. The child would denounce his parents, and then the parent would be often executed. It was very tough stuff. Anyhow, that was one type of thing.

Another approach, because the Hukbalahap rebels were going strong in the Philippines. I produced a pamphlet called "What Would Communism Mean to You?" in which on one page it would show, in graphic terms, some democratic concept of liberty faced with its opposite under Communism. These would often be fairly simple, like perhaps under Communism, a bird in a cage, under freedom the bird flying away. It was intended for use by Philippine PSYOPS officers. An example was when Huks hit a village in northern Luzon and beheaded the mayor, while the troops pursued the insurgents, the PSYOPS officers would assemble villagers and use these pamphlets to explain. A million were produced in different dialects for the Philippines.

We produced something called the story of Dr. Leong. This was intended for the overseas Chinese. It showed a true story of a Chinese doctor who had been sent to work with the Communist troops in Korea. I thought humor might be a weapon, and I got a supply of baby portraits from a portrait studio in Hong Kong. I called it "Little Comrades," with humorous anti-Communist captions. They were popular. Then we got Vietnamese and Indonesian baby photos and did the same thing. Two years later, when I left Manila and was in Rome, and again in Vienna, where they had major political campaigns going with the Communists very much involved, I saw large anti-Communist posters of Italian babies or Austrian babies.

We thought religion might be a bulwark against Communism, and we worked with the Catholic Church in the Philippines. I did a poster called the "Rosary for Peace" that went up in all the churches. We did a very elaborate history of Buddhism, printed thousands of copies for a major Buddhist revival in Burma.

They were to hold elections in the Philippines. I got involved helping what was then a new organization called NAMFREL, National Movement for Free Elections, a non-partisan organization dedicated to getting the citizens registered. That organization has gone on to this very day, 1988, when it was quite active with the registration and elections in the Philippines that defeated Marcos.

I was working with several people on that, one of whom, come to think of it, was Jaime Ferrer. He was a senior minister under Cory Aquino, and he was assassinated about five months ago. My old Filipino secretary, who now lives in California and is an American citizen, wrote me

saying, "Do you remember when you used to work with Jaime, trying to develop democracy in the Philippines?"

*Q: Who did they suspect of the assassination?*

WILSON: It was those murder squads of Communists. We turned out a booklet for NAMFREL called "Let's Have Free Elections," and we printed half a million of those in a few weeks, then thousands of posters, postcards, car stickers, and leaflets. In that particular instance, the Huk campaign to disrupt the elections failed.

*Q: You say you were turning out these thousands of pamphlets and so forth. Was this a campaign which you were conducting directly out of the RSC, or were you going through USIS Manila?*

WILSON: I said earlier it was an interesting situation, because I was not attached to USIS Manila. The PAO, Jim Meader, was not involved or interested in these type operations. He was caught up in the educational cultural program. But the chief of the political section, Jim Bell, was gung-ho for this type of operation. I could show him a sample publication and basically, Jim would get it approved. Then I would the okay of the Philippine Government, their propaganda chief, Jose Crisol. They worked with the Philippine veterans' organization, a large organization for the diffusion of this stuff. So in a matter of days or weeks these things could be zipped through. Once I had one in English that had been approved, I could send it to the other posts, and more often than not, they would adapt it to their own uses.

In that way, I started an eight-page publication called "Young Citizens Life," intended to reach young people through the schools in Asia. It became quite a staple for some years.

Washington continued to put out pilot models, but they were rather distant from the scene. They would send out something like Herblock's anti-Communist cartoons, but the humor and references were lost, generally, out there. Or they might send out something like a history of Sino-Soviet relations which would be of interest to a limited number of people, but not to broad audiences.

I had been forming my own rough philosophy of what we were trying to do. Remember we were in the Cold War, and we were very, very much trying to defeat Communism. I felt that if I had to talk to a young officer, I would tell him we're not out here trying to make people like the United States. We're trying to make people see that U.S. actions are in harmony with their interests, and that it was in their interest to oppose Communism. That we, together, were working for a better world with more food, better health, higher income, and peace for the individual, for his government, his country, and that the Communists were trying to subvert this growing democratic revolution.

In my view, we weren't going to gain many converts by preaching about the American Revolution or about life in America. I figured the average Asian knew very little about either the U.S. or Russia, but they did know firsthand about disease, hunger, poverty, lack of civil rights, and so on. I was beginning to get this feeling that perhaps if we could begin increasing adherents, it might truly make a difference.

Our Harris offset presses had arrived, been installed, and our plant was really quite good. Ken Sayre had done a good job. Loren Reeder, my old colleague from Shanghai, hated seeing that little high-speed Webb press sitting idle in the corner. Loren didn't like this, and I didn't like it because I hated to see blank pages or unused capacity. We had lots of paper for this thing. So I thought of an idea which goes back a little bit, maybe, to Disney and his efforts in Latin America, for his cartoons during the war.

I went over to see the agricultural attache in our embassy. I said, "Look, if you could get across simple, technical information to the farmers in the Philippines on some idea for improvement, what would you tell them?" Well, this sort of took him back.

He said, "I'd tell them how to build a chicken house," because I had said it had to be something they could do on their own without money or help, as long as they had some technical advice.

I said, "Why?"

He said, "Their chickens run all over, get diseases, etc., and they could very easily pen them up and get better, healthier chickens, better eggs and so on."

I said, "All right." So I tried to figure out how to do something along those lines so an illiterate could understand it. I came up with a cartoon book, eight pages, a series called "Botyok," which means "Fatso." We created this Fatso farmer character with an intelligent wife and children. There was an agricultural agent to do the explaining. After some amusing things to get the interest of the reader, he would build a chicken house. On the back page we had, from U.S. Department of Agriculture materials or somewhere, an actual design, a very simple design of a chicken house built of bamboo. That thing caught on, the Philippine Government liked it, it went all over the place, and then it began to be picked up in other countries.

I had to explain, because another idea in my simple mind was a chicken was a chicken, wherever you found him. It was just the people and the culture that changed. So if the idea was right, then all our USIS office had to do in Thailand, for example, after checking with the proper authorities, would be have a local artist draw it with Thai costumes and tools. Well, that's what happened. So in Thailand, in Indonesia, and in Vietnam, and even in British Malaya, they picked this thing up.

My God, it was just going like crazy, when I got a letter from Charlie Arnot, Director of Press and Publications in Washington, very explicitly saying what in the hell did I think I was doing, the Agency wasn't in this business, and I was to stop it at once. So unhappily, I stopped it.

The first PAO conference was held at the end of 1950 in Baguio. I had this comic book I told you about earlier, "When the Communists Came." Our plant was based on one shift that was capable with the equipment we had of turning out 650,000 eight-and-a-half-by-eleven inch press impressions daily. Each post could draw upon those numbers allotted to them.

I used the back of an envelope up there in Baguio, and got hold of these PAOs quietly by themselves. I asked them a simple question. I said, "Look, I know you're inhibited by your

allotment of press impressions, but I would like to know that if you didn't have such inhibitions, what do you think you could really use?" After I got these numbers, I put them down and they were staggering.

So what to do? There was a guy at the conference from what was then called ECA, the AID program. His name was Leo Hockstedder. He was a very colorful, flamboyant character. And ECA had a lot of money compared to us. He was over in Saigon, but he was at our conference. I had lunch with him, and I said, "You know, Leo, you need a lot of printing, we've got the plant, all we have to do is enlarge it and we could handle a lot of your printing." He got up, went to the telephone. He came back and told me he had called Washington. To my astonishment, he said ECA had agreed to double our plant. So that's what happened. We did a lot of printing for them. Then eventually, ECA set up its own plant similar to ours in Manila. Later they turned it over to the Philippine Government, to turn out AID type materials.

Later, in 1972, I went to Manila when I was USIS Advisor to CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief Pacific]. I went there for a SEATO conference on counterinsurgency. The Philippine Government provided high-level briefings. The guy in charge for the Philippine Government was Jose Crisol, Deputy Minister of Defense, my old cohort when he was working as chief of their counterinsurgency propaganda. He kept calling me the "Father of the RPC" to these delegates from Great Britain, Malaysia, Thailand and so on. It got to be a little embarrassing.

But the last thing on that score was in 1982. Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Philippines, came to Washington, his second visit in 17 years. Before coming--he had an English language weekly newspaper called the Philippine Monitor--he had 50,000 copies printed and flown into the U.S. on the government-owned Philippine Airlines, where they were distributed to key target people coast to coast among Philippine Americans to help Marcos gain American support for his one-man rule. (Laughs)

**MILTON LEAVITT**  
**Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Legaspi (1951-1953)**

*Milton Leavitt was born and raised in Worcester, Mass. where he left to join the U.S. Air Force in 1940, being captured by the Japanese in the Philippines and led on the Bataan Death March. After the war, Mr. Leavitt received his Master's Degree from Boston College and joined the IIE (USIA) in 1951. From there he served in the Philippines, Germany, India, Colombia, Peru and Thailand. He also served in various capacities in Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1989.*

*Q: Was it Legaspi, did you say?*

LEAVITT: Legaspi, Philippines, which was in the southern Luzon province. This was 1951. Mount Mayon at Legaspi is the only tourist area of the Archipelago. The Philippines doesn't have many tourist attractions but Mount Mayon is one of them, an active volcano.

I had just gotten married, and we spent our honeymoon in Legaspi. I was assigned there as a Public Affairs Officer. I believe we were the only two Americans in the town at the time, with the exception of a missionary family in the area. I worked there for a little over two years building up a branch post. You probably know that, at that time, the branch posts were rather new to the islands. We established eight branches throughout the Philippines, three in Luzon and the rest on the other islands, Cebu and Davao among them.

The highlight of the Philippines was the fact of the Hukbalahap (more familiarly referred to as "The Huks") Revolt when that communist-led organization tried to overthrow the Filipino Government under President Quirino at the time. The Defense Minister was Magsaysay who worked very closely with us. During my stay in Legaspi, I had the cooperation of the Philippine Constabulary and military in showing films throughout my area. I was very fortunate in that some of the leaders of the Huk Revolt had been in prison camp with me, and they were careful not to do me or my wife any harm during the time I was there.

*Q: You mean some of the Huks had been with you in the prison camp?*

LEAVITT: That's right. I didn't know that until they came and told some of my people who were out with mobile film units, "We know Mr. Leavitt, please advise him that we wish him no harm, and we'll do all we can to protect him." However, they did warn me that there were certain things that I wasn't allowed to do in the barrios, certain posts that they had there, and so forth.

*Q: Let me ask you now, did the fact that there were certain things that they told you you couldn't do unless you wanted to get into trouble, did they impair your program efforts to any great extent?*

LEAVITT: No, not in the least. As a matter of fact, strangely enough, they were very cooperative with some of the film programs that we had. Most of the films that we had at that time, if you remember, were mostly how-to-do-it films, how to build an outhouse, how to build a chicken coop, and so forth. And they were very desirous of receiving those films. It's interesting that some even showed the films themselves.

*Q: This makes me wonder, it's rather interesting that you were probably out there supposedly helping the Philippine Government, not only in this mundane sort of thing, but in part with anti-communist propaganda too, and yet you were doing things that the Huks themselves wanted to have done. Did the Agency back home ever realize that you were, in effect, showing some of these films and doing work and doing things that the Huks themselves found beneficial to them?*

LEAVITT: Right, these were useful films, and I reported all my activities to Harry Hudson, Jim Meader and Ralph Busick at the time. Whatever happened to our reports in Washington I don't know. But this lasted through the time I was Public Affairs Officer in Legaspi.

A lot of our program, of course, was the library program in Legaspi. We had two large mobile units. One was a German truck, an Opel Blitz, I remember. And the other was a French unit, a Delahaye. And there were hand-carried generators which went with our crews into the barrios throughout the area. This lasted the whole time we were there until the last year I was there.

Unfortunately a typhoon, what in the U.S. we call a hurricane, hit the place. It wiped out our Center and the library and everything in the building and it took several months before we were back in operation again. For months we dried library books, page by page, on the roof of the Center. By that time, I was ready for transfer, at which time I was transferred and went back to Washington.

*Q: I want to ask you also, was the fact that you were known to and recognized by many of these Huks, at least the lower-level leaders, bother the Philippine Constabulary and did the Magsaysay forces realize that this was the case? Or was that kept from them?*

LEAVITT: No, it wasn't. It was never kept from them because Magsaysay used to come down into the Bicol (it's the peninsula where Legaspi is located) from time to time, and, of course, he was privileged to all the information I had. We worked very closely together with the army and the constabulary. They never showed any films other than how-to-do-it films, how to build an outhouse or how to dig irrigation ditches, and things like that. The leader of the revolt, Luis Taruc, never came down into that area. He was always up in the central highlands somewhere, so I never met him.

*Q: Did the Philippine Army and Constabulary, at any time that you were there, make attacks on the groups that incorporated some of these people that you had known when you were in the prison camps?*

LEAVITT: No, our crews were left alone to freely do what I wanted them to do which was to show the films in the various barrios and to distribute pamphlets produced by USIS. We had no trouble in distributing the printed material that came out of Manila.

Of course, as I say, the biggest part of our program was the library program in Legaspi. We had very few speakers come into the area at the time. So we didn't have to worry too much about walking or escorting them throughout the area.

**ROBERT L. NICHOLS**  
**Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Davao (1951-1954)**

*Robert L. Nichols was born in Wisconsin on August 4, 1924. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II in China and Asia. He received a bachelor's degree from Tufts University and a master's degree from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. His Foreign Service career included positions in The Philippines, The*

*Netherlands, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore. This interview was conducted by Robert Amerson on August 30, 1988.*

NICHOLS: Correct. What I knew about it was what I had learned from Katherine Porter that day in the office, and from my discussion with Bob McKinnon, who had served in Cebu as Branch PAO. He was an FSO waiting to be integrated into the State Department at the time.

*Q: So your first post then was a one-man post in the Philippines.*

NICHOLS: Yes. The State Department took terrible chances. They sent us out there with very little training. I had about six weeks in Washington in the summer of 1951. Then my wife and my two children and I were sent out to the Philippines. I spent a couple of months in Manila before I was sent for a brief one-week stay in Davao with Cliff Forster. I think Cliff had to put his stamp of approval on me. I'm not sure, but I believe that's how the final decision was made to send me there.

*Q: You were there, then, for the first several years?*

NICHOLS: I was there for about two and a half years, until the end of '53.

*Q: What are some of the experiences you recall from those first exposures? What problems did you face?*

NICHOLS: I remember very clearly one thing, and when I think about it now and I shudder a bit. It was a one-man post, really an outpost, because there were about three American businessmen in town. One ran the CALTEX plant there, and a couple of them were in the hemp business. There was a Chinese consul from the Nationalist Government, and I was the only other so-called diplomatic representative. But, of course, the Filipinos were much more impressed with an American than they were with a Chinese. Even though this was a rather senior Chinese career diplomat who had been in the Chinese service for 20 years, and here this brand-new, wet-behind-the-ears 26-year-old arrives, and I was made out to be much more important. He rode around in a Cadillac; I rode around in a jeep. But when there was any sort of parade, the jeep was always in front of the Cadillac. (Laughs) But that isn't what embarrassed me so much.

I was interviewed when I first got there by the newspapers, and this was all sort of an exhilarating and a somewhat overwhelming experience for somebody of my age and experience. So the headline--I still have it in the scrapbook, and I just shudder--it says, "Nichols Vows Make Democracy Grow Stronger." Well, I always remember this because I think it depicts the sort of arrogance that we Americans have.

*Q: Or hopefulness, perhaps.*

NICHOLS: Hopefulness and a certain amount of arrogance, that we know how to do this, and we can go out and do this. I could go into this new environment, the Philippines, that I was just learning about, despite having served there during the war, and I could make a vow like that!



Then I think about where the Philippines is today and what we have done there and haven't done there, and how "successful" we've been, it's a little . . .

*Q: This was the time of Magsaysay.*

NICHOLS: Before Magsaysay. I was there when Magsaysay was elected, and that was another experience that I often think about. It has to do with what I was saying about American "arrogance." This was during the period of Hukbalahaps. This was the period when the Philippines were under the threat of being taken over by the Communists--the early 1950's. The USIS information program there at the time was largely a negative anti-Communist program. The exception was the libraries, because there was very little going on in exchanges. Most programs were mass media, the press, the publications type of program, and we were putting out comic books and leaflets, anti-Communist leaflets. Again I look back and shudder, because I've seen these same things put out in China and other places where they depict the U.S. in a negative way. We were doing the same things in the Philippines in 1951-52.

Mindanao happened to be a place where there was less of a Huk (Hukbalahap) threat in the Philippines. Today it's quite a different story, but then it was the one area of the Philippines where the threat of the Huks taking over was minimal. I liked the positive programs, and I kept saying, "Let's do some more with the positive programs." So we got involved in helping what was then called ECA, the AID type of programs of today, working with them information-wise on positive things in Mindanao. And that helped a lot.

*Q: The early 1950's were also the time of Senator McCarthy. Did you have some fallout from that?*

NICHOLS: Yes, at the latter part of my stay in the Philippines, during the Cohn-Schine visits to the European USIS libraries. They didn't visit the Philippines, fortunately, but there was fall-out. We began to get orders to take certain books off the shelves. I refused to take Howard Fast's books off the shelves in Davao. There were also some articles in certain magazines and we were told to remove those magazines. Again it was something that I just refused to do. I was in a one-man post, and nobody really ever checked up on me. But it had an effect on me, very definitely.

This was also a period--you asked me about Magsaysay. Well, he ran for president of the Philippines in 1953, and if ever the United States interfered in a foreign election, it was that year. It's interesting because there was an organization called NAMFREL, National Movement for Free Elections. An organization of the same name was involved in electing Mrs. Aquino here a couple of years ago. But in 1953 we were providing the financial support for NAMFREL, the leaflets were printed at the RPC (our press and printing center) in Manila. I remember being confronted by the mayor of Davao, saying, "The Americans are supporting Magsaysay. They're participating, interfering in the elections."

I said, "No, we are just supporting NAMFREL, the National Movement for Free Elections. We support free elections." Well, of course, supporting free elections in the Philippines was support to Magsaysay.

This was also the period when the Philippines became the training grounds for the whole Vietnam experience. Colonel Ed Lansdale, who later became well known in Vietnam for directing the psy-war campaign, was running Magsaysay's behind-the-scenes campaign in the Philippines. So it was a period which predated all of this counterinsurgency type of win-the-hearts-and-minds-of-the-people sort of thing.

*Q: Also, this period then launched the career of one Robert Nichols with an emphasis always in your career in the Far East, is that right?*

NICHOLS: Not always.

*Q: Not always, but with an emphasis, in any case. Just to project ahead, you went from there to Italy, and then to Amsterdam, back to Washington, and then Hong Kong and further experiences in the Far East.*

NICHOLS: Yes.

*Q: Ending, again in the Far East, your last assignment, I think, overseas was PAO Taipei?*

NICHOLS: No, Singapore. My last overseas assignment, yes.

*Q: And then Washington. Looking back again to those early years of your time, you went from the Philippines then to Milan, Italy.*

NICHOLS: That's correct. That was sort of a result of an inspection. I remember the inspector coming through the Philippines and recommending that "Mrs. Nichols ought to be shown some of the better side of Foreign Service life" after serving in a one-man post in the Philippines. So when I got back to Washington, there was an effort to transfer us to a European post. That's how I eventually ended up in Milan.

*Q: In the meantime, a parenthetical question. Your employer had become the independent agency USIA.*

NICHOLS: Yes, after I left the Philippines in 1954, early '54, as I remember, or '53. Was it the end of '53? I can't remember.

**FRANK N. BURNET**  
**Rotation Officer**  
**Manila (1951-1954)**

*Frank N. Burnet was born in New York in 1921. He joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in the Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Washington, DC. Mr. Burnet was interviewed in 1990 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: Your first posting was to Manila. You went there in '51 until '54.*

BURNET: March of '51 until February '54.

*Q: What were you doing?*

BURNET: Well, this was a routine kind of basic training assignment for me. It started out in the consular section. And what could be more basic, working on citizenship matters.

*Q: Particularly in the Philippines, and particularly in those days when we were sort of cleaning up.*

BURNET: It was still physically kind of beat up and was to remain so for some time. And of course we had all of the legacies of an American presence in the Philippines since the Spanish-American War, 1898-99. And not only did you have American soldiery who had been there, but you had the great influx into the Philippines at the turn of the century of American teachers of English. They were recruited largely from the Midwest. Many of those people who came, particularly the men, stayed there, married (and some did not), and raised families, which produced all kinds of complicated citizenship problems. It was not easy, but applying our citizenship laws was a challenge for a new FSO. I enjoyed it.

*Q: So your contact was a positive one as far as how you felt.*

BURNET: Very positive, I think, and I enjoyed making friends with a good many Filipinos.

*Q: Did you have any contact at all with Ambassador Spruance?*

BURNET: Yes, yes I did. He was one of my first Ambassadors.

*Q: He was an Admiral, of course, during World War II, a famous one.*

BURNET: That's right.

*Q: He was the victor of Midway, wasn't he?*

BURNET: Yes. He was a joy to work for. We had a very hard-charging Ambassador before him.

*Q: Who was that?*

BURNET: I can't think of him at the moment. Spruance was really a wonderful guy to work for. I will never forget...

*Q: Myron Cowen.*

BURNET: Cowen, yes; he was a political appointee. Anyway, as a junior officer (and I couldn't have been more junior) I didn't see much of him; he was in another world completely.

But Spruance was totally different. Here was someone who had already made his career and he was still working for the US, trying to be helpful as an Ambassador to the Philippines.

Later on, when I got out of the consular section and was in the political section for a year, I did have some direct contacts with him.

I remember when I had to go down to his office with a piece of paper or something, I would go down there and inform the secretary that I had to see him on such and such, and she would let him know that Frank Burnet was here to see him. And I could see through a little window that was in his office, he said, "Oh yes." He nodded his head. (Very distinguished looking man. Not very tall, and rather slight. But very thoughtful and soft-spoken.) And as I looked I would catch sight of him getting up from his desk, going over, *putting on his jacket* to receive me.

So I went into his office. He didn't sit down. He would greet me and say: What's on your mind? or What is it? And then I would start to tell him what the problem was. And we *walked back and forth*, as if he were on the bridge of his ship. And he'd say, "Yes, yes, yes. I think we should do that. Yes, yes." Pretty soon the interview was over. He went back to his desk, and I went out the door. And I guess he took his coat off!

So he made a very strong impression on me. I enjoyed that brief association. He and Mrs. Spruance were very kind to my wife, Mary, and me (then my fiancée) as they gave us a reception at the Residence in honor of our forthcoming marriage (in Manila in February 1953).

*Q: What was your impression of the Philippines? And not only just your impression, but the junior officers. How did you look upon this? It was newly independent, yet America had tremendous influence. Did you see this as a democracy that was going to go anywhere? Did you think, "Oh my God."?*

BURNET: It was a great mix of feelings. You couldn't help but admire the people. But on the other hand (coming out of the United States this was the first time that I'd been in Asia), you couldn't help feeling how disorganized it was and how irrational things seemed. I think that the other junior officers too often stressed the latter.

Of course you had to make allowances. There had been a very bitter war. Bitter for the Philippines, bitter for Manila, which was still badly beaten up. But yet they were so friendly, so outgoing that you couldn't help feeling that this country with our help really had a future.

It was a rich country which seemed to me to be highly endowed in raw materials and so on. There should be a place for it. But there were negatives. There were too many guns around and they were used too often to settle scores. There was also the Hukbalahap problem and incipient revolution in the bush with overtures of class conflict and anti-Americanism.

*Q: These were the guerrillas.*

BURNET: These were the so-called Leftist, Marxist guerrillas of that era. I think they were pretty much the home-grown variety, but it was something you had to think about. What were the causes? I began to think that maybe we were not as anti-colonial as we thought we were.

I remember the week before I arrived, two Americans who had started a dairy farm, were shot and killed just about 20 or 30 miles outside of Manila near the road to Clark Field. And this would happen from time to time, so you had to be careful about moving around. Not so much in the daytime, but certainly at night outside the city of Manila. For instance, you were advised not to travel by road from Manila to Clark Field (about 40 miles) in the afternoon and evening hours.

So it was a mix of feelings. But, I enjoyed it. I was of course single for most of those days, and there was a large group of single Americans working in the embassy, and we all had a pretty good time. Including the young lady who was to become my wife, Mary McDevitt.

**EILEEN R. DONOVAN**  
**Political Section Chief, Acting Principal Officer**  
**Manila (1952-1954)**

*Ambassador Eileen R. Donovan taught high school history in Boston when World War II began. After the Pearl Harbor incident, Donovan joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps. She was sent to Officer Candidate School in Des Moines, and came out as a 2nd Lieutenant. After teaching Japanese women for a period, she took the Foreign Service exam and was sent back to Tokyo to begin her career that would culminate with an Ambassador appointment. She has served in Manila, Barbados, and Japan. The interview was conducted by Arthur L. Lowrie on April 7, 1989.*

*Q: Is this right, that you went there in January of '52, would that be correct?*

DONOVAN: Yes, that's correct.

*Q: That would be correct. And you went as political officer?*

DONOVAN: That's right.

*Q: Did you realize how rare that was, for a woman to be a political officer?*

DONOVAN: No. I didn't realize how rare it was, but my boss when I got there did. And he said, "Can you type?"

*Q: Oh, no!*

DONOVAN: I said, "I've never learned to type." Which was true. I always started but I never finished. He said, "I tell you we need a typist here much more than we need another political officer." However that too was overcome.

*Q: Did you have to learn to type?*

DONOVAN: No, I wouldn't touch a typewriter.

*Q: Good for you.*

DONOVAN: As a matter of fact, I did, but I went...

*Q: You know he never would have said that if you had been a man.*

DONOVAN: No, he wouldn't have. He was a good guy though.

*Q: Undoubtedly. It was just the attitude. It was a given.*

DONOVAN: I used to sneak in early with a book my mother had sent me on how to teach yourself to type. But I never got beyond...

*Q: You know it makes one wonder if you had been able to type, if your career might have been totally different.*

DONOVAN: It might have been.

*Q: You might have started out as a typist and remained a typist. (Laughter) Isn't that awful. I mean that's terrible.*

DONOVAN: And especially when... what happened? He was transferred and there was another man who was the consul general who was made chief of the political section, but that was 1953 then, beginning, and they had that awful thing called the RIF, reduction in force. And poor Merrell Benninghoff was out, too.

*Q: He was RIFed. That was the consul general?*

DONOVAN: So I became acting chief of the political section, which I thoroughly enjoyed because it was the most exciting period in Philippine history. It was very much like it is now. They had a man named Quirino who was a very corrupt president...

*Q: Could you spell that for me?*

DONOVAN: Q-U-I-R-I-N-O. There was a young man from the barrio named Ramon Magsaysay who was a candidate. He was extremely popular everywhere. This is off the record now. I... know what they really thought about Magsaysay.

*Q: This was after the election?*

DONOVAN: No, before the election. I used to go to all the conventions and all that stuff.

*Q: You were handling the whole section alone?*

DONOVAN: No. There was man there, two of us. Nobody ever knew what the Moros thought, the people down in Jolo. So I'd become quite good friends with a Filipino senator who came from that area. He said, "I'm going to fly down to dedicate a Red Cross something or other. You can fly down with me and fly back and see the place." Fly down to Zamboanga and then go off across the water, off the south China Sea. I wanted to go to Zamboanga anyway, on my own, so I flew down. But I thought he could take me over the Jolo because it was his constituency near the Moros. Most of them didn't speak English. When I got to Zamboanga, after a day or two there doing various things, I got a message from him that he had canceled his trip. I thought, "What do I do know, go back to Manila with my tail between my legs?" So I went around and I found a little commercial boat, [that] went over to Jolo every other night. It's an all night trip. Mostly with commercial travelers, as we call them, and chickens and hens and things like that. I booked myself a passage on this boat.

*Q: Weren't you frightened?*

DONOVAN: No, I wasn't smart enough to be frightened. I was a little when I inquired around, from whom I don't remember, from some of the steamship booking places and there were Filipinos and Captain Jack something and they said he was the most reliable. He had a cabin on boat. He said, "I want to give you my cabin." There was a shrine there with a vigil light burning in front of it. I thought, "He's probably reliable, on the other hand, I go and lock myself into this cabin on this boat, anything could happen, because I was still fairly young. I thanked him very much and told him that I loved the fresh air and that I would sleep on the deck with the other commercial travelers, which I did. I didn't sleep, but at four o'clock in the morning when I got there and a rooster started to crow, at least I wasn't locking myself into a dim, dark cabin that belonged to the captain. That was smart.

*Q: Probably very smart.*

DONOVAN: But the rest of the whole trip was probably not smart. So then I went to this funny little so-called hotel. I was carrying a duffel bag, I think. Then I decided to go and see the man I that I would have gone to see had the senator been with me., and I found him. We had a nice interview. He liked Magsaysay and so did all the people. Then I walked through the Moro villages which is probably not quite so bright a thing to do all alone. However, they all smiled and yelled, "Hello, Joe," at me. That was all the English they knew.

*Q: "Hello, Joe," how sweet.*

DONOVAN: G.I. Joe.

*Q: The Moros are a tribe?*

DONOVAN: Yes. They're the people that live in southern Philippines.

*Q: That is where we left off before luncheon, talking about the Moros. You say at this point you had been put in charge of the office, and I see by your record that you had also been promoted to a four. Now, you were not troubled at all by the shaking up of the Foreign Service at that time, where so many people who were fours slid back and became fives? That is when they changed the Foreign Service from six categories to eight categories of officers. Do you remember that?*

DONOVAN: No.

*Q: You didn't get involved in any of that? Good. Where did you live in Manila? What sort of housing did you have there?*

DONOVAN: I had a small apartment in a building called Dewey Arms which was on a boulevard there. They didn't have any space when I first came. I lived in the Bayview Hotel or something like that. Then there was a consular officer there who was living in a tin hut in one of the compounds further out. So they said if we would share the apartment, we could have it.

*Q: The State Department is the one who set this up?*

DONOVAN: Yes, the administrative officer at the embassy there. So I said, "I don't really want to share an apartment," but I didn't see much future.

*Q: Housing was so primitive.*

DONOVAN: We had lunch one day and we sort of walked around each other cautiously and asked a few questions and then decided we could take a chance with each other. So we did. It was Marybelle Eversol, a vice consul there. It was adequate. There wasn't much furniture, and it was very beat up. I had some made, this stuff, that's Philippine mahogany.

*Q: Is it? It's lovely.*

DONOVAN: They call it yellow mahogany. It's been recovered since but the basic...

*Q: And you had these made there?*

DONOVAN: Yes.

*Q: It's certainly stood up beautifully.*

DONOVAN: And these tables and that table there.

*Q: It's a heavy wood, isn't it?*

DONOVAN: Yes.



*Q: Very nice. I suppose you did the usual entertaining?*

DONOVAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: Of local people as well as your colleagues.*

DONOVAN: Yes.

*Q: Was there a large diplomatic colony there at that time?*

DONOVAN: I remember the Chinese. They were out there. The Taiwan Chinese. I can remember their parties on 10-10 day and their fireworks and the British were there and the French. I don't remember. Frankly, I've not focused on that for long.

*Q: But most of your time I suppose was spent with the Philippine people because that was...*

DONOVAN: I got to know lots of them. I got to know Senator Clarrow Riktal, who was one of the opposition leaders who had been accused of collaborating with the Japanese. I don't believe he ever did. I believe what he did was just for the good of the Filipino people, but I was in the minority. I got to know a lot of them. When I left Manila I had to write my efficiency report. There was an advisor in the embassy who had lived in the Philippines for 37 years. So he wrote a very nice statement which was incorporated in the papers that were used as a nomination for the federal women's award in 1969. I managed to get a hold of the nomination papers after it was all over. I have it in there. And he said that I, more than anyone else that he'd ever known in the embassy, I had the ability to--I forget his exact words--to size up local interests and our national interests and combine them without anybody getting mad at me.

*Q: That's quite a compliment, I should say.*

DONOVAN: If you want that thing, it might be very useful for you.

*Q: Yes, it would be.*

DONOVAN: Especially the end of it where it summarizes pretty well what we've been talking about. Then there's a very fine statement that was written to the press by a black Barbados senator, which is used at the end. I sent that to the young man in EUR who was writing this thing. It was changed over then to ARA, the responsibility for it, so he never got it sent in that year. But he had it written down. This is probably one of the nicest things that was ever said about me.

**JAMES J. HALSEMA**  
**Information Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1952-1954)**

*James J. Halsema was born in Ohio in 1919, but spent his childhood in the Philippines. He entered into the USIE, a predecessor to USIA, in 1949. His career included posts in Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, and Chile. Mr. Halsema was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1989.*

HALSEMA: Then in the summer of '52, I was assigned to Manila. In '51 when we were there for the PAO conference, the Hukbalahaps were regarded as being a real threat to the government. By the time we got there in '52, the menace had greatly reduced because Magsaysay had become the Secretary of National Defense.

The job in Manila--I was information officer, Ralph Busick was the PAO, and Harry Hudson was his deputy. Ralph, of course, was an old Philippine hand, and Harry was a China hand. I think a lot of the China hands suffered from the problem of thinking that the rest of Asia was like China and, of course, it isn't.

The operation had been built up greatly under this Campaign of Truth, and we had branch PAOs all over the place. From the extreme northeast end of Luzon, down to the extreme southeast of Mindanao, there were USIS posts, all manned by eager young men of varying capabilities. I felt that they were a great bunch to live out in some of these situations they were in, but most of them didn't know beans about the Philippines.

*Q: One of them was Bernie Lavin, whose interview I've just gotten through editing. He was down on one of those branch posts, and I've forgotten which one it is.*

HALSEMA: We were heavily involved in the U.S. Embassy's support for a free election, which was our way of supporting Magsaysay. That's pretty well spelled out in the Lansdale biography, which I think is well worth reading from what I've seen. I've learned a lot of things about Ed Lansdale from that that I never knew before. But, of course, I had met Ed, as I said, in Manila.

By the time we got there in '52, Ed was already starting work in Vietnam. I remember one time he came into my office, he'd just come back from Saigon, and he said, "The trouble is, I can't get Diem to take off his necktie," and it gave me an idea that Ed got along fine with Filipinos, but he didn't understand the Vietnamese.

*Q: You mean, he couldn't get the Vietnamese to take off their neckties.*

HALSEMA: Yes. And I don't think he could have gotten Diem--Diem was a Mandarin. Ed was very effective working with Filipinos. The Filipinos and Ed just clicked. They really got along beautifully, but the Vietnamese were a different kettle of fish. Ed knew that he didn't know anything about Vietnam, and in the book it points out that the only person in the embassy in Saigon that would talk to Ed was George Hellyer, and that George had been his real right hand. He was the one who was Ed's interpreter when he first talked to Diem.

I'm sorry you didn't get an interview with George before he went because there were some fascinating things about their psy-war operation--getting the people from North Vietnam to move

south--that he was involved in at that point. I knew Ed quite well, and I knew his Philippine contacts quite well.

One of the things that I stumbled on was the fact that Magsaysay was being groomed to become a presidential candidate. I learned this from Lorenzo Tañada, whom I had met when he was the prosecutor in the war crimes trials. Lorenzo Tañada had been a prosecutor at the trials of Filipinos who had been collaborators with the Japanese, and Tañada told me all of the tactics that were going to be used for getting Magsaysay elected. I reported this to the embassy, and it was received in utter silence. What I didn't realize was that the embassy was involved in this and that Bill Lacy, who was the DCM, was intimately connected with Ed Lansdale and the support for Magsaysay. Of course, what's not understood by most people, including Filipinos, was that our role was not a direct one of "you vote for Magsaysay," but the indirect one was "have a fair election because it's so important." And of course if you had a fair election we were quite sure that Magsaysay would win. We did a lot of work to support that with media, but our activity was largely in terms of the importance of good government and the importance of free elections.

*Q: Let me ask you, were you doing this strictly on your own, in the sense of your own as USIS, or were you in collaboration with the embassy in the process of doing this?*

HALSEMA: No. This was embassy policy, to support free elections.

*Q: Then you were not necessarily coordinating your effort directly with the embassy?*

HALSEMA: Yes, we were through the PAO. I was so junior there that I was never involved in any of the senior staff meetings, so I don't know. But let's say what we were doing was certainly with the knowledge and approval and endorsement of the embassy.

The big problem then, as I guess it's been over the years, is the problem of audience. For what audience were we designing this material? Some were still under the illusion that we could go for a mass audience, so our materials were put out on that basis and with all our outlets we certainly got a lot of paper around the Philippines. How effective it was, I wasn't sure, but Harry was certainly a great supporter of "give them everything we've got." I wasn't so sure.

Those were the days when we had mobile units going around through all the barrios. And as information officer, of course, I was in charge of the media operation. I began to suspect that maybe some of our figures were inflated. So one of the things I did was get into some operations research on my own. I had a wonderful Filipino secretary who really helped me a great deal, and she even did some public opinion surveys.

She lived outside of Manila in a small town that I thought was much more representative of national opinion than Manila was. She would do some surveys for me on what people thought about various issues. One of the things that I came across were the figures on the number of people who attended some of these outdoor movies that were shown by our mobile units and just calculated--Alice is the mathematician in our family--but how many people could stand in an area where they could both hear and see the movie. Remember, those things were shown on relatively small screens, and they had a couple of small speakers out there in front. Well, I

concluded that even if people stood on each other's shoulders, there wouldn't have been enough that could get in that range to have come up remotely to the number that we were talking about.

This made Harry very unhappy when I said that I didn't think the figures were accurate. I even looked at the census statistics on the populations of the villages included and I came to the conclusion that even if the people from the surrounding barrios had come too, they couldn't have had that number of people.

So, I think there was a certain amount of self-delusion in our reporting. On the one hand, there were many successes that we had which we could never really assess because we weren't around long enough to see the ultimate effects. Conversely, that there was a lot of figures claimed for our media operation which you'd have to look on with some suspicion.

*Q: You were using a lot of, I presume, pamphlets and posters and that sort of thing, and that, I would presume, was also put out by the RSC, wasn't it?*

HALSEMA: Yes. It was right in town. Manila has always had a disproportionate call on the resources of the establishment.

But I think the question of audience, at that point, I began to think about this in terms of-- obviously, people like Arthur Goodfriend, who was one of the great proponents of the mass audience...

*Q: He later became somewhat of a critic thereof.*

HALSEMA: Yes. But I pondered this a lot as information officer in terms of effectiveness, and I came to the conclusion that we really, by the very nature of operations, were not essentially a mass audience kind of an organization, that really our targets should be people who were actual, or potential influences on their own society. That we couldn't hope to reach the masses. Not only because of the physical problems involved of distribution, but also because we needed to have what we had to say interpreted by people who knew their own people, and that we couldn't hope to do it successfully ourselves.

*Q: Another factor that I wanted to ask in passing, did your mobile units distribute a lot of these pamphlets?*

HALSEMA: Oh, yes.

*Q: The question is what was the degree of literacy of the people to whom you were distributing these?*

HALSEMA: Well, the Philippines has a high literacy rate, so this wasn't the problem in the country.

*Q: Were these in English, or Tagalog?*

HALSEMA: They were in both, it depended on what the material was.

*Q: Because in Thailand the problem we had--and the conclusion to which I came--was that we were wasting a good deal of our time and effort because the villagers to whom we were bringing this stuff in the boondocks, were so basically illiterate that I didn't think really a great deal of it was getting across.*

HALSEMA: Over the years this is something that I've given a great deal of thought to. In later years, for instance, I didn't see much value in having USIS branches all over a country; that there were only certain places that had an influence on events in the country as a whole, and that we ought to concentrate on those.

For instance, in the Philippines, instead of having 10 or 15 branches, that maybe two would be right. Maybe, I might add, today three. But there are places that influence the rest of the country, and that as those places go, so goes the country. A good example would be the so-called "EDSA Revolution" in the Philippines in 1986.

The revolution, so-called--I think it's more of a restoration--took place entirely in Manila. The rest of the country was not involved in it. It was affected by it, yes. But the course of events was determined by people who lived in one city.

*Q: I think the situation in Thailand, just as an aside, was different because what we were shooting at, particularly in north Thailand, was to immunize to the extent possible the villagers against the Communist recruitment of, and subsequently response to the insurgent group. It was not a matter of a nationwide propaganda effort in many respects, but primarily to keep villagers, who were little in touch with what was going on in Bangkok, from succumbing to the Communist insurrection which was going on in the countryside.*

HALSEMA: Well, of course, I'll come to that because I was in Thailand after the Philippines. But it seems to me that in a situation like that, a mass effort really has to be something that's done by the some local organization, rather than by ourselves.

In the Philippines we had a role to help Magsaysay get elected. Another one was to work with the Philippine armed forces in their psy-war effort against the remainder of the Hukbalahaps. That was the thing that our provincial offices did a lot with.

My problem as a junior officer in the embassy was that I had lived in the Philippines, of course, for my whole adolescence. I had worked there as a newspaperman, and I had contacts which a junior officer normally doesn't have in an embassy. The result was that Alice and I were invited to the kinds of affairs where the only other embassy representative was Ambassador Spruance and his wife. It wasn't our fault; these people who were inviting us were old friends of my family. I got contacts with people like Tañada, as an example, from my newspaper days. And it didn't go over too well with the rest of the embassy, so it was rather an uncomfortable position to be in.

Subsequently, when I became more senior in the Agency, I always turned down suggestions that I go to Manila to be the PAO because I knew Filipinos and I knew that they would expect that as an old friend, I would be in a position to give them favors like leader grants or influencing the consul to give them a visa, or that sort thing, and that I would be torn between my official duties and those of my knowing the Filipinos as well as I do. Things that they would expect me, as their old friend, to give them.

It's just so natural to help a friend that I didn't want to be in that position. As a junior officer, of course, I could say, "I don't have any influence in the embassy, because I'm too junior." But it's a great problem, and that's one of the real dangers, it seems to me, of being in a place too long, is that you get to know so much about a place, and people get to know you so well that they expect that you can use their value system. That probably would go against the idea of having a person in a post too long.

The British, I noticed, got around this in places like Thailand by having a resident Britain who was a real expert on the country, but who had no place in the chain of command. He was an advisor to the embassy.

*Q: Sort of like the British process of having a permanent under secretary of their ministries, in a way.*

HALSEMA: Except that this particular man that I knew had no authority of any kind. He couldn't exercise it. But he was the one who knew who slept with whom, and who was related to whom, and all these things which are of vital importance in a society, but which require years of local knowledge to acquire. So that's the other side of the coin in terms of length of stay at a post.

I traveled around the Philippines as much as I could, and I certainly enjoyed the time that I was there. It was a period when the U.S. was still very much number one in terms of the position of influence in the Philippines. Then came along the events of 1953 which led to Dien Bien Phu and the collapse of the French position in Indochina with the whole pressure on countries like Thailand. I was tapped to go to Thailand to join Donovan's staff.

*Q: Before we get to Thailand, I'd like to ask just a couple of questions about the Philippines. Magsaysay is generally looked upon, I think, as having been a great president. On the other hand, I have come across a few detractors who felt that Magsaysay was, not entirely, but somewhat of a myth, and perhaps wasn't really as great a man as he's given credit for being, both in the Philippines and in the States. What is your own opinion?*

HALSEMA: Well, I guess, Magsaysay was like John Kennedy. Their deaths were unfortunate but fortuitous as far as their reputations were concerned, because they were never put to the test of having to deliver. Both of them faced hostile congresses. Magsaysay really never was able to get the Philippine legislature to enact the kind of programs that he wanted, and neither was Kennedy. Remember, it took Lyndon Johnson to get the new Great Society going, because he knew Congress and they would do what he wanted.

So I think Magsaysay was certainly the best president the Philippines has had. But whether he would have been effective is conjectural. He just didn't live that long. He certainly has a great reputation.

*Q: He certainly did.*

HALSEMA: I think it was well deserved. He certainly was a charismatic figure.

*Q: He was an activist too, wasn't he?*

HALSEMA: Yes. I have a picture of him when Nixon, who was Vice President, came out to the Philippines. I was the press officer for that visit. And there's Magsaysay leaping over a fence with one hand just to go over to see. He didn't want to walk around it to get to where the Vice President's plane was. That kind of an activist.

*Q: Did he deserve a good deal of credit for having resolved the Huk insurrection?*

HALSEMA: Yes. I think that this was something that he and--Ed Lansdale was obviously his tactician. But Magsaysay understood Filipinos very well and he knew how to reach them. They made a great team. I think that whole operation was a success and that that was the kind of intervention that was justified. The trouble was, it gave us delusions that it could be replicated elsewhere.

**BERNARD LAVIN**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1952-1957)**

*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: You joined the Agency in 1952.*

LAVIN: That's right.

*Q: Where did you expect to go on your first assignment?*

LAVIN: I was told that there were two openings and I could have a choice between going to Paris or to Manila. And I surprised everyone by choosing Manila. I explained that I was very interested in Far Eastern philosophies, and I wanted to learn about them and compare them with our Western philosophy. So they said okay. So off to Manila I went. And I never looked back.

*Q: Bernie, you spent four or five years in Manila and in Cebu. Do you want to tell us a little bit about your first foreign service assignment, first time overseas? Tell us a little bit about how you felt about both being assigned to the Philippines and the Filipinos and your initial experiences in the Foreign Service.*

LAVIN: I'd be glad to. When I got to Manila, which was everything I expected it to be and probably more, I was very fortunate to be there at a time when President Magsaysay was on the rise, not only in Manila but in the Visayan area where he often visited as he was getting ready to assume the presidency. So I remember that as a great time.

*Q: You were also there, I guess, when he died in the plane crash.*

LAVIN: Yes, as a matter of fact the plane went down about eight miles from where we lived. I was on the same platform with him the night before he died at a special ceremony at the University of Southern Philippines. After his arrival I moved from the platform down to the first row where I sat with President Magsaysay's photographer, Felix Manuel. At one point President Magsaysay leaned over and tied his shoelace. I nudged the photographer and said, "That's a great shot of the President tying his shoelaces. Why don't you get it?" And he did. The photograph is probably the last one that was ever made of President Magsaysay. When they found the plane, many of the bodies were burned and much of the plane was burned. But what had happened is the photographer's equipment was thrown out of the plane up onto a little hill and did not burn. Felix, of course, was killed. And they found this roll of film and published the pictures in the Manila Times.

*Q: Including that picture, huh?*

LAVIN: Yes, the picture was in the Manila Times about a week later with the notation that no one knew where this picture was taken, but that it was probably the last that was ever taken of President Magsaysay. So I wrote to Joe Bautista, the Editor of the Times, and I told him the circumstances. He printed the story. I will never forget the grief that overwhelmed the Filipinos at the passing of President Magsaysay. I went to the Third Philippine Constabulary Headquarters to view the bodies. There were at least 10,000 Filipinos standing around on the outskirts of the camp. They made comments like this, "He is not dead." "He's in the mountains." "He'll come again." They couldn't believe that he had died. But it was all too obvious that he and the others in that plane died a terrible death. The bodies were badly burned and mangled. Congressman Lopez was a good friend of mine who had often come to our house out in Talisay. To see him in death, terribly burned, was just overpowering.

*Q: I remember I was in Hong Kong when Magsaysay died. And it had quite an effect on the community at that time too, you know. They just couldn't believe it had happened. Well, Bernie tell us a little bit about the other highlights of your time in the Philippines while you were there that you think the Oral History people would be interested in.*

LAVIN: When I got to Manila, Ralph Busick was the PAO. Four or five months afterwards, he said to me one day, "Bernie, what do you know about women's organizations in the Philippines?" I replied, "Nothing." And he said, "Okay, you had better bone up, you're the program and escort



officer for Mrs. Nixon." That's when I found out that Vice President and Mrs. Nixon were coming to the Philippines. And so I became her escort officer. And then I had to do a lot of studying about women's organizations. Then the fateful moment came when Mrs. Nixon was to make her trip downtown to the USIS library and to Tondo.

*Q: That's the slum area.*

LAVIN: Tondo is the slum area, yes. And I commandeered every Cadillac I could find around the Filipino community and I ended up with 12 of them. I seated Filipino ladies in each one of the cars. And, I had obtained a motorcycle escort. I said to the policeman, "No matter what happens, don't let this motorcade get split. We must keep these 12 cars together, because in the lead car we know how to go downtown to the USIS library and to Tondo." Well, so help me, as soon as we left the Manila Hotel we weren't 300 yards away when the motorcade split in half. And there I was up in the lead car sweating bullets because Mrs. Nixon and the rest of the group had gone off in another direction. I thought, "Well, here's the end of my career in the Foreign Service."

*Q: Your first tour.*

LAVIN: First major assignment. Well, I rolled down the window of this air conditioned car, and thought, "Well, maybe I'll get some kind of a clue." And sure enough in the distance I heard a siren. I yelled to the driver, "Follow that siren!" So we took off after it. And we very soon got back together again. We arrived at the USIS library and here is a great story which I'll never forget. In those days, there was a striking resemblance between Vice President Nixon and myself which many people noted. When I got out of the first car and opened up Mrs. Nixon's door a big crowd of people gathered around. So I led her to the USIS, Mary Aireton took over from there and showed her around and I stayed with the cars. There was a lot of jostling and the police were milling around controlling the crowd. A little old Filipino lady, she must have been 80, was carrying a big box nicely wrapped in white paper with a big red ribbon on it. She came over to me and said, "Mr. Neexon, I traveled 300 miles to bring this gift for Mrs. Neexon." Things were happening so fast all around and I thought, "Well, I can't explain to her I'm not Mr. Nixon." So the first thing that came to my mind was, "Oh, Mrs. Nixon and I are very happy to receive this gift." I am sure this dear old woman went to her grave believing she had met the Vice President of the U.S.! The next day at the Embassy, we showed the "rushes" of the films of the Vice President and Mrs. Nixon's programs of the previous day. One of the officers, upon viewing Mrs. Nixon's visit to USIS, called out "What the hell was Nixon doing at USIS when he should have been out in a rice field!" He had made the same mistake as the little old lady!

In the course of the program work in the Philippines, Harry Hudson was a great leader in the special program for conducting fair elections. The whole idea of it was to be tied in with the election campaign of President Magsaysay who was then Secretary of Defense. USIS conducted a program throughout all of the Philippines where we had massive amounts of materials on how to conduct a free and fair election. Later Harry told me after the whole thing was over, "Well, I guess you noticed the timing of this program was very closely related to what Mr. Magsaysay was doing and the activities of Colonel Lansdale. And that's when I got to know about and to meet Colonel Lansdale during those heady days. (He was the real Captain Hillandale of "The

Ugly American.") (Harry Reasoner was with USIS then and attended Gene Schnell's Friday night spaghetti bashes for USIS staff.)

*Q: Bernie, you were in Cebu back in 1957 and then the call came to go to Korea.*

LAVIN: Right.

**CHARLES J. NELSON**  
**Public Administrative Specialist, ICA**  
**Manila (1952-1955)**

**Special Advisor to Mission Director for Rural Development/Deputy Chief, ICA**  
**Manila (1956-1958)**

*Ambassador Nelson was born and raised in Michigan, educated at New York University and Boston University and served in the US Army in World War II. Prior to his appointment at Ambassador, Mr. Nelson served in senior positions with the State Department, AID, International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the Mutual Security Agency and the Peace Corps. These appointments took him to the Philippines, Egypt and Iran. In 1971 he was appointed Ambassador to the nations of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, where he served from 1971 to 1974. Ambassador Nelson was interviewed by Celestine Tutt in 1981.*

*Q: You went to the Philippines when?*

NELSON: 1952.

*Q: And you were there until when?*

NELSON: 1958 with [one] exception. I went to Cairo, Egypt, John Russell had been transferred to Cairo, with the idea of working with him there in the Public Administration Division. I stayed some 90 to 100 days, then returned to the Philippines via Beirut, Turkey, etc. With the Aswan Dam fiasco, my Egypt assignment was off.

Then I became deputy chief of the Rural Development Division inaugurated under then-President Magsaysay. I did the local government part of that program.

*Q: That must have been an exciting time?*

NELSON: It was a very exciting time when I worked within the Public Administration Division. John Russell and I were called in actually, and we worked with Magsaysay's Executive Secretary on the organization of the President's Office. One of the things we did was to set up what was called the PCAC (President's Complaints and Actions Commission) where anyone could come to

Malacayang and register their complaint with the government. Or from anywhere in the Philippines one could send a telegram to Magsaysay for 10 centavos.

From this there developed a book called, "Bare Feet in the Palace," about the common man who could come and register his complaint about government. Government had not been responsive to the Philippine citizens under previous presidents. Therefore, this was, in a way, news.

*Q: I would like to go back to the Philippine period to begin with. What were your major problems that you saw how our efforts meshed in with the Philippine government and society?*

NELSON: Major problems? What we were trying to do primarily was to improve the efficiency of certain key agencies of the government - the Civil Service, the budget process, land regulation, etc. We established the Institute of Public Administration, using Michigan State University, which goes on today and is a very effective institution as part of the University of the Philippines.

Helping society is highly segmented. You have the aristocracy which is primarily of Spanish lineage; a civil serving class which could be called a middle class; and then there is the farmer, the cultivator. The cultivator is in a very difficult position, particularly those who [produced sugar], etc. I remember once going to a hacienda where the lady was talking about the persons who worked on her estate. She was talking about the fact that the farmers wanted to vote as they pleased. She was really upset about this. The only thing I said to her was that the Philippines was supposed to be a democracy.

But, back to your question, at least our focus was in terms of improving the efficiency of certain critical agencies of the government (For example, land tenure) so that they could be more responsible. They could become a kind of engine or facilitator of change that needed to take place. And to build institutions which could, with trained Filipinos, continue this process.

As an aside, my wife became the director of the School of Social Work which she organized at the University of the Philippines. I think, in a sense, she did a better job than we did in the U.S. government. When she left, her staff that had been trained in the United States had returned and [the school] was virtually an all Filipino faculty.

NELSON: This is a digression, but I think about the Philippines, the fact that Clark Field has been overtaken by a force of nature.

*Q: For the record, Clark Field was our major air base in the Philippines and last year a volcano basically destroyed it as a base.*

NELSON: The naval base is still there, although it was affected by the volcano's eruption. But you have this sort of schism in the Philippines. It makes a contribution to the surrounding areas in terms of bars, restaurants, etc. But I personally feel that the Philippines would be much better off if they didn't have Clark and didn't have Subic Bay. Because look what it does. It permits them to evade their responsibilities to make hard choices, etc., if you get base rent at \$200-250 million a year. The Filipinos are smart people. They have initiative and ingenuity. But they are

being run circles around by the Koreans and the rest of the people in the Asian complex because they don't have to work because Uncle Sugar is providing them with the money. Actually, it is a very divisive influence, regardless how you manage it.

*Q: Well, this kind of thing never works. It doesn't work in a society, putting a military base in an area becomes a crunch over there.*

NELSON: The Philippines have resources, if they had to depend upon the nurturing and exploitation of their resources they could get on with it. But because of the fact that you have \$250 plus million plus other monies that come into the economy because of these bases, you really don't have to work too hard.

**RUTH McLENDON**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1953-1955)**

*Ruth McLendon was born in Texas in 1929. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University in 1949 and her master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1950. Her postings abroad following her entry into the Foreign Service in 1951 include Sao Paulo, Manila, Adelaide, Rangoon, Bangkok and Paris. Ms. McLendon was interviewed in 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: Whither?*

McLENDON: I went to Manila. I was originally assigned to a slot in the political section, which was biographic reporting. Thank God that was changed, but it served me a bad turn later. I was supposed to go to that, but a consular officer, an officer in the consular section had developed hearing problems and could not handle the consular work and was moved into that position and they moved me into the consular section which worked out very nicely.

*Q: You were in Manila from when to when?*

McLENDON: From July of 1953 to September, no early October of 1955.

*Q: Can you kind of give a feel for the Philippines in the '53 to '55 period?*

McLENDON: It was seven or eight years after the war. Manila was not yet completely rebuilt. Of the capital cities, Manila was second only to Warsaw in the amount of devastation and bombing and attacks. It had not yet recovered. It had received its full independence from the United States a year after the end of the war.

*Q: In 1946.*

McLENDON: It was delayed. We had the commonwealth act in 1935. It was supposed to receive independence in 1945 on our independence day, July 4<sup>th</sup> and we postponed one year because the war was not yet over in Asia in 1945. They had become independent with all of the devastation the war had wreaked in the Philippines and without assistance from us to rebuild at first. They had a rocky start for independence, but we did come in with the war plans act and we did a lot of compensating. A lot of money was poured in which did help in rebuilding. At the time this was before the Filipinos had become very nationalistic. They were still largely pro-American. There were Philippine nationalists. They were particularly journalists who loved to beat us over the head, but it was still a country in which we had far too much influence, you couldn't avoid it. We had a special economic relationship. We had negotiated an agreement which had established preferences for Philippine products in American markets and the same for American products and American investments in the Philippines. We had the Philippines bases agreement which guaranteed our role in protecting the Philippines as the price for the bases. We didn't pay a cash price. The relationship was close, too close for a healthy development of the Philippines and they were beginning to resent it. It's awfully hard to cut an umbilical cord like that.

*Q: Can you describe the embassy at the time and then we'll get to your job.*

McLENDON: The embassy was in and still is I guess in the old high commissioner's residence right on Manila Bay, a nice old, art deco, early '30s building. Very pleasant and surrounded by Quonset huts because we had to expand it temporarily and we had a whole cluster of Quonset huts off to one side that was staff housing. We had some larger Quonset huts on the other side that housed USIA and our snack bar. The consular section had the ground floor and one entire wing off the ground floor plus a few offices on one side, plus a few offices in the other wing.

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

McLENDON: My first ambassador there was Raymond Spruance, the former admiral and everyone loves Ambassador Spruance. He was.

*Q: He was the victor of Midway.*

McLENDON: Midway. He was not only highly respected, but venerated I would say for his role in Midway certainly by the ex-navy, but he was also a thoroughly decent, nice human being. Just the nicest sort of person to work for. His wife was like him. She was a delightful woman with a long experience of being a navy wife and looking after the morale of the navy wives under her husband's command. She was a superb ambassador's wife. They were a lovely couple. I didn't work obviously with Ambassador Spruance on political matters, but my friends who did respected him also for his common sense as well as grasp of important elements in the relationship. The criticisms that I heard of him tended on the side that he was ex-military, he was overly committed to the importance of those bases, but who wasn't.

*Q: Which really remained for the next 30 years, the same thing. Can you describe the consular section? Was it one of our biggest at that time?*

McLENDON: It was one of our largest. Manila was, I think, at that time our largest embassy or one of the largest embassies. We had a large AID mission. We had a large military assistance group as well as bases. We had a large consular section. We had a heavy demand for visas and we had probably the largest number of American citizens abroad at that time because of the long relationship and because of the over 5,000 Philippine veterans who had been naturalized at the very close of the war and were still citizens and with children.

*Q: Well, now, who was in charge of the consular section?*

McLENDON: I was there two years and we had five different consuls general.

*Q: Okay. Why?*

McLENDON: The first one, the best one was selected out that year. He was basically a political officer who was moved into the consular section and I'm not sure why. He was selected out. It was because we selected out 25% and it happened to be a bad time.

*Q: Yes, a bad time.*

McLENDON: He was followed by an old-line consular officer and I don't remember his name. I can see his face, but I don't remember his name who, let's just say he was unimaginative. At one point Terry Sanders took over the consular section, I don't know why. He was sort of interim. He was basically an economic officer and I think very bright, but a bit temperamental and not at all interested in consular work. Then we had Raleigh Gibson who was transferred down to us from the political section. He was on his last six or eight months before retirement and he retired from there. I think the first three I mentioned, we're talking about only a few months and I don't know why. Then the last was Hayward Hill and our name for him was Haywire Hill who was a very nice person, very tender hearted and not inclined to pay much attention to consular regulations. The heart ruled the head.

*Q: Well, what were you doing there?*

McLENDON: I was moved around a lot. I started off in the citizenship side and I was working under Irv Ross who was an old line staff officer who had been in Manila since the days of the high commissioner, had been interned there during the war and had returned after the war and he was a complete character. The complete opposite of the type anyone would identify with the Foreign Service as being a Foreign Service Officer. I would say he looked like a retired merchant marine or non-com in the navy, balding, very heavyset, tattooed I think, a real character. When I was brought in and introduced to him as his new junior officer he looked me up and down and said, oh. He wasn't a bit impressed. Irv and I got along. When he learned that I had done some consular work on the clerical side and I didn't mind, I didn't at all mind being sat with one of his senior Philippine employees, we called them local employees, to be taught the intricacies of nationality law as applied in the Philippines a former possession.

*Q: Where it was extremely complicated.*

McLENDON: Where it had all kinds of complications, yes, because our Foreign Service national employees were very high quality. They did a higher level of work particularly on the nationality side than I'd ever seen anywhere else. They could process the cases, handle the interviews, bring the case entirely to decision point, write a draft decision and then bring it in to the officer for the final interview and decision. I seldom had to make changes, occasionally a minor grammatical or file change in the decision, but I almost never had to question either their law or their evaluation of the individual in terms of reliability.

*Q: Were there any particular problem type citizenship cases?*

McLENDON: Oh, yes. We had a very high level of fraud. I knew when we went through consular training in the Philippines it had been mentioned as that. The Philippines and Hong Kong were in competition of who could produce the greatest number of fraudulent claims to citizenship. Hong Kong had by far the more elaborate system set up. The Philippines' operation was much more amateur, but it became more professional to the degree to which we professionalized our handling of it. We had basically two types of fraudulent cases. Three. One, the largest number involved Filipinos who claimed to have been born in Hawaii. There had been from the late '20s or early '30s, I think, a program by the Hawaiian sugar planters association importing labor from the Philippines. While most of them did not remain in Hawaii permanently, they had children born to them there and then returned to the Philippines. There were literally thousands of American citizens by birth who had at one time been returned to the Philippines as children with their families. After the war, when we made war reparations available to American citizens in the Philippines, that put a high premium, a high cash premium on American citizenship. So, immediately we had all kinds of competing claims for citizenship. There were a lot of Filipinos who simply obtained the birth certificates of those born in the Philippines. They might have come from the same village in the Philippines as the parents and then filed their own claim. The child who had been born in the United States might have died and you've never known about the citizenship or what have you, but we had this steady flow of applications with all kinds of fraudulent documentation and no capability of investigating except we could send it back to the immigration service in Honolulu. They could do a field investigation and interview those who lived still, Filipinos who still lived in the same area in which this person was allegedly born. And sometimes turn up information that clearly indicated that this was not the one; or we could get attestations from the home village in the Philippines from the priest and the mayor and the chief of police, but given the system in the Philippines of village loyalty and everybody will do anything to help somebody else, those were not worth the time it took to look at them, to glance at them. So, that was one type.

We had the case of the Philippine veterans who had been naturalized, never had left the Philippines, never had been in the United States, but had been naturalized in the Philippines at the close of the war or the close of their service. Never had any intention of going to the United States to live because they just considered the tie between the two countries would go on forever. They married and had children and of course Philippine families tend to be large. They would register a child a year with us and no questions asked and then somewhere along the line we began to realize that not all of these children belong to the same father. If they didn't happen to have a child born that year they'd register the brother's child or cousin's child, anybody's child,

you know. We were acquiring American citizens at a much higher rate. Then the third case was what we called the bamboo Americans and these tended to be veterans of the Spanish American War who had settled in the Philippines or those who had gone out with the U.S. military at whatever time back in the old days.

*Q: The turn of the century.*

McLENDON: And had settled down and married and taken a Filipino wife and settled in happily. A notable percentage of them tended to have multiple marriages. We'd have first one family who would come in and be registered as his family. By this time the original American was in most cases dead, not there for us to ask questions, and we'd get one family registered and then another group would turn up claiming to be also the family and then in some cases a third, but we'd have competing families because of course under our nationality laws only the legitimate wife and the Philippines did not legally recognize bigamist marriages or polygamist marriages. We had fraud in that case because then we had all the competing claims about well the other marriage never really took place. All of this was complicated by the fact that with all of the devastation of the war parish records and civil records had been destroyed and even where they perhaps had not been destroyed it wasn't very hard to get a certificate from the local priest saying that they had been. So, it was reconstruction on the basis of affidavits of very little credibility. It was fun.

*Q: Was there much attempt of the Filipinos to get to the consular officers either through money, sex, gifts or what have you or anything like that or was that a problem?*

McLENDON: I did not hear of anything like that involving an officer. We did have a strange incident in the visa section in which our receptionist who did the initial counter interview, who was American staff personnel, found \$500 in cash on the floor, this packet of \$500 in cash lying on the floor of the main processing unit of the visa section. No one ever claimed it. No one ever admitted having lost any money, possibly because it could have been a perfectly legitimate case of which the applicant, it had slipped out of the pocket and they had so little faith in recovering it they never thought to mention it. While I was there and later after I left, several of our Filipino staff had to be dismissed for fraud.

*Q: I was many years later in Korea and it was endemic there.*

McLENDON: There was a lot of pressure on the visa side and perhaps on the citizenship side. I was not aware of it on the citizenship and I don't remember, I cannot think or remember hearing of any of our Filipino staff on the citizenship side who was ever let go because of fraud. One was eventually let go because of rudeness, but I can't think of anyone else. On the visa side I knew a couple of them and I must say there were a couple of them when I worked in the visa section that I watched very closely.

*Q: This is tape two, side one with Ruth McLendon. You moved over to the visa side what after about a year or so or?*

McLENDON: I don't remember the timing of it, probably.



*Q: What then.*

McLENDON: But then they transferred two officers from the political section down, three actually. One was in the economic section and one from pol/mil or something, political military, but they were transferred down at their own request because they wanted to have a stint in consular work and learn that they were on their perhaps third tour. All good friends and they became my very good friends. We were buddies and I learned a great deal from them, but we were sort of a, there was a great deal of camaraderie. We would switch around so that we were all learning the different aspects of the work. I spent less time on the visa side. I may have spent not more than six or eight months there I guess.

*Q: How did you deal with, what were some of the problems in the visa side that you were doing?*

McLENDON: Again, it was fraud. There it was a very heavy pressure on non-immigrant visa of those who in fact intended to remain in the United States by whatever means. We had high pressure on non-immigrant visas almost year round. It was high volume work. We also had a long waiting list on the immigrant visa side, but with a quota of 100 a year as an Asian country in those days we were not issuing many except to the non-quota category, the wives and husbands.

*Q: Was there much fraud in the marriage business particularly with sailors, soldiers, American soldiers, sailors who were married more for money than?*

McLENDON: There may have been some of that, there undoubtedly was, but we were not as much aware of it in those days as we had seen later. I don't recall ever having to give the kind of in-depth interviews that one gives in those cases. In most cases there was at least one child already.

*Q: Something was going on.*

McLENDON: Someone had been around. No, it wasn't that, I think that became a fraud sideline a little bit further down the road.

*Q: Then you left there, I mean is there anything else we should cover do you think?*

McLENDON: One thing, this is ego speaking, but I take credit for finally having had a tantrum in simply insisting to the Department that we had to have a small investigative unit of our own. It was absurd to attempt to handle the kind of fraud cases we were handling without the capacity of asking questions vocally. I blew my stack one day after I sat and took the affidavit of a man, an American citizen, who admitted to having fraudulently identified five individuals as persons born from his home village, born in the United States, and not one of the five was. I thought that's egregious fraud. So, I put together some figures and a description. I wrote it, in those days, to communicate with the passport office, one wrote by dispatch, not by operations memorandum or other more informal methods, but by dispatch. I wrote a dispatch and had it cleared. I think I was the acting chief of the citizenship section at that time, so there wasn't anyone to clear it with,

but the consul general who very wisely suggested that I clear it around the embassy, which I did. The first place I started was with our security officer to get his advice and I incorporated his advice into it and then I cleared it with the political section I think as high as the DCM and the administrative section. It went out and when it hit the Philippine desk, Dave Koffell, who was on the Philippine desk at that time with Bob Fuline and Bob told me later that they carried it into his office, tips his finger and said, who wrote that? What's responsible for that? I made a modest request. I thought that we had to have a small investigative unit of our own consisting of a minimum of one American officer and one or more Filipino investigators, or if that were failing that, I forgot what my second request was. Or failing that, that we at least be allowed to send an officer over to the Hong Kong fraud unit for him to get some training and look into it there. The officers on the desk interpreted that as the desire of our consul general to get a free trip to Hong Kong. The passport office was really upset when I gave them the statistics on the fraud. I've never seen it happen so fast until the Mexico thing. I think it was three months we had our authorization. It was very fast.

*Q: This wouldn't have been Frances Knight, would she have been there?*

McLENDON: Yes.

*Q: Well, she carried an awful lot of weight.*

McLENDON: Yes and when she got mad.

*Q: When she got mad, she would go straight to both congress and to J. Edgar Hoover. I suppose too the times were right, you know, people; we were being super patriotic and all I suppose fraudulent American citizenship didn't sit very well.*

McLENDON: Well, just that degree of fraud in any operation didn't sit well. It makes you look stupid.

*Q: But when you left there you must have gone with a certain aura of she who gets things done.*

McLENDON: I don't know. I felt that it was, I was just very, I thought, at least I accomplished one thing. One thing.

**MONCRIEFF J. SPEAR**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1953-1955)**

*Moncrieff J. Spear was born in New York in 1921. He received degrees from Cornell and George Washington Universities. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and joined the Foreign Service in 1946. Mr. Spear served in Germany, the Philippines, Yugoslavia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Bahamas, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1993.*

*Q: I can hardly think of a more interesting, first assignment for an officer than to have been in Berlin in those days. But then, of course, as with all of us in the Foreign Service, the time came for transfer. And I notice that you moved to a different part of the world.*

SPEAR: Well, that wasn't the plan originally. I was assigned at first to go to Lyon, France, to the Consulate there. But while I was back in Washington, attending the Mid Career Course, my orders were changed, and I was sent out to Manila, in the Philippines.

My first job out there was working on the military base agreements. At that time Admiral Spruance had been named our Ambassador out there. The United States had acquired a large number of military bases during operations in World War II in the Philippines. Then, in 1946, the Philippines became independent and, as a result, the future of all of these military bases was up for grabs. A series of negotiations went on there. Ambassador Spruance had gotten, I believe, a 700-page opinion from the U. S. Attorney General that these bases were U. S. property. But the Philippine Government didn't see it quite that way, and we went into a long series of negotiations, some of which only ended when the U. S. left these bases in the last year or two, in the 1990's. These were the beginnings of the base negotiations, and I worked on that to start with.

*Q: The ongoing problems continued for many years, as I understand. You must have been in Manila when the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty was negotiated [in 1954, under which the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization was set up in Bangkok].*

SPEAR: That's right. As I recall, that was the first occasion on which you and I met. John Foster Dulles [then Secretary of State] had come out there for the signing of [what was later called] the SEATO Treaty. In fact, his counselor, Ambassador Douglas MacArthur, was the nephew of General MacArthur. I remember that when he came out to do some of the preliminary spadework before [Secretary of State] Dulles arrived, the Philippine press in Manila referred to his arrival as "the second coming."

*Q: Well, after working on the military bases, you went into the Consular Section in Manila, which is, of course, one of the world's busiest. I assume you had the usual problems there.*

SPEAR: Yes, that's for sure. It was a tremendous visa mill, plus the fact that there was an enormous Citizenship Section because there were so many Americans living in the Philippines at that time. This was the period after the Eisenhower Administration came in, and there was a considerable cutback in government personnel. I remember that as a very difficult time because we were severely understaffed. We used to be in the office evenings and weekends, just trying to keep the operation afloat, because we were so short-handed.

**LESTER E. EDMOND**  
**International Economist, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1953-1956)**

*Lester E. Edmond attended the City College of New York and Harvard University. Edmond was in the US Army during WWII and worked in the State Department before entering the Foreign Service as a Rotation Officer and International Economist. His posts in the Foreign Service include Japan, Finland, Washington, DC, National War College, France, and the Philippines. Edmond was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.*

EDMOND: Prior to leaving for Paris, I had been asked by the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (PSA) if I would accept a position as an International Economist in that Office which formed part of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. I had made the acquaintance of representatives of PSA while working on rubber issues which were of great interest to that office. The three month hiatus from the Commodity Affairs office made this a logical time to make the shift. Thus in early 1953 I joined the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs as an International Economist.

*Q: In that capacity you were there for a couple years then or longer?*

EDMOND: I was there from early 1953 to 1956. The name of the Office demonstrated its focus. The Philippines had only achieved its independence from the United States on July 4, 1946 and the US dominated the country economically and continued to maintain overwhelming political influence.

There are two things that I recall working on during that period. One was the revision of the so-called Laurel-Langley Agreement, an agreement that we had concluded with the Philippines at the time they obtained their independence. The United States had received free trade status for a period of eight years and also received national treatment for its investments in the Philippines. This meant that US firms were to receive the same treatment as did Philippine firms. The Laurel-Langley obligations severely limited the ability of the Philippine government to make changes in its laws and regulations that might disadvantage American economic interests. With the 1946 trade accord coming up for renewal, it had become apparent that the Agreement needed to be revised so as to permit the playing field to be a bit more level, although US firms still would retain a very favorable economic climate in which to operate and would continue to receive national treatment in terms of investment.

These discussions provided me with my first significant opportunity to negotiate with other US agencies. Agriculture, Commerce, and Treasury were obviously deeply involved in the negotiations since the subject matter directly affected the well being of the domestic industries that formed their constituency. Since American firms opposed most of the Philippine proposals the negotiating team found it necessary to assess the Philippine positions, judge which were reasonable and consistent with US obligations elsewhere, ascertain how adverse the proposed changes would be to US commercial interests and to place all of the above within the context of overall US domestic as well as foreign policy. In effect a dual negotiation took place, first to develop a coordinated US position, and then with the Philippine negotiating team.

**LAURIN B. ASKEW**  
**Economic Officer**  
**Manila (1954-1956)**

*Mr. Askew was born in Tennessee in 1921. He was raised partly in Tennessee and partly in Europe, attending schools in Luxembourg and Germany. He served in the US Navy in WWII. After graduating from Georgetown University he entered Government service, serving first with the Library of Congress and later with the Department of Commerce. Joining the Department of State in 1948 he was assigned as Economic Officer and Commercial Attaché at US Embassies in Peru and Philippines. Mr. Askew was interviewed by Mr. Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998 but died before this interview was completed.*

*Q: You then went to Manila. When did you go to Manila?*

ASKEW: '54.

*Q: You were in Manila from when to when?*

ASKEW: '54 to '56. Two years to the date.

*Q: What were you doing in Manila?*

ASKEW: I was assigned to the economic officer there. The chief of the economic section, who I suspect didn't know what the hell to do with me, he said, "We haven't gotten a good round up of the mineral situation in Manila so get to work on that." He told me about a fellow in USIA (United States Information Agency) who was a mineralogist and who was very knowledgeable on the mines in the Philippines so I made friends with him and every time he went out to visit a mine he'd drag me along with him. I don't think I learned much in the way of mining but I did start writing. I started making means to connect annual reports from the various mining companies. I struck up a peculiar correspondence with the only man in Washington who gave a damn whether I was there or not or what the hell I did while I was there. His name was Wong in the Department of Interior. One of his little jobs was to make a report on the status of the Philippine mining industry every year. Somebody told me he was there and that he was the one that was getting my reports. I wrote him a letter and said this is my first experience with it but that it was less boring getting a good job done than not and if there was anyway he'd care to head me, I'd be delighted to follow his suggestions. I got a very nice letter back from him. He pointed out that there were these places that he wished I'd fill in and that if I could do it by such-and-such time he could get it into this years report. So we got off on a good foot. I later met him in Washington. Sure enough, he was a little Chinamen, in a tiny little cubbyhole in the Department of Interior and he was the one that was compiling this report every year.

Manila was very disappointing and embarrassing to me. I had been in the Philippines during the war; in Manila Bay I'd gone ashore. When I came back almost ten years later, just about every unpleasant aspect of American presence was smeared all over the place; Coca Cola, cigarettes.

An attitude by the Filipinos that they were taken care of now and that they didn't need to do anything, whereas before they had been notably anxious for education and had gone to great lengths to give their children a decent education. I just couldn't wait to get away from there.

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

ASKEW: Admiral Spruance.

*Q: He was a great hero of Midway.*

ASKEW: Yes, he was a fine man. As far as I could see from a very low spot, his heart wasn't in it. He accepted the honor of the president. He wasn't happy with the way things were going in Philippines, although, at that time we had Magsaysay, does that ring a bell to you?

*Q: Oh yes, very much so, he was the one bright spot in the whole Philippine political spectrum in the last 15 years.*

ASKEW: That's right. We undoubtedly were helping him by any means possible. Unfortunately, my family and I went back to the United States by boat via Japan and it was in Yokohama we heard of his death. Airplane crash. It really hit me hard personally. I had met him a few times and even chatted with him. He was a remarkable man. It was really the doom of the Philippines for anything coming within the near future. One thing that the Manila assignment permitted us to do was for my wife to take our three children by that time, two of them born in Lima, to meet their grandparents. Then we went back to Washington.

*Q: One more questions about the Philippines and then we'll end this session. What about corruption? You were dealing with industry, what was your impression of Philippine society at both at the top and also at business.*

ASKEW: I don't remember clearly. My best guess is that it was so thoroughly known throughout society that it was accepted and that you didn't talk about it.

*Q: So you weren't sitting there saying, "If only they'd get rid of the corruption they'd have a better system?"*

ASKEW: No. We didn't. There were problems with the Philippines, with the bases there; Clark base, Subic Bay and so on, that took up an awful lot of our relations with the Filipinos. I mean it was the big subject all the time. It was always there. This other sort of faded a little bit. It was know to be present. I think it was believed that the United States should not be involved in trying to do anything about it. That it would do the Filipinos more harm, it would galvanize opposition to us. We didn't want to disturb this base situation. We were not prepared to leave at that time. I had my first ulcer attack there.

*Q: What about society? Did you find that high society engulfed the embassy so that they were sort of co-opted?*

ASKEW: Yes. I was mortified by the excesses of high society at a time when poor people were still scrambling like mad. We were invited to these affairs. My wife became close to one of the main hostesses of Manila, who was a charming woman. It was rumored that she was the girlfriend of the American admiral at Subic Bay. She was a very admirable looking woman. They threw a party, gave it a theme and everybody had to dress accordingly. Then came the food on the table, tremendous platters of iced oysters flew in from Tokyo with the shells on another platter and in each shell a pearl. My wife didn't take it too seriously, she was young and enjoyed the party, they were splendid, but I could barely take it. It was so disgusting to me. It was a shame. We met her as late as about 15 years ago in the Jockey Club in Manila still charming and very fond of my wife. There were several groups like that that rode this thing out in high style.

*Q: What about American business interest there?*

ASKEW: They were all over. They had become very well reestablished by the time I got there in '52. The American business representatives, who were having a high 'ole time in the nightclubs and eateries and so on, didn't misbehave. Several of my fraternity brothers from Georgetown showed up there. The mining I never really got very close to. The business in general took care of itself. It knew how to do it and didn't need any help.

**JULIEN M. NIEMZCYK**  
**Military Attaché**  
**Manila (1954-1956)**

*Julian M. Niemczyk was born in 1920 in Oklahoma, the son of an Army officer. He went to Oklahoma University and then went into the Army during World War II, eventually being assigned to the OSS serving in Burma and China. He remained in the Air Force and served in Japan and the Philippines and eventually Warsaw as an air attaché. He was Defense Attaché in Prague during the Prague Spring and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Becoming active in political life he was appointed as ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1986. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.*

*Q: Obviously this is an unclassified interview, but the world has changed and we are trying to get a picture of how we felt and were working at the time.*

NIEMCZYK: It was the beginning of one of three attaché US Embassy assignments in my military career. Manila was first, Warsaw was second, Prague was third and we will get to that later on.

I was in the Attaché Office, a major, and the legitimate attaché was a bird colonel. He and I were called into a room in the Pentagon before either of us went out. We met. He was not overjoyed. He felt he was going to be burdened with an additional officer, but one that he didn't have total control over. I had two bosses. One, who was the Chief of Mission in the Embassy in the Public Affairs, and another one across the street in the AID Building, Lovett, a retired army general.

I checked in and one of the assistant attachés, who became a very dear friend of ours, really looked after us getting settled. My job was to do liaison with G-2 of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. That worked so successfully that the CIA would hand select as a result of some of my observations, some of my contacts...and I knew all of them. It also gave me an excellent entrée into the hierarchy of the Armed Forces of the Philippines which bothered the Air Attaché, my paper boss, and the Army and Naval Attachés. But it was clear to the senior Filipino officials who my backing organization was.

This enabled me to do my job a little bit better and more successfully. I would identify and select, with G-2's, the Army of the Philippines, approval six people at a time. We would get them to Clark Air Force Base and on an unidentified airplane fly them to Saipan or some island out in the Pacific where they would undergo four weeks of intelligence training by CIA personnel. They would come back to the Philippines and either pursue their intelligence field in the armed forces or some of them wound up in a newly formed NICA (National Intelligence Coordinating Agency), which was the Philippine CIA. I think it still exists today.

This was my job, to work with the Philippine military people. I was asked if I would like to extend for two more years there at the Embassy and my wife and I had become friends with the Filipinos and the Spanish, etc. so we accepted the extension. Thus we wound up having four years working out of the Attaché's Office at the American Embassy in Manila.

*Q: What was the government situation like when you were there? How did our Embassy relate to it?*

NIEMCZYK: Very favorable relations. Very good relations. It was the time that the US was supporting and courting Magsaysay who became President. Like our President Kennedy he met with a tragic ending in an airplane crash piloted by none other than his commanding officer of the Philippine Air Force. I remember that so well. But we had excellent relations there. The US-Philippine course was on course and going very well. AID was doing its job, helping a great deal.

I did a lot of traveling throughout the country. I was invited, and at that time I guess the only American who was invited on a seven day trip with a Philippine Navy ship going to the Sulu Archipelago and stopping at Jolo, going to Sandakan, North Borneo, back through Turtle Island and the Palawan Island and on to Manila. That was an experience I could spend an hour on, which I won't. But it brought me much closer to the people with whom I would deal. They were my hosts.

*Q: What was your impression of the Philippine military at that particular time? Although independence was gained in 1946, they still depended heavily on the United States.*

NIEMCZYK: My recollection would probably be prejudice, but I thought they were doing very well with what they had. I had a chance to visit their military academy at Baguio. A number of their leaders had actually been graduates of the US Naval Academy and West Point. They were



there overseeing and leading the way. So I would have had favorable observations...Surely the army and to some extent the air force and to a lesser extent the navy.

**THOMAS J. DUNNIGAN**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1954-1957)**

*Thomas Dunnigan was born and raised in Ohio. He attended John Carroll University, and after graduation served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1946. Mr. Dunnigan served in London, Manila, the Executive Secretariat, the National War College, Bonn, the Hague, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv, and with the Organization of American States. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.*

*Q: Yes. Well, Tom, you served in Manila and Hong Kong from '54 to '57 as a visa officer. And maybe we could lump these two together rather than go through the whole thing. If not, I mean, if there's something...*

DUNNIGAN: No, by all means.

*Q: What was your impression of operating as a consular officer in the Far East in those days? It must have been a come-down, for one thing, wasn't it?*

DUNNIGAN: It was, in a sense. And I had a well-placed friend here in the department who, when I was back here in training getting ready to go, said, "Don't be ridiculous. Don't do that, I'll get you a job here in the department."

I said, "No. I want to go see what consular work is like. I haven't done it yet. I haven't been to the Far East, and I'm going to do it."

Well, he gave me a look as though he thought I were off my rocker. Because he'd seen Manila, he'd been out there in the consulates and come back and said, "What a hole..."

But I went out there, and I was given the visa section under a consul general of the very old school, Hayward Hill.

*Q: Who only just recently deceased. He was for years in Athens. I remember him living in Athens.*

DUNNIGAN: And, as you know, his bequest of almost a million dollars to DACOR took everyone's breath away. He was that sort of man, generous to a fault, but not a tower of strength on consular matters, if I can put it charitably.

Anyhow, the visa section there consisted of myself, Jim Mason as vice consul, and two American consular assistants. And we had a tremendous load of visas, because, as you know, the Philippines is one of our problem areas, and we were going from morning till night. It was interesting, I must say.

My wife said to me, after I'd been in Manila and Hong Kong, she said, "You know, I wish you'd go back there, because you always came home with the most interesting stories there. You don't have any interesting stories now that you're doing other work."

And I think that's true, because you were dealing with human-interest problems.

The pressure to come to America was increasing all the time. Jim Mason left and we finally got Hugh McCall, another consular officer, and they worked away, standing out at the visa counter, interviewing people, you know. We gave the first refugee relief visa while I was in Manila, too (I have a picture of myself signing that), to a couple.

**JAMES T. PETTUS, JR.**  
**Press Attaché, USIS**  
**Manila (1954-1957)**

*James T. Pettus, Jr. was born in Missouri in 1919. During World War II, he first served as a lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Air Force and then as a colonel in the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Pettus entered the Foreign Service in 1954 and was posted in Manila, Wellington, Rangoon, London, and Canberra. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on May 30, 1990.*

*Q: I missed the last one when he was there, so I didn't hear him.*

PETTUS: Well, after I got back, my first job in USIS was to go to Manila as press attaché in Manila. I didn't know much about being a press attaché at all, and I didn't even know why they had picked it out, other than that they had a requirement. So they sent me to Tokyo to see what a press attaché did for four or five days.

*Q: What year was this?*

PETTUS: This was in 1954.

*Q: I was in Tokyo at that time.*

PETTUS: Cliff Forster was there. I think Joe Evans was a PAO.

*Q: He hadn't come quite yet.*

PETTUS: Hadn't he?

*Q: It must have been later, then, because Joe came in October of '55.*

PETTUS: This was October or November of '54. Anyway, I didn't learn very much, but when I got to Manila, I found out what there had been a requirement and that the former DCM had requested a press attaché because they were having a lot of problems with the press in Manila, which they always did have. I'm trying to think of his name. But he had requested a press attaché, and they were trying to fill the slot, and they finally hired me. But in the meantime, this DCM had left, and they really didn't have any desire or need for me.

Admiral [Raymond A.] Spruance was the ambassador, a very fine man, very popular with the Filipinos, but he was so respected by the Filipino press that they didn't particular vilify him, but the base problem, which is active in the news today, was becoming more and more active then. But Spruance's feeling was that if we take the initiative onto this problem, or even try to deal with the aggressiveness, you stir it up and we'll make it worse.

So there was plenty to do, but I spent my time getting to know the Philippines and to know the press and the people and so forth, but mainly knowing what went on in the Filipino press and trying to understand more and more about it.

*Q: Was Jim Meter the PAO at that time?*

PETTUS: No, John Nalley was the PAO. Jim had been there just before.

*Q: I know he was there in 1950.*

PETTUS: Yes.

*Q: I guess you had gone to Bangkok by that time.*

PETTUS: Yes. John hadn't been there too long, but John knew a lot about Asia and Southeast Asia. But the base negotiation which the embassy had a good deal to do with and was getting to be more important, and was no longer left just to the military, had taken sort of the forefront of what was going to be the major problem coming up.

Spruance was due to retire, and did retire or leave. He had retired as a four-star admiral and was, of course, tremendously respected by the Filipinos, and a very, very fine and competent, able man. His wife was a wonderful woman.

It was a really interesting beginning of how to learn. So I met a lot of interesting people and I got a lot of valuable information from some of the Americans who had been there before the war, many of whom had been interned there, like Ford Wilkins, who was editor of the Manila Bulletin, and Carson Taylor and others who gave me real insights into the problems, as they felt them, were coming up, some justified, some not, and how the Filipinos felt about these things.

I knew the editors of all of the papers. The Manila Chronicle was the paper that was probably the most critical of us. It was owned by the Lopez family, some of the wealthiest people in the Philippines. But I remember a very cogent statement that was made by an editor of the Chronicle named Ernie del Rosario. Ernie was an old-time newspaperman. He knew the newspaper. He knew lots about the Americans, and we drank a lot of beer together. Ernie one time told me, he said, "You know, Jim, there's one problem with Americans that come out here in the embassy and the military and they come to negotiate. They forget that Filipinos know a great deal more about Americans than Americans know about Filipinos. They come here and they stay here for a couple of years, two or three, and then they go off and they leave." Well, I've never forgotten that. I think we could take a little information from it today when we're trying to deal with this very emotional and seemingly intractable problem that they have with the base negotiations. And they aren't much different today than they are then.

A big problem in those days was sovereignty, whether two flags would fly on every base. There was a tremendous argument about the height of the flagpole on each side. Which flag would go on what side of the entrance? But mostly the money was not as important as it is today. They wanted more equipment. But the emotional problem of the fact that the United States, at that time, although we specifically avowed that we were not sovereign on these bases, we certainly in many places acted like it, and that's changed a lot, but still today it's a problem that they feel, that these bases are not their own. The Filipinos are tremendously capable people who cannot really find the right path in many ways, but they are extremely emotional and subject to rabble-rousing leadership.

*Q: [Ramón] Magsaysay had not yet become president at that time, had he? The Huk insurgency was still going on?*

PETTUS: The Huk insurgency. Magsaysay was president at that time when I got there, and Ed Lansdale was holding strong. Magsaysay was a fine, fine man. I saw a lot of him and I traveled with the Filipino press quite often whenever there was any American content into his visit. If he was going to go to a base, although the military had their own information people, the embassy sent along somebody and I usually traveled with the Filipino press and went with him. On the day that he was killed, there was no American content or function on his visit. So fortunately, I wasn't along, but I'd been on his airplane and I knew a lot of those people.

He was a man who really, really tried and had the ability to lead people, but I think he was in many ways far too trusting. We knew a lot of things that were going on, which he must have known. But he used to say, "I'll put my own father in jail or my own family if we find that they're being corrupt." As it turned out later, after he was killed, part of his own family wasn't all that honest.

By this time, we'd gone through another ambassador, though. Albert Nufer was the ambassador at that time. But we'd been through Ambassador--what was his name? Former senator from Michigan. But the less said about him, the better. He was really only concerned with getting an appointment to a federal judgeship, which he got, and not making any--no, I'm wrong about that.

The sequence was that Ambassador Nufer came after Spruance and was a very fine, able man who spoke, he thought, fluent--was bilingual in Spanish. He understood the mentality and would have made a very good--I think would have done very well, much better in base negotiations than what we did had it not been for the fact that he died of a heart attack very suddenly. In fact, he died the same week as Magsaysay was killed.

Homer Ferguson was the interim ambassador. He came right after Spruance, and he didn't stay very long, fortunately. But he was a man who--I guess he had a good legal mind and was a good senator, but he did not understand the Filipinos.

I left soon after. Well, the base negotiations broke down. Magsaysay was killed. Nufer, the ambassador, died the week before Magsaysay was killed. The base negotiations were going on. The DCM was a man named Horace Smith, who about worked himself into an early grave himself with all of the stress of the breakdown, but without Nufer's guidance and without Magsaysay's support, it was obvious. They made an interim agreement, but it was nothing really solid to build upon. I had been there at that time getting on a little over three years, and I was offered a chance to go to New Zealand as PAO.

*Q: Then most of the thrust of your work while you were there was dealing with the base problem and with the press, generally. You weren't in on so much of the active campaigning for other issues that USIS might have been involved in?*

PETTUS: Yes, that's true. The base problem was the predominant feature. There were other factors and American policy, in general. One of the things was that the Filipinos were trying to get a seat on the Security Council, one of the rotating seats on the U.N. Security Council. The Americans were backing them on the fact that we would back the Filipinos for so long, but if it became an impasse, we had told them that we were going to have to change our vote, because if not, we'd get somebody in there that would be very unfriendly.

I remember an incident where [Carlos P.] García was the vice president of the Philippines. García gave a press conference wherein he stated that the Americans had pledged to back the Filipinos all the way. Well, I knew that this wasn't true, and García also knew it wasn't true. Well, I heard about this from some of my colleagues in the press and the Filipinos, non-Americans. I finally got hold of the ambassador to tell him that this was García's statement. This was about nine o'clock in the evening. Ferguson comes on the phone and he says, "Just a minute, Jim. I'll ask the vice president. He's right here."

So the next voice I heard on the phone was that of the vice president of the Philippines, and he says, "Hello. Patterson? I didn't say that. I said . . ." And he just twisted the words enough so that it would satisfy the ambassador, who was standing right beside him and who wouldn't know the difference. Ferguson then got on the phone again and says, "Now, Jim, you've heard it from the vice president. You go down to those newspapers and you straighten them out on what he really said."

Well, I hung up the phone and debated about what to do. I was at a party and I went back and had another drink and decided I'd better not do anything, because the one thing we could not do,

I knew he had said it and I knew that they weren't going to change it, and I also knew that it would just discredit me, us, and everybody if I went down and tried to put words in the vice president of the Philippines' mouth.

*Q: It's just unfortunate we didn't have the practice of taping practically every interview, because we didn't have the equipment. These days you couldn't get away with that.*

PETTUS: (laughter) Well, anyway, the next morning, of course, the story came out in the paper just exactly as García had said it, and at 7:30 I was called to the ambassador's office. The ambassador says, "Did you go down to those newspapers and straighten that story out like I told you?"

I said, "No, sir, I didn't." I guess that was a mistake. and I should have.

Anyway, his response was, "You're fired!" And he tried to get me fired. In fact, he did get me transferred out of there, or would have, but I strongly resisted being transferred under a cloud of the fact that I knew, and later, I understand, he realized that I had done the right thing. But I guess I should have had a little more wisdom and discretion would have been the better part of valor to have fudged it and said, "Well, I tried, sir, but . . ." (laughter)

**CLIFF SOUTHARD**  
**Publications Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1955-1960)**

*Cliff Southard was born in Illinois in 1925. He joined USIS in 1955. His career included posts in the Philippines, Japan, Burma, and Nigeria. He was interviewed by Pat Nieburg in February of 1988.*

*Q: You have had a very full career, Cliff. Let me take you back, through to your early assignment in the Philippines. Your first assignment to be correct. What was it like? What were you doing? What were you trying to achieve on that particular post?*

SOUTHARD: I was the publications officer. The large amount of material we produced in those days is hard to imagine today. I had mentioned earlier I was the country public affairs officer in the Philippines in 1980, 25 years after I had gone there as publications officer in 1955. In 1955, USIS-Philippines spent more money and produced more printed material than the entire East Asian regional area produced in 1980. In 1955, we were very print oriented.

For example, in Manila, I edited three magazines. We had a weekly news review. We had the monthly Free World--the Philippine edition of the Free World magazine, then we had a quarterly exchange magazine. In addition to putting out those three magazines, we produced about a pamphlet a week the year around. We produced posters, maybe a poster every two or three weeks.

We had a mailing list that when I arrived there were something like 45,000 names. We were printing 150,000 copies of Free World magazine. Again, in 1980, the largest circulation magazine we had in the Philippines was Dialogue--4,000 copies.

*Q: Cliff, thinking back to 1955 and the enormous amount of printed material that you produced, what were some of the themes that you covered? What were they supposed to convey?*

SOUTHARD: Within the Philippines, we were interested in supporting our military installations there. A fair amount of the material was supportive of our bases at Clark Field, Sangley Point and Subic Bay. Sangley, that was the U.S. Naval Base on Manila Bay, across the bay from the city of Manila.

We obviously were interested in encouraging the development of the Philippines--supporting the economic development--economic assistance programs. We were especially interested in building support for the Southeast Asia treaty organization, which was formed in 1956. The Philippines was one of the members.

We did one thing--had one project that was unlike that which I think you would find any place else in the world. The Filipinos had always suffered--from among their colleagues in Asia and elsewhere in the world--from being thought of as the little running dogs of the Americans.

A lot of people really never accepted the fact that they were an independent country. So, it was in our interests to establish the Philippines "as" an independent country, operating on its own.

In support of that, the Philippine government itself established in 1956, something called the Philippine information agency, which was patterned very much after our own Agency. The only difference is, I think they had about five people on the payroll. Ours is somewhat larger!

One of our country plan projects was to support this Philippine information agency. They had nothing. They had no capability for printing. They had very little editorial capability. They could not make movies.

So, USIS-Manila assisted them in producing things. In my office--in the publications office--we produced a series of seven or eight different pamphlets, each dealing with a facet of Philippine culture, which would be written by Philippine experts chosen by the Philippine information agency. We would set the thing in type, lay it out and send it down to the regional service center for printing.

In some cases, we even pouched them to our American embassies in foreign countries to be passed on to the Filipinos, because they could not afford to ship these things.

*Q: Cliff, a little while ago, you made a comparison about coming back 25 years later, in terms of the volume of material that the post produced. Can you give us an impression? How large an operation was the USIS Philippine operation? How many Americans? How many Filipinos? How extensive and what was the influence?*

SOUTHARD: It is interesting and a little sad to think, in a way, that the size of the organization in 1955, when I went there, varies very little from the size of the organization today, in terms of personnel. We had about ten or eleven officers in 1955. In the early 1980's we had not ten or eleven officers. In 1955 we had not quite 100 Filipino employees and three branch posts. In the 1980's, we have about 80 Filipino employees and two branch posts. In terms of material output, the people there today, simply do not produce as much material as we did then. The whole direction of the program is different in the 1980's than it was in the 1950's

*Q: Are you saying in effect that, while in the 1950's we were relying very much on individual products to convey our message, in the 1980's, it was more a question of personal contacts?*

SOUTHARD: More personal contact, of course. Television did not exist in the 1950's. Getting tapes placed on television is a very big thing in the 1980's and we do it quite well.

In the 1950's, we produced documentary films and showed them in mobile units all around the country. The mobile unit and use of films has practically dropped to nothing.

I suppose, and certainly I think, a greater reliance on personal contact in the 1980's than there was before--and the other big thing, of course, more reliance upon the imported speaker. The specialist coming in to speak. We seldom had speakers in the 1950's. Hardly ever did we have somebody come in.

*Q: I cannot help but wonder, from your statement. We had so many people in the 1950's and we had almost the same amount of people in the 1980's. Haven't we changed?*

*The situation must have changed in the Philippines. Requirements must have changed, and, so must the requirements for the resources. Yet, from what you are trying to tell me, or at least, what I hear, is that we as an organization really have stayed very much the same, though our surroundings may have changed. Is that good? Is this bad? Or, am I mistaken?*

SOUTHARD: To restate, the physical size of the organization has not changed very much. You cannot use dollars, because today's dollars are unlike the 1950's dollars. In those things which are comparable, people and branch posts, you can say that there has been very little change in the size of the organization. As a matter of fact, there has been not a great deal of change in the focus, in the effort of the organization.

We are still primarily supporting the continued presence of our bases there and surprisingly, some of the same problems, vis-a-vis, the bases, are seen today as they were seen 25 years ago, and I am sure will be seen ten years from now.

*Q: From your observation though, and you are one of the few people who have served at the same post with a considerable time interval which gives you the tremendous advantage of a comparison.*



*When you first came to the Philippines, I would assume you came to basically a favorable, friendly climate for USIA to operate. What was it like 25 years later? Was it changed for the better or for the worse? Could you make that comparison for me?*

SOUTHARD: Actually, in terms of the range of experience, I first went to the Philippines in 1945 as a young ensign in the U.S. Navy, just as the war ended. So, I saw the Philippines in 1945, 1955 to 1958 and then in the early 1980's. One thing continues throughout--one thing that really impressed me--and that is that the image of the United States is terribly, terribly good in the Philippines. I do not think there are many places in the world where Americans are more highly regarded than in the Philippines.

Even over these many years, irritations in the relationship, some economic, some relating to the bases, the fact remains that the Filipinos look upon the U.S. as their closest friends. Whether the USIS had anything to do with that, I am not sure. We certainly--the U.S.--certainly has a very high image.

*Q: Retained it to this day?*

SOUTHARD: Well, I haven't been there for eighteen months. I was back again in 1986. This was after the Aquino revolution. I saw little in 1986 that would lead me to believe that this basic attitude of the people has changed much.

**STEPHEN LOW**  
**Philippine Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research,**  
**Washington, DC (1956-1957)**

*Ambassador Stephen Low was born in Ohio in 1927. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale, and his master's and doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In addition to Nigeria, Ambassador Low served in Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia. He was interviewed by Professor I.W. Zartman in 1988.*

*Q: What was your first job?*

LOW: Unbelievably, my first job was in INR [Intelligence and Research] working on Philippine affairs.

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

LOW: It would have been March, 1956 to July 1957. I was immediately assigned to DRF, the Far East Division, as the Philippine and Malaysia analyst - while I was still finishing up my dissertation on the Philippines.

*Q: Was there any logic to this? Did somebody say, "Do you know anything about the Philippines?"*

LOW: I think so. I think that there definitely was. INR looked at my background and said, "Good, we can use him." It was a great assignment for me from which I learned so much. You learn how reports from the field are used, and how they fit into the system in Washington. A lot of people have trouble understanding that even though the Secretary of State may not read your reports, they form views of the people who are writing the memos which go to the Secretary and can often be very influential. It gave me a great respect for the non-electronic analytical papers called "despatches" which don't exist anymore. They were read by the worker bees in not just the Department of State, but the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Defense, the CIA and elsewhere around the government. It was interesting; I was the analyst for both Malaysia and the Philippines and found the comparison of the reporting from the two places fascinating. We had the most superb reporting from Singapore and Malaysia because the U.S. was not the responsible government there. As observers, some of our officers were brilliant. I remember particularly a fellow by the name of Anderson who wrote the most thoughtful analyses. We really had a feel for what was happening in Malaysia. But we got very little good analysis from Manila because we were so involved with the government of the Philippines. It was quite clear that there were opinions all up and down the line in the embassy but nobody felt free to ruminate, speculate, or analyze. We had some detailed reports of the government in one state or another, but nothing that really gave the kind of insight that we had in Malaysia. So, it was a very interesting experience. I had a wonderful boss, Dick Stewart, responsible for Southeast Asia who really taught me how to write.

*Q: This is so important.*

LOW: He was patient but very demanding. I won't say that I became a brilliant writer, but he certainly pointed me in the right direction. One of the best parts of that job was that I got to know the desk officers in the Department. We were then in the old SA-1 building, the big, tall building overlooking the hole that they were punching in the ground to build new State. It was an interesting period.

*Q: I'm not too familiar with the exact dates, but I would think that you would have two things going on in Malaysia and in the Philippines. This would be insurrections, the Huks and Magsaysay. Also in Malaysia, you were having the insurrection. This was after the Geneva Accords or whatever dealing with Indochina and the division. The Korean War had not been that long ago. I would have thought that there would have been a lot of "whither Southeast Asia" here.*

LOW: Interestingly, these were quite separate. There was no bringing together of Southeast Asia. There was no relationship between the insurrection in Malaysia and what was going on in the Philippines, nor with Indochina that I could see at that level. I did find that we would go into a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) meeting and there would be 40 people in the room. Not many of those 40 knew a lot about the Philippines. I was doing a great deal of the basic drafting of our Philippine analyses and writing some of the papers. I remember writing a paper on Malaysia which was, I think, fairly critical of Lee Kuan Yew. It was just before he was to make his first visit to the United States. Rufus Smith was the desk officer. He called me on a Sunday morning saying that he had just read my paper and respectfully requested that I withdraw it. I had

a lot of respect for Rufus who knew his business very well. So I said, "Sure. Tell me why." He told me why. It made sense to me, so we withdrew it. And he was dead right in the end. That wasn't the last time in my career when I took the advice of persons who I thought knew what they were talking about, and did the right thing. Later as ambassador and negotiator during the Zimbabwe peace settlement I desisted from sending in some hastily thought out ideas on the basis of the tough advice of my staff. The same was true of the decision in 1987 on the best design to be selected for the new Foreign Service Institute when the architects on the selection board steered me away from my interest in the most space for the least money toward what turned out to be a wonderfully designed set of buildings.

*Q: This would be stirring up the waters.*

LOW: Yes. I think Lee Kuan Yew was creating problems for the U.S. at that point and my paper was more critical of him than Rufus felt it should be. Talking to him, it made sense. We were right to change it.

*Q: Could you explain who Lee Kuan Yew was at that time?*

LOW: He was prime minister of the government of Singapore. He was considered by us to be too sympathetic to the left and too confrontational. He was a difficult person. I knew the desk people for the Philippines, Dave Cuthell and Bob Foulon, quite well. On one occasion, when both of them were away, I sat in over in State as the Philippine desk officer. So, I really got a wonderful exposure to the way the Department operated.

*Q: Was Magsaysay there?*

LOW: That was the period when Magsaysay was president of the Philippines. He was killed in an air crash. I remember going over to the desk and helping write letters of condolence. Though I was primarily involved in research analysis in both countries, I was able to get some idea of what the operational side of the Department was doing. It was an a very good first assignment.

*Q: With the Philippines, what was the feeling about, while Magsaysay was there, his leadership? After Magsaysay's death, what was the feeling?*

LOW: He was clearly our golden boy; a very impressive figure. He was an intelligent, non-corrupt, and strong leader who could have developed the Philippines and our relationship with it in a very positive way. So, it was a great tragedy. The old political class was still there and ready to take his place. Some were better than the others, but none had the vigor, leadership quality, or standard of values that Magsaysay had. So, it was a great blow.

*Q: You had studied the Philippines quite closely for your dissertation and then on the desk on the INR side. Did you see a problem of not having been there and not having that finger feel?*

LOW: Yes and no. There is no question that you would know the detail better, you would be able to analyze the day to day happenings better if you had experience on the ground. In the first place, I had the benefit of the reporting, which was not enormously analytical, but it gave you a

lot of the factual background of what was happening. So, you weren't entirely without that. The expression "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" is a fair expression, but I've always felt that a little knowledge is better than no knowledge. Every little bit is helpful. I had somewhat more than I would have had otherwise, but it has to be put in context.

*Q: Did you have to deal with old Philippine hands there with the "little brown brothers," which was the expression of our colonial time? Were they hanging around? I'm thinking particularly of the Department of the Interior or the Army?*

LOW: I didn't. The two desk officers were first-class people who were good analysts with prior service in the Philippines which had given them an understanding of modern Philippine problems. I think they are the ones who had to deal with the old stereotypes. I didn't in INR. Nor did I have enough time on the desk to do so. The desk officers would not have given me responsibility for dealing with the Pentagon. The contact I had with the military through INR was with pretty sophisticated officers who were beyond those stereotypes. I did find it many years later in some of the old timers in the Philippines when I eventually got there, which wasn't until my last assignment in the Foreign Service 30 years later. But I was fascinated going to a conference in the Philippines with some of the old timers. They knew the country well and loved it. But they were the most extraordinarily patronizing people. I am speaking of foundation people and advisors in the mid-1980s. The State Department people, the young people who were running the thing, certainly were not burdened with that kind of attitude. They may have had to deal with it. I didn't.

*Q: From your perspective in INR, what about the role of the CIA?*

LOW: As an analyst, you really didn't have that much involvement. I can't throw any light on it. This was the operational side. I think quite properly, the analyst is kept out of it. You're trying to look at the broader picture, of what the major trends are, what the longer-term picture is. I think that we just weren't involved in the Agency's activities. I think we benefitted from that. So far as the analytical side of the Agency is concerned, my recollection is that they were pretty competent.

*Q: I was wondering about reports that came in.*

LOW: It's interesting. My recollection looking back is that we gave much more weight to the Foreign Service reporting. Even in the Philippines, the despatches that came in and described what was happening were of much more value than the spot reports that came from the CIA. The CIA then as always was preoccupied with the Soviet Union. That wasn't what we were primarily interested in. I don't recall that we had any great disputes with my colleagues when we had our interagency meetings. I don't think they knew a great deal about Philippine political history. They didn't really have the same background. There were no issues of interpretation on which we divided that I remember.

*Q: Today is the fifth of December. I'm not quite sure how it was picked out, but next Monday, they're having a meeting for the 50th anniversary of INR. What were you doing? Can you*

*describe the role that you saw of INR both on Malaysia and the Philippines as opposed to what the desk was doing?*

LOW: Our effort was to try to analyze what was happening in the direction of events. We had two different functions. One was spot analysis and the other was the National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) that were much less helpful in my view. They were supposed to be important, but I think by the time all the compromises had been made, the things that everyone could most easily agree on were straight-line projections and not as insightful as the spot things we wrote. We had a free hand to write spot reports on whatever we saw that we thought was of importance and interest. It might be five, six, seven, or eight pages. I think the product was fairly good. Based on the reporting, it was often of a kind that we knew was of some interest to the desk and above, up to the assistant secretary level. We knew they weren't reading every word, but we also knew that they took the reports fairly seriously. Then we had the daily briefing every morning. We would do the papers that would be given to the briefer who would go to the Secretary. The number of times that there was a Philippine or Malaysian item for the Secretary's briefing weren't very many, but there were a few. I think we were filling in an analytical niche that was useful.

*Q: It really is almost the only place in the Foreign Service that institutionally allows somebody to figure out where you're going. The desk officer is filled with writing letters of condolence or answering things.*

LOW: And negotiating with the Interior, the Treasury, and so forth. I enjoyed it. I think it's a wonderful experience for anybody who is interested in political or economic reporting. I felt very lucky to have been shoved into that.

*Q: We've been talking mainly about the Philippines. Were there any events in Malaysia during this time that particularly engaged our interest?*

LOW: No, it was the ongoing war against the largely Chinese guerillas, fought by the British supported to some degree by the Malaysians, and the beginning of the development of an independent Singapore and Malaysia. It was important to me because another experience was learning how the important decisions are made. I developed my car pool analysis technique. My life was powerfully influenced by car pools. The Philippine desk officer, Bob Foulon, and German desk officer, Peter Hooper, car-pooled to the Department together. One morning Peter announced he was to be assigned to open a post in Kampala, Uganda, and asked Bob whether he knew any young officer who might be willing to go along? That's how my career then moved to Africa: through a car pool decision.

**PAUL M. KATTENBURG**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1956-1959)**

*Dr. Paul M. Kattenburg was born in Brussels, Belgium and emigrated to the United States in 1940. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of*

*North Carolina and served in the U.S. Army in the Office of Strategic Services. He later received a master's degree from Yale University before entering the Foreign Service in 1955. Dr. Kattenburg's Foreign Service career included positions in Guyana, Vietnam, Germany, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.*

*Q: I want to move on. Your first assignment abroad as a new Foreign Service Officer was to Manila. You were there from 1956 to '59. This was a very interesting period. I wonder if you could talk about what you were doing and how you saw the Embassy at that time?*

KATTENBURG: I was picked to go by Jim Bell and replace Bob Brand in the political section, under Bill Walker, who was the political counselor. I believe "Chip" (Charles) Bohlen was there when I arrived, if not, he came soon afterwards. One of the most interesting people in the Embassy at that time (I have seen him recently, he is in his eighties now and probably couldn't give an interview) was Henri Sokolove who was labor attaché in Delhi previously and came up from the Labor Department. Henri took me under his wing. He had more Philippine acquaintances than anyone. One of the reasons Jim Bell picked me, he had had considerable experience in the Philippines before, was that he felt we needed more contact with the Filipinos, the Philippine elite, and politicians, that we were doing well enough with the American community but not moving enough around in Filipino circles. Pretty soon this became my function, although I started out doing external reporting on Southeast Asia--and I think that was also in Jim Bell's mind, that we would bring the Philippines a little closer to the Southeast Asia fold. They were escaping it by these special arrangements with the U.S. SEATO was one of the ways to tie the Philippines more to the region.

But very soon my function at the Embassy became internal political reporting. I must say that I got to know a lot of Filipinos very well. One of them, it turned out, was Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. One of the things I am proudest of in my career in the Foreign Service is a despatch I wrote to the Department in March 1957, shortly after President Magsaysay's airplane crash in which he was killed, titled, if I remember it correctly, "Mayor of Tarlac Benigno Aquino, Jr., Future President of the Philippines." I did a biography of Ninoy Benigno whom I had gotten to know even in those few months quite well--both he and his wife, Cory. Mary and I had been up to the hacienda Luisita in Tarlac and had a very good time with Ninoy and Cory. Now she is President of the Philippines but then she never left the hacienda, she tended to stay in Tarlac and take care of the family, but Ninoy was all over Manila all the time. He was only 25, then, ten years my junior, but somehow we hit it off and continued our friendship up to the time of his assassination.

*Q: What was our view of the Filipinos as far as contacting them? Here you have the well-to-do group which the Aquinos were, but it seems that there was a substratum that even today seems to be almost uncontactable or something.*

KATTENBURG: Well, there is a substratum in the middle classes. Mass contact is always difficult except to shake hands in a village. The substratum, I think a number of us in those days got to know quite well. You can't get to know everyone. There are a large number of universities, hence they were producing a large number of relatively well- educated people who were

occupying middle-level positions in the bureaucracy and in the private sector. I think we started in those years, but not much before, to open up to these groups. The Aquinos were, of course, in the top elite, but there were a lot of others more wealthy and a lot of others less wealthy with whom we had considerable contact. My particular beat was the Congress, both the Senate and the House, and we had very good relations in those days, or I certainly did. There was Congressman Macapagal, who later became President, for example. Also Congressman Marcos, though Jim Bowers, who was another political officer in the Embassy, was cultivating Marcos in particular and I was not. We had contact with a large number of academics, partly through USIA. We moved about. I think this must have been a peak period for me in terms of output and contact numbers. I was on the go constantly.

*Q: What was our attitude within the Embassy towards the Philippines. Would you say it was a Big Brother attitude?*

KATTENBURG: I think we were trying to get out of the Big Brother attitude and to move towards more genuine independence--to loosen the grip of the special provisions of the treaties. I don't want to go into the details, but the Laurel-Langley Treaty was signed in 1955 reaffirming some of the provisions that were really infringements of the constitution. For instance, the capacity of Americans to own land in the Philippines and to own public utilities were regarded as difficult by the Filipinos. On the military bases issue, we tried in those years, in the Bohlen-Serrano Agreement, which was signed during my stay there but which was worked on by George Newman (he was the one who helped Bohlen in that negotiation) and Bill Walker as well, the Political Counselor. Subsequently Bill Walker was replaced by Barney Koren who was very instrumental indeed in moving us out of the superannuated SOFA provision--a Status of Forces Agreement provision that we had in the original military bases agreement of '47--and moving us toward something like the NATO provisions. In other words, really enhancing Philippine sovereignty. But I ought to say here, Stu, to balance out the considerations on this, and I think Karnow's book makes this clear--a very good book...

*Q: Yes, it is very good, I have read it...*

KATTENBURG: It's called *"In Our Image--America's Empire In the Philippines,"* by Stanley Karnov and published in 1989, I believe. I think the book is the best thing on the Philippines that has ever been done, at least at a relatively popular level. This is not an easy game to play with the Filipinos because the more you give them the more they feel cheated in a way because all they have to do in life is to twist our tail, at least in those days anyway, and play the anti-imperialist game. In other words, it was somewhat akin to "Bulwerism", if you give the labor unions everything they want there is no reason for there being any labor unions.

The Filipinos had no other role to play that I can see in politics, external politics anyway, than barking and haranguing the United States. It was not an easy game to win. I came back to it again ten years later as country director, at which time we really got rid of all the provisions that infringed on Philippine sovereignty in both economics and the military bases spheres in the Rusk-Ramos Agreement of 1966 which was signed during President's Marcos' visit to President Johnson in September, 1966. Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary...

*Q: Let's stick to your time there.*

KATTENBURG: Well, that was when I was country director ten years later, that is why I brought it up.

My time there, 1956-59, was really a very good time. It was probably, from my point of view, a peak period of career production. I think perhaps the most important despatch I wrote from there was a very long, serious analysis of the press in the Philippines. I did a series of despatches on government institutions, and structure and personalities, including bios. It was a very interesting period. Nothing of tremendous significance.

*Q: What was your impression of Charles Bohlen, Chip Bohlen, as ambassador? In some way one feels he was a fish out of water. I mean, he was a supreme Continental man, a Soviet and French specialist.*

KATTENBURG: I think he was absolutely wonderful. He was probably the most wonderful person I have worked for in my entire Foreign Service career. He was a man of extraordinary intelligence, charm, and dignity. He knew how to handle relatively junior officers, as I was, after all I was a second secretary in the political section. He was sitting in his bedroom, watching television and he saw a picture of me on the floor of the convention of one of the political parties. He called me in and very gently explained to me that I was going a little too far in that one. I remember that very well, but he did nothing hasty. He said that I had to realize that Sergio Osmena, Jr. was using me. I explained how it happened. While walking with Osmena in the corridor he moved out to the floor with me trailing behind. Osmena then motioned to the camera to have me pictured on the floor with him.

Another thing occurred during that time for reasons which I will never understand. My name appeared in the New York Times all of a sudden, although I didn't know it (eventually I learned about it because some friends and relatives in the U.S. sent me the column) as being one of the plotters along with President Garcia and a number of other people of the Indonesian coup of 1958--that the CIA was preparing. Well, I was, I think being used as a foil by the Agency because I did have some contacts in Manila with Indonesian exiles who were plotting the overthrow of Sukarno. One guy in particular, who was a son of former Prime Minister Sjahrir, whose name was Des Alwi, visited Manila even though he was resident in Singapore with Sumitro, which was the exile group that was trying to overthrow Sukarno. The Ambassador was, I think, extraordinarily broad-minded about all this. He realized that I hadn't done anything and so I suffered no ill consequences.

Though that was a strange one. To this day I wonder how my name appeared. It must have been put there for deceptive reasons by somebody. I think if you read the memoirs, the extremely interesting memoirs of the same period, by Joseph Burkholder Smith, called, "Portrait of A Cold Warrior," on the CIA and its activities in southeast Asia in the mid to late fifties, it describes some of the activities of the Agency in the Philippines. In particular in the Philippine elections of 1958 and it becomes clear why I might have been used a little bit to take attention away from Agency involvement.



*Q: Did you interact with the Agency in the Philippines?*

KATTENBURG: I never knew exactly who was with the Agency and who wasn't. Perhaps I was naive in some respects. "Little Joe" Smith, the author of the memoirs mentioned, actually berated the Agency for some of its dumber, sillier activities in the Philippines, including passing along condoms that were defective which were presumably being passed on behalf of then candidate Recto whom we didn't want to see elected, as he was too strong a nationalist. This is idiotic, but this kind of thing did happen. I'm never mentioned in the book, but we knew each other. His cover was that he was working for some army unit in downtown Manila, but I suspected that he was Agency. How deeply involved we were in Philippine elections in that time is difficult for me to say. I think we probably provided some assistance to more than one party. The Agency was clearly involved in helping the exiles in Singapore plot the overthrow of Sukarno. In 1958 it did what I think was an unforgivable thing. I didn't know the full scope of it until later. It used the base at Clark to assist the exile army with bombing runs against army positions in Java and Sumatra. That's where Pope, an American pilot, was captured by the Indonesians and put on exhibit in Djakarta by Sukarno. I think that was going much too far, although my own sympathies were probably anti-Sukarno at that time. His government had turned very repressive.

*Q: But these things usually don't work anyway...*

KATTENBURG: That's right.

**ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY**  
**Personnel Officer**  
**Manila (1957-1962)**

*Ambassador Rozanne L. Ridgway was born in Minnesota on August 22, 1935. She received a bachelor's degree from Hamline College in 1957 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. Ambassador Ridgway's career included positions in The Philippines, Norway, Bahamas, Finland, and Germany. This interview was conducted by Ann Miller Morin in 1987.*

RIDGWAY: So I went out to Manila in this funny little job; I was the third of three personnel officers, and what I learned then in the way of regulations and the rest has all been overtaken by the years of changing regulations. But I had an office tucked way back in the corner and I was something called Personnel, in a mission that had nine hundred Americans. I have heard of more things that people can do to themselves, their lives, their loved ones, and I've just sort of come to . . . I'm unshockable today on what trouble people can get themselves into, what tangles money and sex and liquor and everything can be. But I think I was a good listener. I think I came to understand a much broader world of the human condition than a lot of people I know. They just knew they could come and see me in that back office and they were sort of inching up on bringing their problem officially to the front part of the office. But there I was, tucked back there, and they could just come in and tell me what a mess it was. And there were a lot of things that I had never heard of before, didn't know people did those things or could get themselves in such a

mess, and so I learned from that. I have not been shocked since that. Disappointed, but I haven't been shocked.

*Q: Sounds like a very good job to take early on.*

RIDGWAY: It helped me grow up. My own background, things weren't hidden from us, but there was just no exposure to that kind of thing.

*Q: No, because the press was not as open as it is now. There are many things you can talk about now.*

RIDGWAY: The extremes of wealth and poverty that exist in the world, the role of diplomacy, the limitations on diplomacy; it was good in a totally non-office fashion.

*Q: Did you deal only with the American staff, or did you also deal with the . . .*

RIDGWAY: No, I also handled local personnel, it was called at that time. Did a lot there. In fact, became in charge of local personnel. I knew many of them and anyhow they were all very sympathetic. They knew I was the person that was so far down the list that, you know, I never got invited anywhere or did anything. I dated regularly. I must have had a string of boy friends and men friends in my life. I went to all the dances, I went to all the nightclubs, I did all the gambling that was on limits, and that kind of thing. I just made up for every dance I'd ever missed in high school and every date I'd never had, and had a wonderful time.

*Q: You were finally with people where you belonged. It makes a difference.*

RIDGWAY: Yes. And could do that kind of thing.

**HENRY L. T. KOREN**  
**Political Counselor**  
**Manila (1958-1960)**

*Henry L. T. Koren was born in New Jersey in 1911. He entered the Foreign Service in 1948 and served in Haiti, Switzerland, the Philippines, the Congo (Brazzaville), and Vietnam. He was interviewed in 1989 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: Well, moving on. You were appointed political counselor to our embassy in Manila. You served from 1958 to 1960 under Ambassador Charles Bohlen, Chip Bohlen. In the first place, Ambassador Bohlen was a real authority on the Soviet Union. How did he end up in the Philippines?*

KOREN: Because of the differences with Foster Dulles.

*Q: What was the problem?*

KOREN: Well, Foster Dulles was a dyed-in-the-wool Republican and conservative and Chip was a Democrat and a liberal, and they just did not get along together.

*Q: And this is really to put him out to pasture in a way?*

KOREN: Yes, put him to pasture. They had to give him a job, and it was a tough job.

*Q: Well, what were our interests and our situation in the Philippines? We're talking about 1958 when you first arrived.*

KOREN: Well, we had, of course, primarily an issue on the bases.

*Q: This is the one at Subic Bay?*

KOREN: Well, we had three bases. We had Subic Bay and we had Clark Field and we had Langley Point.

*Q: Actually, the name escapes me, too.*

KOREN: That was a key problem we had in the Philippines. Then, of course, we had ongoing problems of veterans and immigration and economic problems. The Philippines political problems were constantly turning around, and the basis for it all was what we just called it G&C--graft and corruption.

*Q: How did we deal with the problem of corruption and graft? We always take a high and mighty attitude about this, but in many countries this is what makes things run. Were we hurting ourselves, or were we going along? How did we operate in the Philippines in those days?*

KOREN: We hurt ourselves. I mean, we felt it but naturally we went along with a certain amount of it, and there was very little of the sudden jerking of the rein and saying, "Enough is enough." That was primarily the ambassador's job. In effect, he would go to see the president or somebody--

*Q: Who was the president at that time?*

KOREN: Well, García was the actual president at that time. It was just after the Philippines' Magsaysay had been killed.

*Q: Killed in an airplane crash.*

KOREN: It became García, and he was a go-along politician.

*Q: Magsaysay had been painted in heroic terms, but on the ground as a political counselor in 1958 and three years thereafter, what was your impression of Magsaysay's impact and his accomplishments?*

KOREN: I'd say he accomplished a great deal. I never knew him because he had been killed by the time I got there, but I knew Diem very well, although he had left at the time. I knew him in Vietnam. But I'd say Magsaysay had a exorbitantly high reputation, and how he would have handled the problems that developed, I don't know.

*Q: Well, the problems as you were describing were not of the Huk insurgency--had pretty well died down by this time. Is that right?*

KOREN: Well, yes. They had died down.

*Q: But the problems were really one of having a viable economy with the problems of the ruling class and their corruption and the graft?*

KOREN: Yes, I think that's probably right. Underlying everything was the problem of the "haves" and the "have nots." That's endemic for every underdeveloped country, as you well know.

*Q: What could we do about the situation? I mean, it had been our colony, but were we still acting as a colonial power or was it really "hands off," saying "This is your problem"?*

KOREN: No. I'd say primarily our attitude was and had to be a friendly counselor, and we had certain principles and certain institutions which we respected. We tried to guide them according to our principles in that respect.

*Q: How did we do this? You're the political counselor.*

KOREN: Talking to the people.

*Q: You talked to the people, but, one, you talk to the people and somebody's getting paid. If you're talking to the people receiving graft, it takes an awful lot more than talking to get somebody to stop taking money.*

KOREN: Well, from my point of view, we had no authority in the sense of "you must not do that" parental type of authority. We could only say, "That's very difficult and it will give you trouble in the long run." Sometimes it would take and sometimes it wouldn't, but basically it was mostly, I would say, a friendly persuasion. [Chuckles]

*Q: How did you see the political situation there? Was it a healthy political situation?*

KOREN: No. Very chaotic and changeable. To give you an example, the two people that I considered my best friends in the Philippines were Ferdinand Marcos and Benigno Aquino, and they couldn't have been more opposite, as you well know. The thing that went on that I did not

know that I've found out since then there was some underground things that the CIA was perfectly--not perfectly, but fairly--cognizant that I knew nothing about.

*Q: Here you were. You had been within the CIA orbit at one time. One of the complaints has often been that the CIA operates and gets things which it does not share to those whom it should. What I gather is that you didn't feel it was a very good cooperation in that.*

KOREN: Well, I felt I had all the cooperation that I needed from the CIA. In fact, I had more than I needed in some respects that they were looking to me for introductions to various people. And one of the last nights I spent was with the CIA station chief at that time and the Marcos, Imelda and Freddie Marcos, because the CIA station chief knew I knew him and asked me if I would give him a leg up.

*Q: What position did Marcos have at the time you knew of him, and how did you evaluate him then?*

KOREN: I evaluated him as a very ambitious individual who had considerable talent, talent in the political sense, and he knew that as far as running the Philippines and being president of the Philippines, which he is, was his objective.

*Q: What was he at that time?*

KOREN: When I first knew him he was a congressman.

*Q: You were saying Ferdinand Marcos was a congressman.*

KOREN: Marcos was a congressman and then he became a senator. And the thing that is interesting to me was that in the Philippines at that time you had elections, everybody voted for whomever they wanted.

*Q: Anywhere?*

KOREN: Anywhere. And the person who came out on top was marked from then on as the number one. They used to say, "Number one, number one."

*Q: You're pointing the forefinger up in the air.*

KOREN: That's to indicate number one. And he was number one in the congressional race, he was number one in the senatorial race. So he was doubly marked, I would say.

*Q: What made him so popular?*

KOREN: Well, he was a very good politician. He was fast with his tongue and made a great deal of promises, and never underestimate the power of a woman. He would go out to the housings, you know the Philippine housing, the barrios, are not noted for their intelligence, and he knew just the right touch. He'd grown up that way, and his wife, Imelda, was a perfect counterpart. She

would sing and he would talk for 20 minutes on without a note and then she would sing, and it was the most popular combination that you could imagine.

*Q: Well, we did we see this as a couple at that time, saying, "Maybe they have the right touch to bring the Philippines together"?*

KOREN: They were the best possible bet for cohesiveness on the part of the Philippines and the part of the Philippine people. In other words, they used to say Marcos was tremendously popular, which he was, and this couple was tremendously popular. I'll hark back to that dinner I had for Marcos and the station chief. At that time he outlined a modern, two-way, very authoritarian government. In other words, there had to be one person on the top who called all the shots, and he was the man who was going to do it. Well, Diem tried to do it in Vietnam, for example. So he looked like the best bet.

*Q: You said your other best friend was Benigno Aquino, who was the slain husband of the president of the Philippines. How did Benigno Aquino seem to you at that point?*

KOREN: Benigno, we used to call him the "Boy Wonder of Tarlac," because he was very young. At 35 years, he was the governor of a province, and he was much, much more intellectually endowed than Marcos. Marcos had smarts; he was sort of a street politician. But Benigno thought in terms of issues and he was a very articulate man and a very intelligent man, and I think he would have been a great president of the Philippines if he had lived.

*Q: Talking about our people at the embassy, what was Charles Bohlen's operating style in the embassy? How did he work?*

KOREN: He would give you an assignment, and you would be expected to fulfill that. If you had any questions, you would come back and say, "I can't do it," or "I need help," and he would give you whatever help he thought was appropriate. To me, he was a great individual, but he had also very strict principles. He was a very intelligent and wise--you know, "The Wise Men."

*Q: There's a book called The Wise Men, in which he was one included about American foreign policy after World War II.*

KOREN: Yes. That was an extraordinarily good book, if you haven't read it.

*Q: I have read it, yes.*

KOREN: At any rate, Chip would, as I say, give you an assignment within your field, he would expect you to do something. He had very high standards, but he was also a very kind and worldly man. He exemplified his background and his training and was unquestionably the best ambassador I ever worked for.

*Q: How did you find the staff at the embassy? I mean, you had a bad experience, both in Bern and Switzerland, and now you're back in the Foreign Service. How well do you feel you were served by the staff?*

KOREN: I had a very good section.

*Q: This is the political section.*

KOREN: Political section. The DCM was a very likable, gentle person, who also had high standards just like Bohlen and, of course, he was more approachable. Bohlen was still the ambassador and as far as I was concerned, he was always approachable, but the DCM was more of a friend, a colleague type of person. As I say, he was a gentle and sympathetic type of person. I had a little problem there that the man who I replaced didn't like the idea and he was still there for a while, but that worked itself out.

*Q: Often in the Foreign Service you don't really overlap with the person you replace, which has its strong points and its weak points. The weak point is that you don't pass on knowledge. The strong point is sometimes there is not the greatest cooperation between the two. There's a resentment.*

KOREN: There was a considerable amount of professional jealousy.

*Q: Well, yes. Of course, you had been out and also Bohlen had specifically asked for you, too.*

KOREN: Yes. It was a very, very pleasant time.

*Q: It was a pleasant time, but also it sounds like a very challenging time.*

KOREN: It was.

*Q: How did you feel the cooperation from the State Department, from the bureau and all. It wasn't Henry Robertson, or was it at that time?*

KOREN: Walter Robertson. We got from the staff of the Department, I think, all of the cooperation we needed to get.

*Q: Did you have any feeling that because of Dulles' animosity toward Bohlen that sometimes this carries over into the whole Departmental feeling toward the whole post?*

KOREN: No. I think mostly that the Department attitude--of course, I was not in the Department at that time--they, I think, pretty generally felt that Bohlen would do a good job no matter where he was, and yet this is sort of a strange place for him to be.

*Q: Yes. Well then he moved from there. Kennedy appointed him to Paris.*

KOREN: The first thing that happened was Christian Herter--

*Q: Who took over from Dulles.*

KOREN: I can remember Chip's relief, because Herter was a Harvard man and a friend of his. But from the point of view of the working of the embassy, of course, anything would work well under Bohlen and Mrs. Bohlen, and we had the best time in the world.

**JAMES R. LILLEY**  
**CIA Officer**  
**Manila (1958-1961)**

*Ambassador James R. Lilley was born in China in 1928. After serving in the US Army from 1946-1947 he received his bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1951. From 1951-1958 he worked as an analyst for the US Army. His career includes positions in China, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Laos, and ambassadorships to South Korea and China. Ambassador Lilley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 1998.*

LILLEY: Then, in 1958 the agency sent me to the Philippines to take over one of its big Chinese operations. I was dually assigned as Chinese Affairs officer in the Political Section of the Embassy, and I did agency work on the side. That was interesting because I dealt with many of the influential Chinese leaders who ran the economy of the Philippines. And they still do. I, as a young guy, 30 years old, was dealing with these men about Philippine politics, about what was happening, who was being "bought off," and all of these types of operations.

*Q: What was your impression of the role of the Chinese community in the Philippines? We never heard much about it. We heard about its role in Indonesia, Malaysia, and other places in Southeast Asia, but not in the Philippines.*

LILLEY: I became very much involved in that. I did research at Yale on it, I went to Chinese language school at Yale, and I took a course focused on the overseas Chinese in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

In the Philippines the numbers of Chinese are relatively smaller than in Indonesia or Malaysia. Obviously so. However, the Chinese controlled the market for copra, manufacturing, a lot of hotels, and retail outlets. All of these things were under the control of the big Chinese families. They were also the "money bags" for Filipino politicians. I was in the middle of all this and I thought that it was interesting.

Then we had the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958, over Quemoy and Matsu [two island archipelagos near Amoy on the mainland of China]. I was very much "gung ho" with the Taiwanese. That is, I enthusiastically supported them. We brought down several Chinese Nationalist Air Force aces who altogether had shot down about 30 Chinese Communist planes. They had flown F-86s, using "Sidewinder" missiles. They were treated well, and I really found that their visit to Taiwan was exciting.



After the visit of these Taiwan pilots to the Philippines, we began to get reports from people whom we had sent into Mainland China. They were overseas Chinese who came out and said that the situation was ghastly. This situation was not being reflected in the Philippine media. We were picking up some of the earlier indications about this Great Leap Forward disaster. We were also receiving reports about the overseas Chinese community and its power over the Philippine economy and politicians. Then there was this question about what was happening in China. We really sensed that something was going wrong in development in China.

*Q: Could you tell us a little about the Chinese community in the Philippines? Was Ramon Magsaysay President of the Philippines at that time?*

LILLEY: He was killed in an aircraft accident in 1957.

*Q: So that was really before you arrived in the Philippines?*

LILLEY: Yes. I was in the Philippines when Carlos Garcia was President. We had traditional ties in the Chinese community which went very deep. There was a charismatic guy in the CIA staff in the Philippines called Schultheis who was born and raised in China and educated at Tong Zhou school outside of Beijing. He spoke excellent Chinese. He was a man with a sense of destiny. The Agency had in the Philippines two giants, Schultheis and Ed Lansdale.

*Q: You're referring to Colonel Ed Lansdale who became renowned as the inspiration for a character in the book, "The Ugly American," and was...*

LILLEY: He was considered to be the power behind President Magsaysay. He represented the success of American covert policy. Lansdale worked to halt the insurrection of the Hukbalahap [communist insurgent group] and helped get Ramon Magsaysay, a charismatic Filipino, elected President of the Philippines. People were saying that we had now started to win the war in Asia. Schultheis had made all kinds of contacts in the Chinese community in the Philippines. He had fled China and had gone to Hong Kong. He was asked to leave Hong Kong by the British and was in the Philippines with his agents.

*Q: Was Schultheis an American?*

LILLEY: Yes. He had been a Colonel, I believe, in the U.S. Army and then he transferred to the CIA. He and Lansdale were very important men. Their cables made impressive reading. They considered themselves to be men of destiny. Nothing could stop them, and they had virtual carte blanche from their institutions.

*Q: Was this rubbing off on you?*

LILLEY: Well, we sort of looked at them as "big men." Lansdale was fascinating. I was skeptical about Schultheis, because he seemed to be "taken in" by intelligence fabricators. However, he certainly went through the Chinese community and lined them all up. He took advantage of a trend, because the Filipinos were Catholic, anti-communist, pro-American. He went through that situation with "Seven League Boots." Lansdale had little sense of the

clandestine approach to operations. He operated like an advertising man, although some of the things he did were rather well conceived. He certainly inspired Lederer and Burdick who actually wrote the book, "The Ugly American." They referred to Lansdale as "Colonel Hillandale," who played the harmonica and...

*Q: The book doesn't hold up very well, but at the time it had an impact like "Uncle Tom's Cabin." In the diplomatic community it encouraged foreign language training and other subjects.*

LILLEY: It also encouraged cultural sensitivity. Of course, Lansdale later went to South Vietnam and worked in support of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

*Q: Lansdale wanted to make Diem his Vietnamese "Magsaysay." He was the wrong guy in the wrong place.*

LILLEY: At any rate, those two men impressed me. I had an interesting job in the Philippines. It was an interesting post. Then I got restless, and the action was moving over to Southeast Asia. That's when I went to Cambodia, which was another, interesting experience.

*Q: Before we begin discussing Cambodia, I would like to know whether Ferdinand Marcos ever crossed your line of fire in the Philippines?*

LILLEY: Yes. He was then the most popular politician in the Philippines. He was the leading Senator in the Liberal Party. He was just emerging from the pack of other Liberal Party leaders as a sort of Sino-Filipino. He was seen as a new, clean generation of war heroes. That's the way he was seen at the time.

At that time Marcos had very little to do with Americans, or at least with me. We were more involved with people like President Diosdado Macapagal, Raul Manglapus, who later became Foreign Minister, "Manny" Manahan, who was a Senator, and others. We had a very strong Chief of Station [senior CIA representative] called John C. Richardson, who had come to the Philippines from Greece. He was determined to be a "king maker." Charles "Chip" Bohlen was the Ambassador when I arrived in the Philippines.

*Q: Would you say that it was almost the ethos of the CIA at that time to look for and make somebody a king? I mean, there was the example of Ramon Magsaysay. This was what the CIA seemed to be trying to do. That is, to bring up local leaders, rather than build up institutions.*

LILLEY: I would say that there was a big drive on at that time, along the lines of: "We want you to guide these guys to do the hard work." (End of tape)

*Q: You were saying that your job was intelligence collection. In CIA parlance, what did that mean at the time?*

LILLEY: There were two branches in CIA Stations abroad at that time. In Manila one of them was called "Foreign Intelligence" or "FI." The other was called "PP," or "Political/Psychological

Operations." The first group collected intelligence. The second group acted on it, by influencing the press, politicians, and policy. The "PP" people used what were known as "agents of influence." The "FI" people collected intelligence. That was the basic concept. The Agency was organized into these two components.

*Q: At the time did you find yourself "tripping over" people from USIA [United States Information Agency] or the Political Section of the Embassy?*

LILLEY: Actually, the relationships were fairly compatible. Henry T. ("Barney") Koren was the Political Counselor when Ambassador Bohlen was in the Philippines. Bohlen was really interested in China, in intellectual terms. He had a tremendous mind. I found him a very intimidating person. Koren was a good friend and a good friend of my father-in-law. He would say to me: "Jim, why don't you get out of this intelligence game and get into the Foreign Service?" He was the first one to throw this idea at me. He said: "I used to be in the intelligence game but I got out of it."

I had been thinking about this. After the "Bay of Pigs" disaster [abortive CIA-led attempt in 1961 to overthrow Fidel Castro in Cuba], I became really rather disillusioned. This occurred when I was on home leave in 1961. Then the CIA personnel people said: "Look, there's this job in Cambodia which is just 'made for you.' You have access to China. For the first time in your career you will be working against a Chinese Communist Embassy there. There are a lot of good people you can work with. Come back."

**WILLIAM G. RIDGEWAY**  
**Regional Motion Picture Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1958-1963)**

*William G. Ridgeway was born in 1926 in Pennsylvania. He joined the Army in 1946 and served as a motion picture officer until he joined the USIS in 1953. His postings included Manila, Bangkok, and Seoul. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in February of 1989.*

*Q: All right. We have just taken a short break. We have come to the point where you were transferred to the Philippines, so let's proceed from there.*

RIDGEWAY: The assignment in the Philippines was to the position of Regional Motion Picture Officer. I was responsible for the completion of USIS films being produced in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Saigon was producing a weekly newsreel in French, Chinese and English and Vietnamese. I think we did French, but I may be wrong on that.

The material would be put on the Pan Am flight Friday night. We would meet the plane, rush the material to the lab, have it processed and turn it around and ship it back by Monday. So usually I

worked every weekend. I did not do the work myself. I just supervised and approved what the lab was handling, both with the sound recording and in making the answer prints and spot checking the release prints. (The answer print is the first print made. It is used to determine if all is satisfactory, prior to the full run.)

*Q: Was this the time in which Alan Fisher was MOPIX director in Vietnam?*

RIDGEWAY: In Saigon, yes.

*Q: So you were not really doing a program for the Philippines. You were actually doing a support operation primarily for Saigon.*

RIDGEWAY: Right, exactly.

*Q: I see.*

RIDGEWAY: The problems we faced there were the difficulties of keeping the lab and the contractors honest. Apparently they more or less stole, appropriated or whatever you want to call it, all the raw film stock they wanted. They got away with it just by simply saying that it was destroyed or damaged in processing, and no one ever bothered to check on it.

I had the same problem in Korea, where raw stock and, in particular, camera film were quite valuable. It was a hundred times more expensive than it would be in the States, so it was an excellent item for sale on the black market.

So what I did -- the same thing I had instituted in Korea -- was in effect a double entry bookkeeping system for raw film. It is not as easy as it sounds because it has to be handled in the dark. When I started checking the records, we had anywhere from thirty to fifty percent wastage on certain types of stock.

For example, on sound recording film they would say they needed a thousand feet for a ten-minute film. What I discovered was that they were using both sides of the film -- both edges of the film. First they would record one way, rewind and then use the other edge. That way they would get two rolls of film from us for one reel, and they would pocket the other. That was just one example.

I was able to cut the shortages, through waste or by theft, by instituting the accounting system. We cut it down to approximately three percent on release print stock, well within the commercial average.

What I did was make them -- if they took a thousand feet of film, to give us back a thousand feet of processed film -- it didn't matter if it was good or not, because they would not know whether we put it on the rewinder and checked it (in the dark).

They would give us back processed film and film that had not been exposed. They were instructed to splice together in the dark, and use it in printing rush prints -- perfectly satisfactory. There was no reason to use good uncut stock when you are going to cut it up later, anyhow.

That way we were able to reduce our film budget considerably, with large savings for the government.

Needless to say, this did not put me in a favored position with the contractors. When I first arrived in the Philippines, I was met at the airport and offered the keys to a nice little red open sports car for my use. I thanked them for the offer and graciously turned it down.

Later on I was also offered -- or the insinuation was there -- that if I needed an feminine companionship, this could be very easily arranged. So basically my position was to keep my staff of two on their toes in handling the books, and to make sure the labs gave us what we were paying for and not cheat us blind.

By the way, one of my staff was Pat Kelly, a Filipina of great charm and well connected to the power structure. Years after I left the Philippines, she married -- General Lansdale, the famed counter-insurgency expert. We kept in touch while we were residing in Washington. The general died a few years ago.

Every five or six months or so, the MOPIX officers in the three countries would have a mini-regional conference. I would fly over and discuss the various problems they were having with the films they were sending me. Some were technical and some were problems of content. I remember offering my observation about Vietnam. There was no way in the world we could hide the fact, and keep it secret, the big six-foot Americans in jungle dress dropping in and out of helicopters.

My opinion at the time was that we should have informed the Vietnamese public, and given some rational reason why they were there, because otherwise the communists, as they did, would just pick it up and run with it.

The assignment there really was quite blah in a way, not at all exciting -- quite pleasant living but nothing really extraordinary. The main highlight was the birth of our son Robert, evening out the family to two boys and two girls.

*Q: That pretty well covers your experience.*

RIDGEWAY: -- in the Philippines, yes.

**ROBERT L. CHATTEN**  
**Junior Officer Trainee, USIS**  
**Manila (1959-1960)**

*Robert L. Chatten received an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of New Mexico and went on to receive a masters degree in communications and journalism from Stanford. He was sworn in as a Foreign Service Officer in 1959. In 1972, he was stationed in Colombia as the new PAO in Bogota. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to Bolivia and Ecuador.*

*Q: You mentioned Manila.*

CHATTEN: They asked us where we wanted to go. I didn't have any preconceived notions, but having done a good bit of my growing up on the border, I thought maybe Latin America would be a good idea. I hadn't been anywhere abroad save for high school and college adventures in negotiating some goods and services in Ciudad Juarez. I put down a handful of preferences, but they ended up dividing us around the world. Of our group of eleven, three of us ended up in East Asia. Barbara Harvey, who had done her Masters on East Asian things and who really knew a good bit about the subject, and Jeremy Tryon, one of the three of us who had media background, ended up in Indonesia. The Chattens were assigned first to Burma, where Art Hummel was PAO. I had just read Burma Surgeon, about the only book out about the subject, when Art came in with a cable that said, "We don't have any housing for a JOT." Manila, a wonderful training post, was the fallback.

*Q: What did you encounter when you got there? You were a JOT, who was the boss there? What kind of a setting did you enter?*

CHATTEN: Dick Barnsley was PAO. He had been deputy to Bill Copeland, who was one of the old time newsies and a former Vice President of United Press in Latin America. Bill had gone back to Washington to be area director or head of IPS I forget which; he did both. So Dick was PAO and Lou Mattison was deputy PAO and of what I came to learn was a very large, highly articulated post in which everything the Agency had to offer in the field was present. It was a wonderful place to be a JOT. There were two assistant CAOs, plus a librarian and a branch post in Cebu. There were four officers in the information section, headed by Hal Schneidman, on his first agency assignment, after having been PR director for the city of Philadelphia and press agent for Victor Mature and Marge and Gower Champion. There was a radio officer, a topics officer, a press officer, and a publications officer. Then you had the whole VOA relay and transmitter apparatus and RSC Manila. If the post chose to rotate you around, as they did me, you could get a view of the agency in many of its dimensions. This prejudiced my attitude forever thereafter as to what constitutes a proper way to deal with a JOT, at least with a JOT who wants to become a generalist. That was opposed to the archetype: one with a degree in Soviet studies and who considered any assignment out of the Soviet sphere as peripheral.

*Q: What was the program like in Manila those days? The USIS program. What were you trying to do?*

CHATTEN: Let me set the scene a little bit. The Huk Rebellion, a peasant rebellion with a lot of communist influence, was still on the very near horizon behind us. It was very, very recent history to the extent that there were parts of the country that, while not proscribed, would have been a little difficult to deal with. That constituted one dimension to what everybody in the

mission was doing, not just USIA in terms of interpreting what communism meant, or what we thought it meant in East Asia. Remember this was before we learned some of the things we later had impressed upon us in Vietnam. That was part of it.

Even more important was that we were, at that stage, in the immediate past out of the Colonial era. Only thirteen years previously, the Philippines officially had become a country. They took over the administration of their own affairs from the US just after the end of the war. The impact of this was a huge factor, coloring everything everybody in the mission did. The Colonial mentality still existed in the minds of many of the people in the Philippines, as well as an educational system, and a US-patterned government infrastructure as background legacies. Indeed, the Colonial mentality still existed in the minds of many Americans, who thought about and who made policy relating to the Philippines and East Asia.

Then you had the enormous US military presence, at the largest air base outside the continental United States (Clark) and the largest naval base outside of the continental United States (Subic Bay). These were, in just about everyone's mind, and the bulwark of freedom, democracy and all that is good and right against the Red menace in the Philippines

Then you have the fact that the language of instruction in the Philippine education system, which we created, was English after the third grade. While there were dozens of languages and seven major language groups in the linguistic cauldron of the Philippines, English was a tremendous program asset. I doubt we thought of it as the kind of program asset that it truly was.

Then you had an ambassador, Chip Bohlen, a Soviet specialist burned in the McCarthy era, and exiled to the Philippines, who had just departed as we arrived. Early in our tour we got one of those aberrations that the State Department produces sometimes, Ambassador John Dewey Hickerson III. He had been ambassador to Finland and he spent at least the time of our overlap there not really quite getting a handle on the distinction between Finland and the Philippines and the nature of the US relations between them. This caused all manner of goofy consequences in the relationship that you went around explaining and sweeping up after.

Then we had an Eisenhower visit, the Presidential trip to Japan that had gotten scrubbed when the advance party had been stoned. When the White House scrubbed Eisenhower's visiting Japan, the fallback was the Philippines.

In sum, I got my first USIS experience not only with this very large, articulated post, mission, and regional center, but also with all of the downstream implications of United States manifest destiny in Asia, which imposed themselves on the program. For good measure I got the opportunity to deal with a presidential visit and the opportunity to meet the President. Interestingly, it was the first chance that I had to see that a presidential press secretary, Jim Hagerty, was the chief advance man for the trip, could tell an ambassador what to do, indeed to push him around. That's a valuable lesson for somebody as green as I was, and anybody else.

*Q: In the operation of the USIS program, did you find any particular meaningful things that USIS was doing with which you disagreed? Were there problems with making it a meaningful, useful activity? Were you happy with the program?*

CHATTEN: Well, I didn't know what a program was, of course. So it was a little difficult for me at the time to answer the question compared to what. But it seemed to me to be a rational program. If there were things about what was going on that seemed a little funny to me as a former newspaperman, they had as much as anything to do with our relationship with AID. ICA, as it was known then, had an enormous presence and we had an Information Officer focused on just their activities. Later on when Alliance for Progress Information Officers were invented in Latin America, many people thought that this kind of liaison with the AID operation was unique, that they invented it. If there was anything that seemed a little strange to me, it was in the whole USG not being very introspective about the degree to which AID really changed, warped our relationship. We didn't seem to be very honest with ourselves about what we were putting into it and what those contributions permitted the Filipinos to do with their own resources. Its not that they didn't need assistance or the we as the former colonial power weren't the logical ones to give it, but we may have slowed the Filipinos' drive to be fully independent developing their own systems and their own government.

I don't want to make too much of this. President Ramon Magsaysay had, with our help, overcome an armed insurgency only short years before. Technical assistance was still looked at as a wonderfully successful tool which allowed an inspired leader to get the country back on the road to an independence that we and they had envisioned when we were the colonial masters.

*Q: Did you see any particular activity that was very successful or fell on its face or on the surface just floated along and no one wanted to say, "The Emperor doesn't have many clothes?"*

CHATTEN: I don't think so. I think it was a good program. One of the things that came up while I was there was an evaluation of something that had been going on in the '50s called the information-media guarantee (IMG) program. Under it, the United States government put rather sizable amounts of money into subsidizing the import of books and magazines from the United States into the Philippines. This program had begun to atrophy in budgetary terms anyway and Dick Barnsley had the responsibility for looking at whether or not it ought to continue. He asked me to pursue it.

It was at that stage that I began to develop some perspective that later on proved useful to me, asking the question, "If we didn't do this, would it happen anyway?" I came back to Dick with an assessment that concluded this was a wonderful program, that there certainly ought to be American books and magazines in the Philippines, but we were very marginal. If this program didn't exist, it wouldn't make much difference. The publications still would enter to more or less the same degree that they were getting there already. The money, I concluded, probably ought to be spent on something else or not spent at all. The IMG programs went away. Now in a euphoric kind of mood, I suppose that one might think I had some impact on the decision. The truth is, I don't know.

*Q: I remember that the program disappeared in about 1963-64. As a JOT, you were moved around the islands?*



CHATTEN: The post had had a history of having JOTs. Gordon Murchie, Jerry Inman, Lynn Noah had preceded me, so USIS Manila had a pretty good perspective on what a JOT was. With so many officers around, they didn't plug me into a slot to actually perform a line officer's function. I was still over-complement. This gave me a terrific opportunity to spend essentially a month each with press, publications, radio, TV, the branch post, RSC (maybe two), and the VOA relay station. I spent a month at the library, where I taught an elementary course on "What is Communism? What is democracy?" using those old USIA books of the same name, which we had then with the Grayson Kirk text.

It was in the Philippine portion of my career that I saw one of the two people that in my whole time in the Agency that I believe were CIA people under USIS cover. I have had lots of opportunity to look at the question. I've had lots of people ask me about it, as anybody of our generation has had. I think that this was an important early lesson, and it conditioned me to look at people carefully whose job was a little bit vague. In this particular case it was a Chinese-American who spoke little English. He was buried in the press and publications operation, and his task was liaison with the Chinese language media of the Philippines.

*Q: By the way Bob, what did you think of his cover?*

CHATTEN: I wasn't alarmed by it. I was certainly interested in it. And I was interested in the fact that nobody said anything about it. Nobody briefed me, this was my own conclusion. It may not even have been so, though I'm fairly well persuaded that it was. The Chinese Language media of the Philippines were heavily oriented toward Taiwan, minimizing the possibility of criticism or of our taking any heat from it from the people that he was dealing with. The Communist Party was outlawed in the Philippines at that time.

The only other one that I have found in my time in the Agency came two assignments after that in the very early '60s, in Peru. In that case, a binational center grantee in Cuzco was either working directly for the station or was enchanted by the notion that that's what he ought to be doing. He would come down to Lima and might talk to the station chief before he talked to the PAO.

Those are the only two. I think that my own perspective on that subject matured over time, as I did, and tracked well with the Agency's standard wisdom.

Credibility is just about the only thing that you've got going for you. You can spend a lifetime in the Agency, especially doing some of the things I did in student affairs, and trying to influence foreign media, in which you are routinely accused of working for the CIA. Credibility is gained only over a very long period of time through programs and experience and exposure and yet it can be shattered overnight. It's a very, very fragile kind of thing. I can remember in the student affairs experience of having people come at me all the time, saying, "You're a CIA person," when they didn't know anything about the CIA. Later, along when I was in the mid-career, academic year at UCLA, the standard assumption among all of the smart-ass graduate students was that of course, you work for the CIA." My answer in both cases, was, "I'm not, but if I were, I wouldn't tell you. Given that problem, why don't we set that question aside and look at what

I'm doing? If what I'm doing is good or constructive, what the hell difference does it make who is doing it?"

*Q: Bob, let's advance you on to your next assignment from Manila.*

CHATTEN: Let me dwell on the lessons of Manila for one more moment. One of the things that was most useful to me, personally, and in my professional life, was beginning to get a sense of where USIA fits into the scope of what the US government does overseas - Where, organizationally and institutionally as well as functionally, we fit in. I referred previously to a kind of State Department condescension that came to be standard. What I got was the beginnings of a notion about where USIS fits in with the military, where it fits with the American private sector, but mostly, how it interacts with the rest of the government. That always seemed to me to be one of the great benefits that I got from going to a huge post as a JOT. People now seem to leave graduate school with a full set of prejudices on how their government works abroad. Whether they are right or wrong is not the point, but given my own experience and the complexity of the subject, all of this pomposity that seems to go with graduate studentship these days seems a bit much.

**IRVING SABLOSKY**  
**Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Cebu (1960-1963)**

*Irving Sablosky was born in Indiana in 1924. He graduated from Indiana University in 1947 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1945. His postings abroad have included Seoul, Cebu, Hamburg, Bangkok and London.*

*Q: In 1960, whither?*

SABLOSKY: In 1960, home leave, transfer to the Philippines, to Cebu, where I was going to be Branch Public Affairs Officer.

*Q: I must say that going to Cebu with a music critic background seems to be a cast in your bread on sparse waters. If that is the right way to put it.*

SABLOSKY: Well, we are all generalists. The idea of having a branch post, I had asked for it. On the personnel form, where they ask where for your next post, I had put Cebu, Chiang Mai, Thailand, and maybe somewhere in Burma, where it would be a so-called one man post. There were many other people there. A one-man post was certainly a misnomer. But, I actually got Cebu. That was my second choice, I think.

*Q: You were in Cebu from 1960 until?*

SABLOSKY: 1963.

*Q: What was Cebu like at that time?*

SABLOSKY: Cebu is like a western town. People carry guns, and yet there was a very sophisticated, often Spanish-influenced, upper-class. There was no orchestra in Cebu. I think there was not very much music really in Cebu. In people's houses, there was. There were newspapers. The first television station in Cebu opened while I was there. They put me on doing a newscast. The influence of the clergy was very strong. The biggest university there was the University of San Carlos, which was run by the SVD, the Society of the Divine Word, partly American and partly Dutch. It was mostly a Dutch order, but the head of it, the rector of the university, was Father Rigney, who was an American from Chicago. He had spent many years in a Chinese communist prison camp. That is where he ended up, I think literally, he died in Cebu. He was a very anticommunist man. Cebu was the seat of the Osmeña family. Osmeña having been the former president, and now by the time I was there, his son, Sergio, who was a senator, had his political machine centered in Cebu. It was the second city. It was a rich city. Shipping was the main thing. There was a U.S. air base on Mactan Island, nearby, which was across the strait.

*Q: Was there an insurrection going around in that area?*

SABLOSKY: No, not in that area at all. Not around Cebu. In Mindanao, there was supposedly some. As Public Affairs Officer in Cebu, I had the only branch port post outside Manila. They had had branch posts all over the southern Philippines. But, now, Cebu was the only one left. So, I covered the whole central and southern Philippines. I went into Mindanao, and all the way down to the Sulu Islands. It was fascinating. It was a real adventure.

*Q: I imagine it would be.*

SABLOSKY: Philippine Airlines flew these old C-47s everywhere you could fly. They were good, the pilots. So, I went to as many places as I could go. We had a consulate in Cebu. There was a principal officer and a vice-consul. There were two consuls during my period, Robert Yost and Lyle Lane. Then, there were a couple vice consuls. One of those, in fact was Charles Bray, who later became deputy head of USIA. He was also later head of the Foreign Service Institute. Charlie came to Cebu as a junior officer. I was still pretty junior, too, but I wasn't quite as junior as Charlie. Anyway, the consuls and the USIS guy, whoever it was, traveled all over. It was fascinating. We met so many people. The Philippine welcome is incredible.

*Q: I would imagine so. In a way, I don't imagine you had much of a selling job to do.*

SABLOSKY: No, but an informing job to do because there were a lot of wrong impressions about the United States there. There were a lot of aspects of American life that they weren't familiar with. The racial situation in the United States was of interest.

*Q: It was just beginning to heat up.*

SABLOSKY: So, we had a lot of occasions to talk about that because there were changes taking place in the states at that time. In lectures, I often talked about jazz there. When you talk to

somebody about the history of jazz, the question and comment period afterwards leads to all kinds of other places. It is a wonderful opportunity to talk about anything that might be on their minds. It was a wonderful chance to exchange views about the United States and clear up some misperceptions.

*Q: What about the press? How did you find the press there?*

SABLOSKY: I would say the Cebu press was pretty provincial. I hope the Cebuanos don't hear me say this. The Manila press was pretty wild. The newspapers there were subject to strong political influence. They represented political leaders, generally. People had a newspaper, and so it was their spokesman, and sometimes not quite responsible. But, they were lively. Some were in English. There were also papers in Cebuano. There was a Cebuano paper, but I think most people read the Cebu Republic News, I think it was called. It was the main newspaper. One of the Manila papers had a Cebu edition that was published in Cebu. I can't remember which paper it was. It may have been the Manila Chronicle.

*Q: During this time in Cebu, were there any major events that sort of grabbed your attention there?*

SABLOSKY: Yes, there were two that I can think of off-hand. One was the return of General MacArthur, who came to Cebu. He went to Leyte, of course. I didn't go to Leyte with him; the consul did, I think, and the ambassador did. He came through Cebu and was received in Cebu with a tremendous parade, and all kinds of jubilation. It was quite a thing to see. Then, there was a change of presidents, from Garcia, who was considered quite corrupt and who had been in power quite a long time, to Macapagal, who was the first of the Liberal party, who promised real democracy, and a brake on corruption. I think Macapagal kept his promise, pretty much. I think he was followed by Marcos.

*Q: When Marcos came in, he wasn't considered too bad. They say power corrupts.*

SABLOSKY: Some friends of ours back then said if Marcos came in as president, he would end up being a dictator. They saw it coming.

*Today is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2000. Irving, we want to talk a little more about Cebu.*

SABLOSKY: I would just like to backtrack a little bit Stuart, since I mentioned what I thought were two globally important things that we really had very little to do with. The Consulate, of course, had a role in the MacArthur visit, but it was generally a Philippine government affair; we were peripheral to it. There were a couple of things that I would like to mention that were very important to us from a program standpoint. One was the appearance of Rudolf Serkin in Cebu, brought there by what was called then the President's International Program of Cultural Presentations.

*Q: You should mention who that is.*

SABLOSKY: Then, the president was Dwight Eisenhower, of course. The performer was Rudolf Serkin, one of the greatest pianists of the times. For him to come to a place as remote as Cebu, was really quite unprecedented. There was a great question before he came to Cebu and that was, can we find a piano - a concert grand for him to play on? Fortunately, by that time, I was acquainted with a piano teacher in Cebu whose husband was a shipping magnate, so to speak. They had a nine-foot Steinway in their living room. I talked with Mrs. Sala and asked whether she would permit it to be used for a Serkin concert. We were going to do it in a nice auditorium in St. Theresa's College in Cebu and would she allow it to be transported to St. Theresa's College. Of course, she said she would be honored to do so. So, we got Mrs. Sala's piano over to the hall and Serkin came to town. He was just marvelous. That was really historic, from the standpoint of Cebu and from the standpoint of USIS in the Philippines presenting something at that level. It was very, very well received. The other thing, along the same line, was the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, which was brand new at the time. This was 1962. Of course, in the next 10 years, they became one of the top companies in the United States. This was a predominantly black, modern dance company. Alvin Ailey performed not only in Cebu, but we took him down to Cotabato City in the Mindanao, in the middle of Mindanao, in the Muslim country. They, of course, had never seen anything like this. The company was tremendously exciting, and everybody was excited by it. It was quite a cultural achievement for the USA.

*Q: How did you find the local governments there in Cebu and Mindanao? Did you have many dealings with them?*

SABLOSKY: Always, yes. I traveled to all of the main cities in Mindanao and from the islands of Panay and Negros in the north down to Zamboanga City and even to Jolo in the Sulu Islands. Everywhere I went, of course, I would meet the mayor, as a representative of the U.S. They were always tremendously friendly. I would have a nine o'clock appointment with the mayor, and he would pull out the brandy. The attitude toward Americans was invariably friendly. Then I would call at the local college or university and touch base with educators there. I found that the legendary Philippine hospitality was real - and that interest in the United States was real, too which meant interest in the books and films and other materials we were able to furnish..

*Q: You left the Philippines when?*

SABLOSKY: In 1963.

**PARKER W. BORG**  
**Peace Corps Volunteer**  
**Camarines Norte (1961-1963))**

*Ambassador Borg was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Cornell University. In 1965, after a tour with the Peace Corps in the Philippines, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During his career he served in Vietnam and Zaire, and in the State Department in senior positions concerning Vietnam, West Africa and Counter*

*Terrorism. He served as US Ambassador to Mali (1981-1984) and to Iceland from 1993 to 1996. Ambassador Borg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.*

*Q: Being told that you were persona non grata for being an Ivy Leaguer must have turned you way off, didn't it?*

BORG: No, it turned me to figuring out what it was that I might be. I was very intent on joining the Peace Corps and so I checked on what were the first programs that they were going to be starting. There were programs in Tanzania, Ghana, Santa Lucia in the Philippines. They were all technical ones except the Philippines. The Philippines was going to be an education program. So when I filled out my Peace Corps application, I said that I wanted to be a teacher and that I was really interested in a career in teaching. To my surprise, I was selected despite my lack of teaching background but, I guess, because I had indicated an interest. So I was selected in the summer of '61 when the first groups were being chosen for the Peace Corps. My parents couldn't believe I finished college, came home, sat around, did nothing and talked about nothing but the fact that I was going to be joining the Peace Corps. They said, you know, "You've got to get serious now. You've got to find a job out there. We paid all this money for you to go to an expensive college all these years. You've got to do something now. You can't waste your time and waste your money." But I was intent, and it came through that I had been selected for the first group to go to the Philippines.

*Q: Let's talk about the group when you found it. How did you find it? Was it as non-Ivy League as they wished.*

BORG: No, it was a mixed bag. It had people from all sorts of different schools. I knew best the people whose names in alphabet were right next to mine because everything was done alphabetically and we ended up living in the same community. One of the guys went to Yale where he'd been in the divinity school. He was an atheist. Another guy had been to UCLA where he was doing theater, and the third one was studying agriculture at the University of Kansas, so almost nobody had educational backgrounds.

*Q: This, of course, was extremely early days. How was the training? Did you have the feeling they were floundering?*

BORG: They hadn't a clue. We felt they didn't know what they were doing. They sent us to Penn State University, which had no background in anything Asian but because it was a state school that had an agricultural institution. Since they were trying to get funding through Congress, they wanted it to appear—or at least we felt they wanted it to appear—that we were all hard at work at diligent schools, not at any of these soft places that had beaches or tropical locations or anything. They assembled a group of people at Penn State who tried to teach us the language, who gave us some historical background, and they did as admirable a job as one could have expected given the fact that nobody had a clue of what we were going to be doing. I think in the early programs the greatest fault lay with the people that the Peace Corps assigned in leadership positions in the different countries, because when we got to various countries the people who were in charge of the Peace Corps programs were more out of water in these

countries than we were. We were at least open to whatever it is we would do, but the leadership was sometimes more closed in their thinking.

*Q: Were you being taught Filipino?*

BORG: No, we learned Tagalog.

*Q: How was that as a language?*

BORG: Tagalog is a very difficult language. It's a Malay-Polynesian language, but it's a language that is full of infixes. We have suffixes and prefixes, but they have infixes.

*Q: Right in the middle of the...?*

BORG: As the tense changes, there are changes in the middle of the word, additional syllables that are added. It was a very complicated language to learn to speak well. You could easily say simple sentences. But I found Vietnamese and Chinese subsequently, despite all of the complexities about them, are basically easy languages to speak, because it's just word, word, word, and you just put them together.

*Q: Were they training you to do anything...?*

BORG: We were supposed to be teachers' aides. We were supposed to be working in the schools helping the teachers teach English, math and science. I didn't have a specific classroom, but I taught one period a day in a variety of classrooms all the way from first grade up to seniors in high school.

*Q: When you were going through your training, were they emphasizing that you be on your best behavior and all this? What seemed to be the concerns? When you think about it, the Peace Corps - there was the kid who wrote a postcard.*

BORG: Marjorie Micheltore wrote a postcard from Nigeria. The important thing...

*Q: ...everybody that year. It was under great scrutiny.*

BORG: You know, I would like to think that there were all sorts of things that they told us, but now I can't remember any of them. They taught us cultural sensitivity, they taught us something about the history of the place, they taught us something about how to go about teaching English and math, but I don't think anybody had developed the big picture of what they might be teaching us at that point.

*Q: Was there any feel at going to the Philippines of either paternalism or guilt or...?*

BORG: Total paternalism. After we got there, we realized that the Peace Corps program grew huge. They had 750 people within two years. By the time we left, it was a gigantic program. We felt that the poor Philippines were sufficiently beholden to us that they would take as many

people as we dump on them, and we hadn't a clue what those people are supposed to be doing. The Filipinos - this was pre-Marcos - are sufficiently nice and they like Americans. You felt they would have loved to become the 51st state if they could, so the response to us was, "Sure, send more and more and more." But it was terribly imperialistic. We used to have arguments amongst ourselves about whether the Peace Corps was a good idea or was a promotion of American imperialism on other people around the world. The way I came out in my own head on this was that, yes, it was imperialistic, but things were changing and all these changes were going to take place anyway at some point, and perhaps our participation might take them in a more positive direction and less harmful direction.

*Q: Where did you go?*

BORG: You mean in the Philippines?

*Q: Yes.*

BORG: We spent six weeks in Penn State. We finished our training in Penn State the same day that Congress signed the legislation authorizing us to exist. We then went out to the Philippines, where we had another month of training in country at a place called the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, which is the local agricultural school, where they taught us more of the same without any better understanding of what it was that we were supposed to be doing. Then they sent us out to communities. They assigned three or four of us in a group to different communities in specific regions. They decided, smartly, not to scatter us all over the country but to focus on a couple regions where they could watch us a little better and keep better track of us. Have you been in the Philippines?

*Q: No.*

BORG: I went to a place called Camarines Norte, which is a province in the southern part of the country on the island of Luzon. It was about a 12-hour drive from Manila because the roads were so terrible but was only one hour by plane.. I was assigned to one town that had an elementary school, no high school, and I was the Peace Corps person in that town, but I lived in another town with my cohorts, who were teaching in other communities in the area.

*Q: Then you did that for two years?*

BORG: We did that for two years.

*Q: This was '67 to '69?*

BORG: This was, no, '61 to '63, the first two years of the Peace Corps. I taught beginning English to first graders, I taught mathematic skills to third graders, I taught science to some sixth graders, I taught literature to eighth graders, and I taught current events and history to some seniors. That was great fun. I had a wonderful time.



*Q: You know, there are techniques to teaching. Some people are just naturally teachers, but had anybody sort of said, "You ought to do a little more here or give a little more emphasis"?*

BORG: Nobody ever came around and monitored what I was doing or suggested I should be doing things differently. I learned at a very early point that the key to teaching is to try and keep the attention of the students. I had to do something, I had to be sufficiently animated, I had to call on the kids in a way that would keep them alert.

*Q: How did the faculty of these schools receive you?*

BORG: They were delighted. They were all very happy to have me come, or, if they weren't, they never said they were not. I was not a threat to them. Mostly I worked with teachers that I liked, that I had met and I said, "Can I help you in your classroom? Would you like me to come in once a week and offer such-and-such a course." Of course, since the teachers would like an hour off, they were almost always enthusiastic about the fact that I was willing to take their class for a while.

*Q: How about the administrators?*

BORG: I got along very well with the administrators of the school. The people I worked with were very nice, decent people who were probably skimming a little bit of money off the top, but everybody was skimming money off the top. The voluntary drive for the Red Cross never made it to the Red Cross. You just said, well, maybe that's the way things work.

*Q: While you picking up, while you were doing this, any impressions of Philippine culture?*

BORG: I was really excited about learning the Filipino language so that I could sit in the bus on the way to and from my school and hear the revolutionary thoughts that were going through people's heads. I was anxious to hear them talk about the need for land reform and the need to overthrow a corrupt government, all of the sort of intrigue that one imagines goes on in the third world. I never learned the language really well but I learned it well enough that I could listen in on conversations, and I heard the men talking about fixing their bicycles, fixing their cars, and local sports teams, and I listened to the women talk about babies and gossip and things that women talk about. I never heard a singular revolutionary thought from anybody.

*Q: I have to say, I can remember when I used to go to the State Department, I'd be listening to conversations, particularly the women, and if it wasn't about hair, it was about dresses. I couldn't believe how people could talk like that all the time, and these were some executive types. Of course, the guys I dismissed anyway because of the sports thing, which I'm not very interested in. Were there the equivalent to Huks (Hukbalahaps) or were they up in the north?*

BORG: There were equivalents of Huks. The Huk rebellion had been mostly eliminated by 1953, and Magsaysay won the election in 1953 having defeated them, but there were still remnants up in the hills and there were certain areas where we lived where we were told that we should be careful because there might be Huks in the area. I never saw a Huk, never met anybody who

claimed to have ever seen one, never had any problem. I met Philippine communists later when I was in graduate school...

*Q: What about the students? How did you find the kids?*

BORG: The town where I was working was a huge industrial overflow city. There was a steel mill in the next town. The kids whose parents worked in the steel mill lived in the next town, but the kids who lived in my town were the kids whose parents maybe serviced the steel mill. They ran the restaurants, there were a couple houses of ill repute, and there was a doctor, a dentist. It was a small town that lived on fishing and I'm not sure what else. In high school some of the boys were much older because they had had a very poor education, so I had 15- or 16-year-olds who were still in sixth grade. I enjoyed working with some of these older kids, trying to get them organized. They wanted to have a soccer team at the elementary school, but there was no one to be the soccer coach. I hadn't a clue how to play soccer, so I acquired a book and read the rules on soccer, and I became the soccer coach. Our team went on and won the district championship. To me it showed that with a little bit of interest and dedication you can do a lot of things.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the stratification of Philippine society?*

BORG: No, because where I was it was all below the stratified level. The stratification was in the big towns and the cities, but where we lived there were no landowners, there were no wealthy people. There were some professionals. One, the son of the doctor in the community where I was, was studying violin, and he went on and played for a number of years at the New York Philharmonic. So there were people of achievement in the community but there was no significant difference between the wealthiest and the poorest in the places where I was living.

*Q: While you were doing that, were you were talking to your fellow Peace Corps colleagues?*

BORG: Oh, yes, we talked all the time.

*Q: I was wondering whether there was a feeling of 'we can remake the world' or do things or 'gee, it's awful'?*

BORG: Well, each one of us had different experiences in different ways. Some people were totally dedicated to only one subject and taught just one subject with one teacher. One of my roommates essentially opted out and really did nothing at all. He would go to the school a couple times a week and sit and talk with the principal, but he really didn't do much of anything. The Peace Corps was sufficiently disorganized that, as long as the Peace Corps people didn't complain or the schools complain or the community complain, we could do just exactly whatever we wanted to do. We were living in an old town that was on the Pacific Ocean with a beautiful beach, and when I first got there I couldn't believe that the Peace Corps was assigning me to this wonderful location with this nice house right by a beautiful beach that I would have paid money to go and spend some time at.

*Q: Were Philippine mothers siccing their daughters on you?*

BORG: Yes, all the time. The Philippines have a tremendous love-hate relationship with the United States and also with lighter skin. So the idea they might get me to marry one of their daughters was something I felt from time to time. You would even meet pregnant women in the market and find them staring at you. I was told that some Filipinos believed that if they stared at someone with light skin, their baby was likely to have lighter skin. Many people in my group, perhaps a dozen or so, married Filipinos.

*Q: Ah, that's always been. It's the right age, and there's always been an affinity, pretty girls and...*

BORG: That's right. I almost didn't make it into the Peace Corps because they were very tough on psychological testing at the time. One-hundred-fifty-six of us entered the training program and only 124 completed the graduation ceremony. I was almost one who was selected out because the psychiatrist, the social worker or whoever it was that was interviewing each one of us to find out about our suitability, asked me what I thought I would contribute to the Philippines by being there for two years, and I thought for a moment and I said, "Well, I'm not sure. I know I'm going to learn a lot about the Philippines and I'm going to try to teach, but I'm not sure that I can verify at this point what my contributions are going to be." I was called back for a second interview, and I felt that I hadn't been sufficiently idealistic and certain about what I was going to contribute to world peace, or whatever I was contributing to, but I did make it.

*Q: By the time you were getting close to leaving in '63, were you figuring out whither?*

BORG: No, I had pretty much decided -- maybe the first year that I was there -- that what I wanted to do when I left was go to graduate school. I wanted to go to Cornell because it had a Southeast Asia program. I had a summer project my first year. Schools were only operating for eight, nine or 10 months a year or something like that, so I had two months off. I took my summer project and I went up to AID, to the head of AID, and asked about working for free in the office. So I was an AID intern for the summer, and that was where I first met Foreign Service Officers. I was appalled. I thought, oh, my God, what stupid jobs these people have. I became good friends with someone, who remains a good friend, and he told me about how they really went out and they were teaching Filipinos how to do square dancing on the weekends and once a week they would square dance and they went to the yacht club on a certain night and all these things. This whole thing just sounded so tedious to me. The people seemed to be perfectly nice, but the jobs that they had, I couldn't imagine wanting to do any of this sort of work.

*Q: This was from the embassy, not from AID?*

BORG: Well, the embassy was right across the street from AID. These were embassy people. There were more embassy people my age than there were AID people.

*Q: The embassy lived pretty much in a compound there?*

BORG: No. There was a compound where some people lived, but a lot of other people lived in various apartments around town. In fact, I stayed with a Foreign Service Officer. He put a sign up in the Peace Corps office saying, "Anybody who's looking for a place to stay, give me a call."

So I called him and he said, "What nights are you going to be here?" and I said, "I'm going to be here for the next six weeks." He said, "Oh, no, I'm talking about just a couple of nights," but he relented, and so I moved in and stayed at his place for six weeks. So I got sort of an inside look at the Foreign Service.

*Q: What was there about it? It wasn't connected or wasn't doing what you were thinking?*

BORG: It didn't seem to have any connection with the country as I saw it. They were mostly younger officers doing visa work and participating in what I thought was the most frivolous sort of life, traveling relatively little outside of the capital, going out on their sailboats on the weekends, and sort of living an American life in this foreign country. By contrast, I was very much into the culture.

*Q: In many ways this is, of course, the typical reaction of the Peace Corps volunteers towards embassies. We're out in the boondocks and we're living the real life, and you're up here in the capital and you don't know the country. I think this is duplicated almost everywhere.*

BORG: That's right, yes.

*Q: What were you doing with AID?*

BORG: I think I may have been the post project to the head of AID. Somehow I got an appointment with the head of AID, who was astonished that somebody from the Peace Corps wanted to have anything to do with him. I proposed that I do a study for them of all the other aid that was going on in the country. I said, "Do you know who's doing what?" and they said, "No, we haven't a clue who is doing what other kinds of assistance in the Philippines." So I spent the summer going around to all of the other assistance organizations, both government and NGOs, to find out what kind of things they were doing, how much money they were spending, and where they were focusing. It turned into a report that the AID mission thought was sufficiently interesting that they assigned somebody from the AID mission to continue this project and keep it going. They did it for a number of years.

*Q: Did you get a different feel for the Philippines from Manila?*

BORG: Have you been to Manila?

*Q: No.*

BORG: When I first got to Manila, I wondered where were the nice sections of the city. I thought, 'This is a dump,' and then I realized that it was not 'Where are the nice sections?' but 'Where are the even worse sections than where we are right now?' There were glitzy suburbs, but the center of Manila was then pretty depressing. The parks were not maintained, there was garbage everywhere, there were shanties right next to nice buildings. The Marcos period cleaned some of this up. It's not quite as bad, but Manila still is a dump.

**VICTOR NIEMEYER**  
**Director, Philippine-American Cultural Foundation**  
**Manila (1961-1963)**

*Mr. Niemeyer was born and raised in Texas and educated at the Scheiner Institute Junior College, Texas A & M, and the University of Texas. He served in the US Navy in World War II. Joining the USIS in 1958, Mr. Niemeyer served in Guatemala, Philippines and Chile as Director of specific programs, and as Public Affairs Officer in Mexico and Trinidad. Mr. Niemeyer was interviewed by Lewis Hoffacker in 1999.*

NIEMEYER: The Guatemalan event ended when I was offered the opportunity to start a binational center in the Philippines, and in January of '61, we all went out to Manila.

Q: *That was a big jump.*

NIEMEYER: That was a big job, that's right. It was to be the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation, a terrible name, because everybody thought we had money, with the word *foundation* in it. It never should have been named that. And it was also difficult to undertake an English-teaching program in a country where English was spoken to a very high degree, and English teaching is what supports the binational centers in Latin America, the income from that. We charge enough tuition, and you make enough money to pay the rent and the utilities and staff and teachers and so forth. But it was more difficult in the Philippines. So there I was trying to *raise* money. I spent two years trying to raise enough funds to match a grant from the US Government, and I failed. I did not do it, could not do it. Two men, two Filipinos had said before I got out there, were quoted as saying, but nobody got their written signature on it, they would give generously. One was a man named Araneta, who had a huge sports/performing arts coliseum. Another was a man named José Yulo, who had been a very prominent politician. They were brothers-in-law. I think they had married sisters. And José Yulo offered \$1 million to the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation. Mr. Araneta was quoted as having said, "José Yulo give a million dollars? I give million dollars, too." I never got one cent out of either one of them.

Q: *How did you function without money?*

NIEMEYER: Well, we didn't... All we were paying was... Well, our government was paying my salary. We had a fund-raising group headed by a man named Toting del Rosario. He was a very active, dynamic type, and as I recall they sold refrigerators, his company did. So what he did was to let us use a part of his building space for a campaign to raise funds. We did raise a lot of money, but we never raised enough to satisfy US Information Service, Manila. And finally, I left in April of '63, and the successor that I had, a fine fellow named Martin Kashinsky, whom I had known at the University of Texas in graduate school, he came out to relieve me, he had the non-glorious task of winding down the Philippine-American Cultural Center. The Filipinos loved our country, but they were very nationalistic at the same time, and I know because I would hear from members of the Board of Directors to whom I was responsible: "We would like to have the Center, but we just don't need any American influence in it." So they got their center. The

Philippine Government picked up the cost, and we were able to get back the \$1,300,000 or so that had been set aside for that particular project. The building that was later built, I understand, was very successful, so I think it all worked out probably in the best interests of both countries. I came away with a great feeling of admiration and respect for the Filipino people, and joined the Manila Boat Club and rowed on the Pasig River, and the labor attaché's son and I were in a two man boat. We won our race one day, and we both got cups for it, and I still have it. His name was Kaukkonen. I can't think of his name, but the young man later became very prominent in the Jefferson Airplane, this... He was one of the founders or one of the stars in the Jefferson Airplane, this musical group.

At any rate, I failed out there. I just couldn't put it together, but I got promoted into the Foreign Service as a result of my efforts.

*Q: I see, as a Foreign Service reserve officer or a Foreign Service officer?*

NIEMEYER: Later I went back to Washington in the summer of '63 and was paneled by a panel of interviewers, and apparently I did not satisfy them completely the first time, so I went back for home leave, and then they called me back to Washington, and I was interviewed again, and this time I did please the panel and was given a position in the Foreign Service, sworn in.

**ROBERT G. FRANKLIN**  
**Information Officer, USAID**  
**Manila (1962-1964)**

*Robert F. Franklin, a native of San Francisco, California attended the University of California. After serving in World War II with the National Guard, he joined USIS. He served in Morocco, Vietnam, the Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, Germany, and Tunisia. Mr. Franklin was interviewed by Earl Wilson in 1988.*

*Q: So your next post was Manila.*

FRANKLIN: Ah, yes. Manila, 1962. We went out to Manila. Flew out, of course, with the minimum amount of stuff that you're allowed to take as air freight to set up. They put us in a little apartment to await the arrival of all our household goods. And our stuff didn't arrive and didn't arrive, didn't arrive. We found out that the ship sank. Everything aboard. And because we expected to be in Manila three years, we said, "well, let's take everything. Why store all this stuff?" We put everything on the ship and it went down.

*Q: How did that happen?*

FRANKLIN: There are two stories. I will tell you the official story first that they were trying to outrun a typhoon and bumped into one of the Okinawa group with violence; just piled up on it.

I did quite a bit of yachting in Manila. And one of my friends in the yacht club worked for a shipping company there. He told me that they had a very junior third officer who had made an hour's mistake on the chart. And they ran full steam ahead into an island.

Well, we got some money back. Nowhere near, of course, what we lost. Some of this was old family silver, things that we couldn't replace--but that's part of the way it goes. They gave us an emergency leave, and we went up to Hong Kong. We spent money. We spent money. We got sick of spending money, believe it or not, replacing these things that we had lost. Of course, many things we couldn't replace.

There was nothing terribly interesting that went on in Manila. I was assigned there as information officer for the AID program. I actually had an office in the AID building, which was across the street from the embassy. I did all sorts of things. I made a lot of movies there. We had a good movie circuit going in Manila, 35 millimeter, for theaters.

*Q: Were these unattributed type movies?*

FRANKLIN: No, these were directly relating, most of them, to the AID program. One of the hats that I wore was liaison with the American business community, and a couple of those films that I made were to show the benefits the American business community brought to the Philippines. This was a little bit out of the ordinary USIA line, but still germane. And I did radio. I did exhibits. I did practically everything, all with the support of the people in the USIA central office which was across the street. I was a one man operation. I think I had a local secretary, but outside of that, everybody around me was AID staff. I worked in what they call the Program Support office, which was the office that published pamphlets, instructional, booklets, and posters.

*Q: I was going to ask you, because I started the regional production center there in 1950. And later, at some point, I don't know when, the Philippine government under the AID program developed a big central printing plant to produce AID type material. Was that during your time?*

FRANKLIN: No. By the way, you asked me about the fellow who was in the AID program who was in Saigon who came over to Manila. That's Hank Pascal.

*Q: That's right.*

FRANKLIN: Henry Pascal. He was very helpful to us. We did a lot of publishing through him by contract, obviously where RSC couldn't do it for one reason or another.

**JOHN G. KORMANN**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1962-1964)**

*John G. Kormann became interested in foreign affairs during his service in the U.S. Army during World War II. In addition to Egypt, his Foreign Service career*

*took him to Germany, the Philippines, and Libya. He was interviewed by Moncrieff J. Spear on February 7, 1996.*

*Q: This brings us to 1962 and I see you were attending the Mid-Career Course. What was your next assignment?*

KORMANN: I was assigned to Manila as Political Officer. A travel freeze kept me in the U.S., however, for several months. In the interim, I filled in for the Philippine Desk Officer. While there I had a bit of trouble with Ambassador Harriman, who at the time was the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. He visited the Philippines and while there entered into negotiations about tobacco. He sent a message back about the negotiations in which he indicated that we should pass the information on to Congressman Cooley, the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. I did so. A few days later there was an item in the newspaper about the matter, citing Cooley. Ambassador Harriman saw the item and was extremely upset, saying, "Who told Congress about this?" I said, "I did." He was furious at me. I wanted to get out the telegram and show him his instructions, but under the circumstances thought better of it. He was a great man, but at his age he had lapses of memory.

Some time after my arrival in Manila, Glen Fisher, the Minerals Attaché, came to me and asked whether I would be interested in joining him on a flight to Borneo. He had a single engine "Piper" airplane and would island-hop the thousand or more miles down the Sulu Archipelago over to Borneo, and then follow the coast north to Sandarac, which had formerly been part of the British protectorate of North Borneo, more recently called Sabah. It sounded like a great adventure to me and an opportunity to do some good reporting. However, there were political implications, since Sabah was now part of the newly formed state of Malaysia, which was at war with Indonesia. The area was a combat zone. I discussed the matter with DCM Richard Service and he, in turn, with Ambassador William Stevenson. Both took a dim view of the idea. I then found out that several officers had been invited to make the trip on earlier occasions, but had declined. I also learned that no plane had flown out of the southern Philippines since WW II and that we would be landing on makeshift fields or beaches. For some reason the Ambassador changed his mind and the trip was on. Just prior to our departure, the British Military Attaché came to my office requesting assistance. A launch with English men and women aboard had been captured in the waters off Borneo by a Sulu pirate named Amok. The captives were taken to one of the many small islands in the southern Philippines. Could we help in locating them or obtain any information about them? The trip was fascinating. Fisher turned out to be an excellent, methodical and cautious pilot. Having said that, I reflect in awe at the mountain passes and thunderheads we flew through, not to say the vast stretches of jungle and tropical seas. In the latter from our height, which was never much more than a 1,000 feet, one could spot the shadows of the sharks below. There were stretches over Borneo for hundreds of miles with no sign of habitation. In Sandakan, which was a miniature Hong Kong, I met with the British Resident and government officials, receiving much information for my report. On our return, we actually spotted the launch lying on its side on a sandbar up a river estuary on the small island of Subuti. When that story sorted itself out, the men turned out to be Borneo Chinese and the women Hong Kong prostitutes. (laughter)



I should say something here about President Kennedy. I don't know what your experience was when he was assassinated, but the impact in the Philippines was tremendous. Being a Catholic country with close ties to America and Kennedy, himself, and his wife being so charming, the Filipinos really took them to their hearts. The outpouring of grief was unbelievable. We had to set up a team of Embassy wives to respond to the gifts and the thousands of letters of condolences received. There was a memorial service which had a vast attendance. Subsequently, when his brother, Bobby, came out to "mediate" the Indonesian- Malaysian conflict months later, we had trouble controlling the masses at the airport. Crowds rioted, breaking through glass windows of the terminal just to see him. I was control officer for the visit. Ambassador Stevenson and I went to the Presidential Palace the morning after the Attorney General's arrival to brief him. He was in his suite with Ed Gluckman, his advisor and press assistant. As the Ambassador talked, Bobby paced up and down, at times sitting briefly. He appeared extremely forceful and dynamic. As he paced, I said to myself, "the only thing he is not doing is sticking his hand in his shirt, or else I would be seeing an impersonation of Napoleon." I made the mistake of inadvertently glancing at the ceiling during the Ambassador's briefing, which I had heard several times before, and Kennedy jumped on me for not paying attention. It was an unforgettable session.

In the middle of a state dinner given for the Attorney General and his wife Ethel, by President and Mrs. Macapagal, he arose, walked out of the Palace in his evening clothes and at 10 p.m. ordered his Air Force plane made ready to fly immediately to Kuala Lumpur. He was not scheduled to leave until two days later. At the dinner, someone must have informed him that the week of Ramadan was to set in the following evening. Malaysia being a Muslim country, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister, would go into seclusion. If there was to be a meeting with him, it had to be the next day. Evidently no one in the Kennedy party informed him about Ramadan, nor had they taken the trouble to find out. To me it was always amazing how high-handed and slipshod the doings of the mighty could be. I had the appalling task of trying to round up the Kennedy party of 90 people scattered in night clubs and other places about town. Thank goodness we managed to locate the pilot and most of the crew fairly promptly. Kennedy fumed, while he impatiently waited at the airport for several hours until the take-off was readied. As it was, he left several of his party behind, who could not be located in time. I had never up to that point sent a "flash" designated message, the kind that denotes imminent nuclear attack. At Kennedy's instruction, I sent four that night. Our poor ambassador in Kuala Lumpur must have been beside himself to arrange for that middle of the night arrival. There was a great sigh of relief at our Embassy, when they had gone. (laughter) Between setting up military helicopters to fly Ethel to the hairdresser and trying to pack all their suitcases, when the Kennedys went straight out to the airport, we were exhausted. I am sure the Macapagals must have been offended; one does not ordinarily treat heads-of-state in that fashion.

We had a great many Congressional delegations visit Manila when I was there. I was control officer for more than my share of these. Many were worthwhile, but some were outrageous. I recall a visit of Senator Daniel Brewster of Maryland, one of the worst. He was a member of the Armed Services Committee, which was stopping off on a fact-finding tour at the time. Brewster had wired ahead to set up a helicopter to take him out to Corregidor Island. He arrived separately from Vietnam at about 4 o'clock in the evening, much later than planned. By that time, the helicopter awaiting him had returned to Sangley Naval Air Station, since it would be too

dangerous to make the flight after dark. The Senator was furious, demanding the helicopter take him then and there. I called Capt. Ed Spruance, the Chief of Staff at Sangley (the son of famous WW II Admiral Spruance) and over protests and his better judgment, he reluctantly sent back the helicopter. Aboard were the pilot, the Senator, our Naval Attaché, William Lazenby, and myself. Once on Corregidor, the Senator persisted in delaying our return, which assured our return to the Embassy in complete darkness. We were going to have to land in the Embassy parking lot surrounded by trees. Brewster throughout was obnoxious, until at one point Capt. Lazenby said, "Senator, my name is Lazenby, my family is the Lazenby family of Maryland, and I am ashamed that you are my senator!" I thought, "My goodness, there goes a fine naval officer's career; what a gutsy thing to do!" On our return, emergency steps were taken by Embassy personnel to ring the small parking lot with cars turned toward the center, headlights on, for visibility. As we came in for a very risky landing, the Ambassador was entertaining the Senate Armed Services Committee and about 100 guests on the Embassy roof-garden. The helicopter literally blew everything away, from table cloths, food and glasses to ladies hairdos. The party was a shambles. Senator Brewster, later, I believe, was removed from office.

During my four plus years in Manila, I witnessed a steadily souring in our relations, spurred on by leftist elements and the war in Vietnam. There were numerous demonstrations against the Embassy. While a part of the large political section under Counselor Max Krebs and later Richard Usher, I was promoted to supervising political officer, charged with external affairs. For a period of 18 months, I also handled military relations and bases negotiation matters, concluding the Corregidor Memorial Treaty. It was a highly charged time, with a conflict on between Indonesia and Malaysia and the Philippines tangentially involved. Then, too, we were massively engaged in an effort to support our operations in Vietnam. The Philippines was a staging area for much of that activity. I did a great deal of reporting, sending telegram after telegram back to the State Department.

There were exertions on our part to make the Vietnam war look like an international struggle to stop the Communist north. To this end we were pressing other countries to send troops to Vietnam, including, of course, the Philippines. After Herculean efforts we finally persuaded them to contribute a regiment of engineers, which we underwrote financially, even to the payment of salaries. Their contribution to the war effort, at best, was negligible. In this connection, Henry Cabot Lodge, visited Manila on his way to taking up his post as our Ambassador to Saigon. I was the control officer for his visit. I made arrangements for his meeting with President Macapagal. I called for him with the Ambassador's Cadillac at the Manila Hotel. Usually for high level trips through the impassably crowded streets we requested a motorcycle escort from the Manila police, which they provided. When Ambassador Lodge and I exited the hotel, he took one look at the escort and said, "Get rid of that right now! I don't want it!" I did as he asked. On the way to the Presidential Palace, he explained that one of the reasons he had defeated legendary Boston Mayor Curley in the Massachusetts gubernatorial election was because the people were fed up with Curley constantly roaring around with motorcycle escorts. Needless to say we were late for our appointment. My normal procedure with high level visitors was to go to the Embassy Com-center very early, 6:30-7 o'clock in the morning, to see if there were any cables my client should see. In Lodge's case, I went there extra early, only to find he had already been there. I felt a bit depressed after he left for Vietnam, thinking that I had not put on my best performance for him. Lo and behold, a week or so later a request came in from

Saigon for my services. However, I showed no enthusiasm for the transfer, while my family took a resoundingly negative attitude, and nothing further was said, I think to our Ambassador's satisfaction.

I should say something about President Marcos, who assumed office during the latter part of my tour. The political section had a lot of contact with him while he was a senator. He was reputed to be a war hero, fighting the Japanese. However, there were suspicions that much of this was bogus. He was a good talker and we had hopes that he would effect a change in the corrupt political scene. After hearing his inaugural address, which had a John Kennedy flavor, we were enthusiastic. Of course, he was a great, great disappointment. I remember Vice President Hubert Humphrey came out for the inaugural and he shared our enthusiasm. Before the Vice President's trip, I was asked to draft an arrival statement and cable the text to Washington. At the airport, I was pleased to note that he used my five minute text, but then he went on and on spiritedly to speak for another 20 minutes, with us standing in the heat on the tarmac. While some Embassy colleagues wondered how I could possibly have drafted anything so long-winded for an arrival statement, I guess the Filipinos enjoyed it.

**RICHARD W. TEARE**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1962-1964)**

*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 were in Manila from when to when?*

TEARE: From October of 1962 until July of '64.

*Q: When you went out what were the Philippines like at that time?*

TEARE: The Philippines at that stage was we thought in pretty good shape. Of course we had coddled it as the first and only democracy in Asia. It had weathered the insurgency movement, the Balahap, in the '50s. The famous President, Ramon Magsaysay, had largely defeated the insurgency and cleaned up the government to some degree. Then he was killed in a plane crash in 1957 while campaigning for re-election. He was succeeded by his Vice President, Carlos P. Garcia, who let things slide back into corruption. But in 1961 a new President had been elected, Diosdado Macapagal, who was honest, at least relatively and maybe absolutely. Not very skilled politically, unfortunately as it turned out. But there was a sense of some hope and promise. The population was growing fast probably outstripping the economy but basically things were pretty good in the Philippines at that time.

The U.S. Ambassador was William Stevenson who had been President of Oberlin College. We got a very royal reception from the Stevensons and it turned out that he was under the mistaken belief that it was my mother and father who were coming to post. My mother had been active in alumni affairs at Oberlin and I guess that's how he knew the name and I guess the confusion was part of that. Anyway he was a nice guy but I'm not sure a great Ambassador. His connection was that first of all he was related to Adlai Stevenson by marriage as a distant cousin. His wife, Eleanor Bumstead was more closely related to Adlai. They were third cousins whereas Adlai and Bill were fifth cousins or something. But their daughter, Helen, was married to Minor, the governor of New Jersey, who had delivered his state for Kennedy against Johnson in the 1960 nomination race. So I think Stevenson's job as Ambassador to the Philippines was in part a payoff for the family.

*Q: Not Stevenson...was his name Stevenson?*

TEARE: Bill Stevenson was the Ambassador.

*Q: What was the Adlai Stevenson connection?*

TEARE: A distant cousin. But Bill Stevenson's wife who was not a Stevenson by birth was more closely related to Adlai Stevenson than was Bill Stevenson. At least that is my recollection of it.

*Q: When you got there were we still running top dog almost like pro consuls or not or would you say that things had changed?*

TEARE: Well I'm not sure to what extent we had done that immediately after independence. Certainly by the early 1960s we were the biggest single foreign influence but we were not dominant in any way in the sense of getting the Philippine Government to do what we wanted it to do. Ed Lansdale had been out there in the '50s and I think we had done much more behind the scenes. We had specifically sold Magsaysay on the value of a land reform program and helped him do it. I think there were Certificates of Title printed on paper with the Philippine flag bordering it. Lansdale tried the same thing in Vietnam a few years later.

In general what may have helped in the Philippines did not necessarily work at all in Vietnam. But what we really wanted I think was for Macapagal to succeed, to get agrarian reform legislation and other things through the Congress and so forth and that wasn't necessarily going to happen and we couldn't make it happen. I think in foreign policy matters that the Philippines pretty well followed our lead. They had troops in Korea and they sent a noncombatant engineer battalion to Vietnam by '65 or '66. So in that sense, yes, there was still tutelage on our part but it was not automatic and furthermore there were signs of nationalism growing. It was during the time that I was there that the Philippine Congress passed legislation changing Independence Day from July 4<sup>th</sup> to June 12<sup>th</sup>, the hundredth anniversary which we celebrated last month. They celebrated. I celebrated it with them.

I was thinking just a moment ago of another example... Oh, yes, up until that time, from their independence in 1946 to 1962 or '63 we had represented their interests anywhere in effect that they did not have resident diplomatic representation. Usually this didn't amount to very much

but occasionally we would hear from Liberia or Ethiopia or someplace that somebody wanted a Philippine visa, could we issue and so forth. In my job in Special Consular Services in the Consular Section I was the guru of all that, custodian of the agreements. In many cases there were specific agreements, for the Netherlands or for Portugal or someplace but then as new countries achieved independence we were never specifically asked but it was assumed that we would do it until instructed otherwise. Finally, again, in my time the Philippines said "Okay, thank you very much but we are now going to look after our own interests. " Even though in many cases this meant that an embassy in Bonn covered the Low Countries and half of Scandinavia or something. So we relinquished and formally handed back our responsibility for representing the Philippines. That was one project I worked on.

*Q: What were you working on? What types of jobs were you holding?*

TEARE: Well I was in the Consular Section. There was a consul general. There were three mid-grade officers, one for passports, one for visas and one for special consular services. Well maybe there wasn't for Special Consular Services...that I think was with a junior officer. The guy doing it when I got there was Charles Steadman who left to become a Peace Corps country director not too many years after that and is now out of the Service.

That was a one-man operation part of the time anyway. And then when I was there it was usually the two of us working at it. That also supervised the anti-fraud which was two local investigators, both lawyers, both Ilokans from the northern part of Luzon Island where most of the Filipinos in the United States come from and where consequently a lot of fraud originates. So the main thing is that the whole time I was in the Philippines, nearly two years, I never had to do visas, which was a grueling job. I sometimes filled in at passports and I took over the Passport and Citizenship Unit the last three or four months I was there. But most of the time I was Special Consular Services and supervision of the anti consular fraud investigators. I thought that was the best job in the section.

*Q: Who was the consul general or consuls general?*

TEARE: Throughout my time one man and for several years after, Louis E. Gleeck, Jr. A few stories about him, too! But anyway Gleeck was consul general and he was frustrated in ambitions for higher rank there or elsewhere. Furthermore he had good deputies, the Passport and Visa people. Gordon Furth for visas and Faith Andress for Citizenship and Passport. As a result of which Gleeck could spend a lot of time out of the office and he did. He played golf early in the mornings, often with Ferdinand Marcos who was then a Senator. Marcos left the Liberal Party, Macapagal's party, after it was clear that Macapagal was going to run for re-election.

Marcos thought he had a promise that Macapagal would stay only one term and then he, Marcos, could move up. Well, when he saw that promise if it had ever existed was not going to be honored, Marcos switched parties, went over to the Nationalist party and very quickly became its President. It is the sort of thing that simply could not happen in the United States but could and did happen there. Of course Marcos went on to get the nomination and was elected in '65, Macapagal turned out to be a one term President.

Anyway, Gleeck would play golf with Marcos and other politicians and he would often go over to a coffeehouse quite near the Chancery called the Playa de Oro, Cup of Gold, where a lot of newsmen and sometimes politicians gathered and it was a hotbed of political gossip. Gleeck was always bringing this home. He studied Tagalog I think formally for awhile and picked up some more. We didn't have any Tagalog language officers or Filipino language officers in the embassy at that time so that was quite a useful function that Gleeck performed. I think nowadays we keep at least one trained Tagalog speaker in the embassy.

So the Consular Section sort of buzzed along on its own with Gleeck's rather detached guidance and it worked pretty well. The visa load was heavy and that is where the real grief came. As a Visa Officer if one follows the law and the regulations one turned down a lot of applicants. This being the Philippines it was often taken personally and junior Officers, I can think of a couple of them, Bob Myers, Ann Swift, were mentioned in the newspapers, typically one editorial one column as being anti-Filipino because they turned down so many visa applicants. There was real pressure in those jobs of that nature. As I say I escaped all that and I had I thought a much more interesting caseload visiting prisons, getting people out of jail, long-running welfare cases, these fraud investigations. I made a couple of trips up country with the fraud investigations.

*Q: Well the fraud was tied to the visas wasn't it?*

TEARE: Fraud also involved citizenship to a considerable degree. In fact, we investigated citizenship cases in considerably more depth than visa cases because citizenship was a lifetime entitlement. Of course, a visa could become that. A lot of Filipinos had gone to Hawaii in the interwar years. Some of them had come back and been trapped by World War II. Others were coming and going all the time. There would be substitution of children.

We would get an applicant that said this kid was born in Hawaii in 1948, let's say, so the kid should have been 14 years old but he only looked to be about 11. So we would put the case aside for investigation and every few months one of the investigators would go up, taking a photograph, to the kid's home barrio and ask whether anyone could say who the boy was. They'd say that it was Menato. Well, the application was in the name of Rodrigo. So then the investigator would ask whether the family had a boy named Rodrigo and they would say that Rodrigo died soon after they got back from Hawaii; this kid was born here. Well, there went the whole case! So we would get simple affidavits from them. We weren't trying to deny people for the sake of denying them but we were looking at cases that didn't smell right and there were plenty of those. Quite a few of them had to do with citizenship.

We would not have had time to investigate the typical weak visa case in any depth at all. There were simply too many of them. We would go after visa cases more when we began to see patterns, letters from the same employer or letters that all looked alike from the same travel agent, something like that. Although I don't think there was any inside fraud discovered in my time, one of the guys who worked for me in Special Consular Services was later caught and fired. I think he had been doing some very low level scam telling a kid who had a U.S. passport but no money that he would get him a work-away passage on a ship if he paid him ten pesos a month or something. It was small-scale stuff but it was the sort of thing that shouldn't have

happened. I suppose it was going on in my time and I might have been able to detect it but it was difficult to keep track of it.

*Q: I do know that later on there were real pressures and we lost a number of Officers who succumbed to probably more sex than bribes, but both. Or favors or something...was this a worry at the time?*

TEARE: Yes. I think we were always on the alert to it. It would have been very easy, for example, for a Visa Clerk simply to pull our notes of a refusal out of the file so that when the name was checked a few months later there was no record of anything. But you are talking about the American Officers?

*Q: Yes.*

TEARE: Yes. I know that there was quite a bit of that later on. I don't remember any in my time. In my job I didn't have direct dealings with a lot of Filipino applicants. I do remember though that once a bolt of cloth was left in my office, a few yards of cloth, and I couldn't figure out where it came from. None of my staff knew and so forth and I let it sit around for some months. Nobody took credit for having given it to me or tried to get anything out of me as a result so eventually I took it to a tailor and had a suit made! But that is about the only incident of that kind that I can remember.

*Q: One always thinks back to when the Marcos' regime really got going about how it sort of absorbed so many of our particularly higher Officers and all, I mean, what about the social life there?*

TEARE: Well, it is hard to say. I was very junior. I went there as a brand new O-7, I think, and I was promoted to six just before I left. Our social life consisted mainly of fellow junior Officers in the U.S. Mission, a few Officers from other Missions, and then some Filipinos of our own age or a little older who were typically Magsaysay leftovers or government employees, a couple of lawyers in private practice. Quite a few of the people we got to know socially we met through another FSO Frank Tatu, who ought to be interviewed if he hasn't been.

*Q: How do you spell his name?*

TEARE: Tatu. He remains a good friend after all these years. The Tatus and we arrived in the same month, October of 1962, about a week apart. So we were thrown together in all the newcomer events. But he was several years senior to me and had already served in Vientiane and Hong Kong by that time and had had Chinese language training.

*Q: Did you feel a certain amount of discrimination or something between the Officers of this huge Consular Section and the rest of the embassy?*

TEARE: A little bit and I suppose if I had been more alert I would have felt more. We were actually in a different building on the same compound; maybe you've seen it. It's a thirty second walk from one to the other. On the other hand, I was on friendly terms socially with the guys in

the Political and Economic Sections and the CIA Station and the DAO, so I didn't feel particularly left out of things. I began to notice that a lot of people knew things I didn't and if I had been more assiduous about going over to the telegram-read file I probably would have known a lot more. I sometimes cleared things with the Political Section and had good working relations.

The first DCM when we got there was Jack Kubisch who left soon afterwards and then Dick Service arrived. Both the Stevensons and the Services were good about including junior Officers in representational events, not only big ones but sometimes small. I think they did it alphabetically so the S's and T's and W's were invited one time and so forth. I don't think I really felt out of it but my political awareness was sharpening and I think I was getting impatient with consular work.

**FRANCIS J. TATU**  
**Chinese Affairs Officer**  
**Manila (1962-1965)**

*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.*

*Q: So then you did go to the Philippines, and what year was that?*

TATU: I think it was '61.

*Q: Well, that would only give you one year in Taijun.*

TATU: No, I was there longer than that.

*Q: Well, approximately. So you had this Chinese language training but really no place to really use it?*

TATU: Well, that's right. There was no place to go. I was offered Hong Kong, but you never repeat a post, in my mind anyway. I was offered General Services Officer at Taipei, but no self-respecting FSO would be General Services, given the choice, although that would have been terrific for language utilization. So the Philippines came up. There was thinking in the Department that we should have Chinese affairs officers in our posts all around the region anyway, so I went there for that purpose as "Chinese affairs officer." In the political section.

*Q: Explain a little bit why the Department felt at that time that we should have Chinese affairs officers around...*



TATU: I think it's obvious to anyone familiar with China that the Overseas Chinese, the so-called *huachow*. Controlled a very good percentage of the economies in most of the countries of Southeast Asia. So the closer we could get to them as individuals and learning their organizational mechanisms and so forth, the better off we would be.

*Q: And was there a perception that they also had links to mainland China?*

TATU: That was not so much of a problem, although these things would pop up, you know. During the Korean War, for example, in Thailand a contingent of 3,000 Sino-Thai youth volunteered and went off to fight with the Chinese in the Korean War. We were just flabbergasted. So we didn't know enough obviously, and I doubt that we do now, "the inscrutable Chinese." I think any reputable Sinologist would concede this.

*Q: What did you do in the Philippines?*

TATU: When I first arrived, the embassy itself didn't have this Chinese concept, and so I was assigned as aide to then Ambassador William Stevenson. He was a very nice fellow, a former president of Oberlin College, very courtly, stately. That was a boring job.

*Q: How was he as an ambassador?*

TATU: I don't think he was imaginative enough. It wasn't that he was particularly standoffish; he just didn't really get into them. Let's say he was not a success. But it was not because he didn't try. So I began lobbying to get out of the aide position. I was also protocol officer. Do you remember Katie Sternberg?

*Q: Yes.*

TATU: She really did the job. I wore the hat and she did the job.

*Q: She was an American and had lived in the Philippines for a long time. What was her story? I don't remember.*

TATU: That's right. Well, she married an American businessman years before - his name, of course, was Sternberg - and she was interned in Santo Tomas by the Japanese along with virtually the whole American community. Her brother-in-law, David Sternberg - did you ever come across him? - was confined to a wheelchair, and in Santo Tomas. The story is that he had a radio secretly concealed in his wheelchair, so that's how the American prisoners got the war news. I'll tell you a little anecdote, speaking of Santo Tomas. You know, Santo Tomas is arguably the oldest institution of Western learning in Asia. It was put up in something like the 14th Century, something bizarre like that. This was where I began doing public speaking, in the Philippines. I'd go out and tell them why they should be in Vietnam.

*Q: Oh, yes, I did that a few years later; it went on for many years.*

TATU: So I pulled up in front of Santo Tomas and I looked around and there's nobody there to greet me. I was there to give a lecture. So I found my way to the administrative office. This man over the counter greets me as "Doctor" and said, "There'll be someone here, Doctor." So about the third time I said, "Look, I don't deserve the accolade. I don't have the necessary degree." "You don't have a doctorate?" I said, "No." He said, "Would you like one?" Being naive I said, "Well, I don't have the time to do the coursework." What it came down to was for 50 bucks I could have got a doctorate from Santo Tomas. Being young and idealistic I was outraged, but now I think, my God, the certificate he displayed to me looked so good. It would be as valuable as some that you see around these days.

*Q: Well, you missed that opportunity.*

TATU: Following my practices, I was the first one in the embassy to make contact with Jose Maria Sison. He was the first one to ever lead a demonstration on the embassy, which I was able to report. Through him I met most of the other activist youth. He later became a serious revolutionary, and went into self-imposed exile.

But anyway I finagled my way out of that protocol position into the political section. I was doing external, as I understand you did, with John Gorman. But this lightning bolt struck. Following my practice of living in the community, I was way out in San Juan Rizal. One of our next door neighbors - who incidentally was the then Secretary of Treasury, a Pampangeno named Rod Perez - then made it a point to introduce me to another near neighbor named Ferdinand Marcos.

*Q: Oh, really? So this was '62, '63?*

TATU: '62.

*Q: So Marcos at that time was doing what?*

TATU: Well, he was going what he always did, being a politician, a senator and leader of the opposition. Our kids were about the same age, so our children became playmates with his. One fine day we were all sitting in an embassy political section staff meeting - the boss was then Max Krebs. He said, "We've got to get on to the various contenders. We don't know anything about this guy Marcos. Who the hell is he?" I was really hesitant. But I said, "Well, I know him socially" Max said, "Get onto that." The colleague who was doing "internal" was really sort of peeved about this suggestion. Well, you know, I couldn't help it.

*Q: If you have the contact, you have the contact.*

TATU: By the damndest chance, not a week later Mrs Marcos's (Imelda) brother Kokoy walked into my office. (How did he even get in the building let alone up on the top floors?) I then knew him casually from my activities at the Manila Overseas Press Club. He said, "Listen, we were having a meeting and we decided we don't have any contacts in the embassy, and you're it." I said, "Look, I do external..."

*Q: "This is not my portfolio."*

TATU: Yes. He said, "We'll see about that." So I said, "Well, okay, I've got to clear it with practically everybody in this building" - well, almost everybody was enthusiastic.

*Q: So this was Kokoy, Imelda Marcos' brother, Kokoy Romualdez?*

TATU: KOKOY, Benjamin Kokoy. Romualdez.

*Q: So he walked into the embassy and said, "You're my man."*

TATU: "You're our man." Anyway, it came to be. There was a whirlwind of activity from that time on. I'll tell you, these guys would call me up at three o'clock in the morning and say, "There's somebody we want you to meet." "Where?" "Quezon City - we'll send a car for you." So here we go out there and there's Blas Opla. "We want you to know that Blas is not a Communist, he denounces a communism." I really got into it, and I had to be very careful that I was not being partisan. For example, they had a convention in the Manila hotel, and they said, "We want you to come." "I cannot come, because it's partisan." They said, "That's okay. We'll have a little room for you. You can be off in this room with a two-way glass." I said, "Have you ever heard of the smoke-filled room?" So one thing I did, though: I suggested a couple of - maybe this was improper - a couple of songs that they could appropriate. Do you know the song "Downtown"? Da-da-da-da-da-da. Marcos. Then there was one other one, "Hello Dolly" [Marcos] and we had this gal lined up who sang this. So I used to participate.

*Q: So you gave them some of their theme songs?*

TATU: To some extent, yes.

*Q: Let's go back a little bit. Who was the Filipino in power at that time?*

TATU: The president's name was Macapagal. "Diodado" ("the gift of God") Macapagal. His daughter is now president.

*Q: So Marcos and who else were contending for the...?*

TATU: The CIA candidate was Raoul Manglapus, practically overtly.

*Q: Yes, he seemed to have...*

TATU: Well, he had a lot going for him, but, you know, I had an interesting experience. I was of an evening with about six sophisticated young Philippine intellectuals. They were agonizing over the coming presidential election. Obviously their man was Raoul. You know, Raoul was the "Filipino Stevenson." So the consensus came down to: "A vote for Raoul is a lost vote, because he'll just never make it. He just doesn't relate to the Tao (the common man). "So we'll vote for Marcos." And so they did. But, anyway, Marcos at one point took me aside and in effect said, "I'm a little too old for you to be a good *compadre*, so you'd better hook up with Kokoy. He's

your guy, and anything you need get through to me you go through him” So we’ve had a relationship ever since, sustaining.

*Q: Do you still see Kokoy?*

TATU: Yes, when we’re in the same country at the same time.

*Q: And what’s he doing these days?*

TATU: Well, he was here about two months ago. He had been living in semi-clandestine, in self-exile in Hawaii. He said he came here to say farewell to everybody, that he and his wife are going back to the Philippines. I said, “Aren’t you sort of in jeopardy there? There are some people who are not fond of you...” He said he didn’t care, he was going back and come what may. Some weeks later he called me from Manila and said, “Okay, we’re in Forbes Park. We have the house that used to be the Japanese ambassador’s with 14 bedrooms, so come anytime.

*Q: Very interesting.*

TATU: I’ll tell you why we maintain this relationship. After Marcos was elected - and here’s another bad career move - Kokoy came here to arrange for the American representative to the Marcos inauguration, who was to be Hubert Humphrey. Kokoy wanted me to come to the inauguration, but I declined as I didn’t think it would look good.

Then he returned to Washington as the ambassador designate. So he came around to see me. I was then in unusual circumstances. I was studying Thai, and I was house-sitting for one of the few millionaires I know, a house on Massachusetts Avenue, 2214, which is just down the street from the Philippine residence. He used to come and visit me, with no prior arrangement, very casually. Early on he said, “You know, we know that you brought the Americans behind us for the elections, because we could never have won without the help.” I said, “This is all BS. I didn’t do any such thing.” He said, “What we want to do is we’ll ask President Johnson to have you seconded to us and you come back to the Philippines and you can do anything you want to do. We’ll have you assigned to Padre Fora, (the Department of Foreign Affairs).

*Q: I see, to the Philippine Foreign Affairs Office.*

TATU: Yes, and I said, “Well, let me think about it.”

*Q: How was that supposed to work?*

TATU: Well, I would be seconded as an advisor. I said all of the media there thought that we were too close anyway. We used to all hang out at the Manila Overseas Press Club. That was the best place for making political contacts. I said, “How would it look? This would confirm that there was collusion if I were to come back. This was over a period of time we were discussing this. He was waiting to present his credentials.” He suggested “We will ask President Johnson. We will confer on you a medal.” I said, “You’re still on the same track here. I didn’t do

anything. That any other American FSO wouldn't have done in my place, I don't deserve anything."

*Q: Interesting that they thought that you were so instrumental.*

TATU: As we discussed earlier, they thought I was CIA.

*Q: But this all really came about because Marcos was your neighbor?*

TATU: Yes, essentially. So he, Kokoy, is hanging around waiting to present his credentials. He had gone with the Humphrey party and came back. He comes over one night – as I said he used to just drop in casually; it was a short walk - and he said, "I'm sick of this. I'm going back to Manila." I said, "You can't go back. You're the ambassador. Johnson waits till he's got five ambassadors lined up and then he takes their credentials at the same time." He had a lot of derogatory things to say about Johnson and Americans. And he did, he packed up and left. He said, "You're right. Washington is a terrible place. I don't want to be here." So then, to complicate matters, his uncle with the same name was appointed ambassador.

*Q: Imelda's brother.*

TATU: No, Kokoy was Imelda's brother. The other Benjamin Romualdez is the uncle. So that confused everybody. But anyway, from then on at every post we've ever had, Kokoy has turned up to see us, to track us down, even here. Once I got a call - I was working in the Department when one of these thugs they used to have as bodyguards, 'goons' they called them – telephoned me, an unmistakable goon voice said, "The governor is here to see you down at the C Street entrance." (his own people preferred to refer to Kokoy as "the governor" since he had once been governor of Legaspi). I hadn't seen him in a couple of years. So I went down, and he's in one of those big chauffeured sedans, and he grabs me and hauls me in, and the car took off. I said, "Where are we going? I'm at work."

*Q: Just like in the movies.*

TATU: Yes. We were headed for Georgetown Prep to see his sons who were studying there. Then, he asked for suggestions for lunch, suggesting himself "Sans Souci," a very trendy upscale restaurant then near the White House. I thought observing his casual attire (and the fact that he had no socks on) that they probably wouldn't let us in. Au contraire, we were met at the door by Paul, the renowned maitre d', and greeted not only by members of the staff, but some very prominent patrons (including the humor columnist Art Buchwald).

*Q: So you've had continuing contact with him? When did you actually leave the Philippines?*

TATU: When did we leave?

*Q: '64? But this was before Marcos was...?*

TATU: No, it was shortly after the election. It was within a week or so of the election. The Department, decided in it's wisdom, that after I had developed such substantive relations with the president elect, I should leave. The Ambassador, DCM, and Political Counselor tried to have that decision rescinded, to no avail. I concede that I had requested Thai language training, but I would have given that up to remain and ride the whirlwind. Marcos was elected, we're off to the airport for transfer. Kokoy's wife, Juliette, came to the airport. She said, "Ferdinand wanted to come to see you off, but he was afraid he might be assassinated." So she gave me this pendant, which I still have, and she said "This will open any door in the Philippines when you come back." That was Jim Rafferty. Do you remember him?

*Q: Jim Rafferty, yes, I do remember him. He was there the entire time that I was there.*

TATU: My impression was he was a little too heavy handed.

*Q: Well, he was pretty obvious.*

TATU: The one that I heard about was where he wanted to get a shipment of M16s to arm the private army of the governor of Cavite. Jim, too, was one of those characters, I guess. He passed away, you know.

*Q: No, I didn't know that.*

TATU: Just fairly recently, within the last couple of years.

*Q: So that was the Philippines and really a great story about how living on the economy can be so very productive. I don't know why more people don't do it. I found it to be fun. I did it most everywhere I was.*

TATU I recently hear a senior officer suggest that being assigned to an embassy was an awful "bore." There aren't many things to do to keep one busy he said, one just has an awful lot of free time. I just don't understand that kind of attitude. There you are in an alien culture with all sorts of challenges to learn about it, the language, the history. One of my functions was liaison with the Peace Corps. At that time the Philippines had the largest program, with over 900 volunteers. That gave me the excuse to travel all over the provinces. I'd just put on very casual clothes, as the volunteers did, travel by any available means of transportation ("trains, mules, and pirogues," I used to say). I got to meet a lot of young people, not just volunteers, I even played the role of the foreign villain in a university theatrical production.

**ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT**  
**Rotation Officer**  
**Manila (1963-1965)**

*Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, DC. Her father worked for the International Red Cross, but died when she was very young. Her grandparents*

*and uncle were all Navy world travelers. Her desire to enter foreign service was sparked by their tales of traveling abroad. She attended Stanford, but graduated from Radcliffe in 1962. She has served in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Jamaica, as well as several other positions within the State Department. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 1992.*

Q: *After you got your training, this would be early fall of '63?*

SWIFT: I went to Manila in August of '63.

Q: *What were you doing there?*

SWIFT: Line visa officer. Actually we went out rotational so I was supposed to go out and do six months in the consular section, and then another six months in the admin section, six months in econ, six months in political. The way it worked out, naturally, because in those days it was no different from now, was they were understaffed and not getting replacements. So I spent almost a year on the visa line.

Q: *As you know these interviews, although we want to catch a full career interview, there is a focus on the movement of people, visa and other things. Can you give how you were doing it, and your impressions of how the system was working at that time? I guess it was about our busiest visa post.*

SWIFT: It was busy but it was nothing like the way it is today. We had what we thought of as large groups of Filipinos coming in for visas, but in terms of the way the interviews went, in terms of the sorts of things we looked for during interviews, it was exactly the same sort of thing that you would have found in either Kingston, which was my last post, or almost any place in the world. I just don't think that the sorts of applicants, and the sorts of questions you asked, I don't think it has changed over the years at all. What has changed is the volume. We were a very, very busy post at that point, but I think we had something like three or four line non-immigrant visa officers, and then another three or four immigrant visa officers. So it was huge in terms of the Service at that point, but not today. I don't think we ever had these lines that stretched out the front of the building. I mean we always dealt with what came in in a day. The waiting room was always busy, and there was always a lot of work, but it wasn't overwhelming.

Q: *How did you feel about this when you first got hit with very obviously important decisions you were making on other peoples' lives?*

SWIFT: Hated it. It wasn't so much the decision making that bothered me but the fact that the Filipinos regarded a consular officer as something slightly lower than God. Certainly we were better than the ambassador and anybody else in the embassy. I mean people would come in and be very humble and self-effacing to me, and I was a 22 year old right straight out of college. I had no illusions that I was anything particularly wonderful and great. And here these often very important people, within Filipino societies--senators, and all sorts of things--were sort of looking up to me, or least were coming to me to plea for a visa for their relatives. And often for a visa for themselves. Often we would have mayors from towns outside coming in to want visas for

themselves, and being terrified of me as a junior officer, and I found that appalling. I really found the situation despicable in that sense. I didn't mind the work. The work was interesting and fun and there were patterns, you could see the little people from the villages coming in who plainly wanted to go join their relatives in the States, and were trying to go the NIV route. We used to laugh, you couldn't pay a bit of attention to any of the documentation because I don't think any Filipino that ever came in ever made more than \$100 a year. Their income tax returns were all fake, their bank accounts were all fake. Everything was fake and you really had to go on what they looked like, and what they would tell you of themselves.

*Q: Again, I think this has some pertinence to get a feel for how the system worked, the second tier of supervision that you were getting. We have old consular hands, did you find this a problem?*

SWIFT: It was just exactly I would say like what it is today. I really don't see much difference. Of course this was four or five, six, seven years after Wristonization?

*Q: Wristonization was around '55.*

SWIFT: Yes, seven years. We had a lot of people that were GS officers, rather than consular, and then had moved over. We had some just wonderful old-time consular officers. In my mind at that point, by the time I came in, none of this made any difference anymore. Everybody was Foreign Service. So you really didn't pay any attention to what they had been before. All I knew was that my mid-level supervisors tended to be older. I mean like they were in their probably early fifties, most of them, and were very experienced. Some of them were wonderful, and we had one guy who came out who was just an absolute total horror. But most of them were delightful, wonderful people.

*Q: Did they add a touch of firmness?*

SWIFT: Oh yes, it was very strict.

*Q: ...as opposed to the more liberal officers. We're talking about experienced visa hands.*

SWIFT: I remember it as a very strict type of experience. You did not question...when the Foreign Service said to me that I was going to Manila, I sort of grumbled and said, "I wanted to go to East Asia, and I didn't really think that the Philippines was East Asia," but it never once occurred to me to try and get out of it. And when I was told that I was going into...well, we all knew that we were going out on these rotational things, so we all assumed that we would get a crack at every section of the embassy, but it never occurred to us...or it certainly never occurred to me, to try to wangle my tour in any way, shape or form. I mean tours happened, and you did what you were supposed to do. And when I left Manila I knew I was coming back to Washington but I didn't have a clue what job I was going into, not the first idea. They didn't tell me until I got back to Washington that I was going to be on the Benelux desk, which is what I ended up doing. For what reason, who knows, I did not know a thing about the Benelux countries at that point. I was an East Asia person. And your bosses were your bosses. They were your teachers, and there was never a question of would you do the work, or wouldn't you do the work. You did the work.



If the work didn't get done by 5:00 you did it until whatever time it got done. And you regarded it as, that's the way you did it.

Besides that, as a 22 year old, right straight out of college, my mother kept telling me who had been in government service for a long time, that I was making three times the amount she made as a much more senior person when she retired. Now mind, she had not retired, but got out of the government. She got out of the government in '51 or '52, or something like that, but she regarded my salary as something just out of this world, and I did too. I thought it was incredible.

*Q: Did you find with the visa officers...I'm not sure, prejudice may be too strong a word, but biased. I mean, after all you have people who lie to you all the time, was there developed a feeling or a different group of officers, no Filipino is going to the United States is up to any good, or anything like that. Was this a problem?*

SWIFT: Well, in those days, especially when I was in Manila, the Peace Corps was there and we were all very idealistic, and we all thought the world ought to be one great big wonderful place. Yes, we knew these people were lying, cheating and stealing to try and get into the States, but could you blame them? Sure, that's what they did, and it was our job to be nice and firm, and pleasant, and turn them down, and let the ones that we thought were okay go, and not let the other ones go. It was very difficult as a young visa officer to operate in Philippine society which we did all the time because you were constantly being hit up for visas, which is no different from what you get today. And you had to learn to handle that. The Philippines was fairly safe except for parts of the Mindanao area where the radical Muslims were, and parts of Cagayan Valley where the NPA Communists were operating. We traveled all over the country; meeting Filipinos, staying with Filipinos, staying with the Peace Corps. We were young and adventurous, we just paid no attention to any restrictions that were put on us. I don't think in those days anybody really told us we could not go. We knew where things were unsafe, or were not safe, but two or three of us had a sort of race on to see who could visit the most provinces. So we traveled all over, and we met an awful lot of Filipinos, and you liked them. It was fun being with the Filipinos, and learning to know them, and the aim of all of us was to learn to know the culture, good or bad. So you sort of separated people out, and I had some very, very good Filipino friends who would never have thought of hitting me up for visas. And yet I knew the minute I stepped foot out into one of the provinces, and anybody found out I was vice consul, number one I would get the red carpet treatment, but secondly, I'd get hit for visas. But I don't recall any bitterness at the time.

*Q: While you were in the Philippines you had some rotational jobs. What other things were you doing?*

SWIFT: I spent a couple of months in the administrative section, and a couple of months in the econ section, and about five or six months in political.

*Q: What were you doing in the political section?*

SWIFT: The political section was not fun in the beginning. What happened to me was that I had been about eleven months on the visa line, and I really didn't mind it. I did want to go off to the

other parts of the embassy, and as usual they were saying, "You can't go, you can't go because we're too busy." I had one of the fine old timers as our boss, but she left and in her place came an officer who I think was on his last assignment and was about to be selected out or something, and he was very bitter, and he just absolutely would not do any work, or take any responsibility for anything. And working under him was simply awful, and I had been used to working under really good guidance and a very free flow where we were expected to make a lot of decisions on our own. But when things were political or tricky, then we were expected to go to our bosses and say, "Hey, I have the niece of, or somebody who says they are the niece of the president of the Philippines, or the senator or something, but I've got to turn her down because she's standing out here telling me a tale that cannot be true. Could you smooth the way." And we were used to having our superiors help us out in cases that we knew were very tricky. And this guy didn't want to touch any of this stuff, so what he would do when you would come back to him, he would look at you coldly and say, "What's the matter? You can't make a decision." Well, I could make a decision. I knew what my decision was. My decision was that I was going to turn this person down flat. But I also knew that if I turned the person down flat we were going to be in the headlines of the paper the next day, and a much smoother way of turning the person down flat was going to have to be done. And I didn't think I could do it out there on the line. It would be much better if somebody would take them back and be gentle with them. And he wouldn't do this, and he was never around, and he never gave us any guidance. It was demoralizing when we got somebody like that. And at that point...the inspectors were coming in and I went to the Personnel section and said, "You get me out of there, because if you don't get me out of there the inspectors are going to hear about your lack of junior officer rotational program until they're sick of it." So I was moved two days before the inspectors came and I always regarded the inspectors as friends after that. Because I was getting to the point where it was going to be the end of my career pretty soon...we were in such a battle, this guy and I.

*Q: You spent a little longer time in the political section...*

SWIFT: You asked me how the political section was. Remember that I can't spell.

*Q: You mentioned that you have a mild form of dyslexia.*

SWIFT: That's self-diagnosed. Everybody has always told me all my life that I can't spell. I know I can't spell. I really can't spell, and I reverse numbers, and I read in peculiar ways. When I was coming up through school nobody knew about dyslexia, and I was given remedial spelling, and I just thought I couldn't spell. But what that means is that if you ask me to file things, it is not a good thing to ask me to do. And I'm very inaccurate, and I was in constant trouble as a young officer because we didn't have computers, and we didn't have spell checks. I used to say my typewriter misspelled things, and spelling was a big thing in those days in the Foreign Service. So I was constantly in trouble for my spelling. Anyhow, I got in the political section and the first thing I was put in charge of was the bio files, which was just awful, clipping newspapers, and trying to be neat and tidy and get everything in order.

*Q: The Foreign Service equivalent of running an obituary files in a newspapers.*

SWIFT: Exactly, and it was just plain awful. I am just no good at that sort of stuff, and I had an old line Foreign Service officer who was a lovely political officer, who was just an absolute love, but an absolute nit-picker of absolutely everything. And I couldn't write a sentence but that the sentence got rewritten, and certainly I couldn't spell anything, so that was worse. By that time I had gone through admin, which had been kind of fun, and I'd gone through econ which had been okay, and then I got into that political section and I really thought, "This is not good." But then they were having the Philippine base talks, so they needed an extra person on the pol-mil section, and that was fun. That was good fun, so that's where I ended up in the political section.

**CHESTER E. BEAMAN**  
**Economic Officer**  
**Manila (1964-1967)**

*Chester E. Beaman was born in Indiana in 1916. He received his bachelor's degree from Depauw University in 1938. His career includes positions in London, Wales, Cairo, Port Said, Philippines, Syria, and Malta. Mr. Stuart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 1999.*

*Q: In 1964, what was the Philippine government like?*

BEAMAN: Diosdado Macapagal was president at the time. The embassy in general had good relations with the president. The Philippines had a lot of economic problems, and there was a big AID operation attached to the embassy. I used to go on field trips with the AID director to various places. Came an election and Macapagal was replaced by Ferdinand Marcos. When Marcos was elected, the embassy was a little bit shocked because they had not had very many contacts with Marcos. The consul general, an officer by the name of Gleek, had the most contacts with Marcos. So we officers were all called to go to parties in order to get acquainted with the new incoming president. I can remember, I was talking to Mrs. Marcos for, I guess, too long a time, and my wife came up and said, "Somebody else wants to talk to her." In other words, "Get away and let somebody else talk." In any event, as a result of this, the Marcos camp gave a lot of parties to which Americans were invited. So we did get well acquainted with Marcos.

At that time, the embassy regarded Marcos as the "Great White Hope," if you want to use that phrase. He came in speaking a lot like Amos in the Bible, saying, "You have been corrupt. You've been doing such and such and it's got to stop. We're going to do such and such." It was an amazing inaugural address, at least to me. But there was a lot of corruption. It didn't start under Marcos. It had started long before that. It was rather benign until after Marcos came into power. In later years, he and Mrs. Marcos became like other politicians. I wasn't there when corruption seized the Marcos. I would say that all the time I was there, the relations were pretty good with the Filipinos.

*Q: Was the Economic Section keeping an eye on corruption or was this more political?*

BEAMAN: It was more political. We might be on the periphery of something, but our task was primarily promoting trade. We had an Economic Section that had seven officers and a showroom. It was a big operation. During my period, we did have talks on airline rights. Further on, one of the things that I spent a lot of my time on was trying to get the Filipinos to join in a satellite project. In addition to being deputy economic counselor, I was also the science attaché. A lot of officials from Washington having to do with satellites came quite often. I would go over to the foreign ministry with them for talks. What they wanted the Filipinos to do was to build a receiving station. These satellites were going to be like beads around the Earth and they wanted to be able to beam something from Washington to the Philippines. Just before I left, I went out into a field where there was a temporary receiving and sending station. President Marcos came and talked to President Johnson via satellite. So I figured, at least I had accomplished something while I was there. I had good relations with the Atomic Energy Commission and other groups concerned with these matters.

*Q: Where was the emphasis? I would have thought that, one, we would have been doing everything we could to encourage the Philippines to develop its own industrial base and to turn it into a viable country because we had this implicit responsibility, but at the same time, we're always trying to find markets. How did this work?*

BEAMAN: We were trying to push both industrial and agricultural development. There were a number of American companies operating there. Many of our contacts were with them. We were trying to push trade, for one thing, and then there was the AID operation which was trying to help the Philippines, particularly to develop agriculture. The agricultural attaché did a good job of introducing the Filipinos to "bulgur wheat" as a supplement to a rice diet. At that time, there was a communist rebellion in rural provinces north of Manila. Our main thrust as far as public relations were concerned: 1) serving with the political counselor or the AID director on negotiations for help. I didn't have anything to do with getting any money to them. It was the AID people. But I would go with the AID director sometimes, and then I'd go with the political counselor 2) Ambassador Blair when he came wanted to visit every province in the Philippines. He again, like in India, used the Air attaché's plane. He would select officers to go along. I didn't go on every trip, but I went on many trips with him where we would go to a given province and talk to political and economic people.

Another thing as far as embassy-government relations were concerned related to the military bases. We probably (not me personally) had more difficulty with incidents that happened at these bases. Filipino thieves would steal yards and yards of cable wire right out of the ground. One time, somebody threw a small bomb over the fence of the air base. Somehow, our USIS people put out something that inferred that the Filipinos had done this. Obviously, they were probably Filipinos. So, that created a little flurry. Then there were the usual problems of sailors and soldiers getting into trouble with the locals.

*Q: What was the major export of the Philippines in those days?*

BEAMAN: Sugar. The Laurel-Langley Agreement had sugar quotas as one of its main provisions. Before that time and even during that time, we were buying a lot of sugar from Cuba.

When Cuba went communist, Philippine sugar became more important. There were other things, but that was the main thing we discussed with the government.

*Q: In a way, that was a very controlled thing. You could only bring so much in. It really wasn't much of a looking for a market type thing, was it?*

BEAMAN: No. The thing was that the Filipinos wanted a long-term agreement. The Laurel-Langley Agreement was going to run out about eight years after I left. They were trying to get a bigger quota on sugar. There were discussions on that and also what to do with the Laurel-Langley Agreement after it expired. I think after I left, the U.S. got it extended a few more years, but I'm not sure.

*Q: Was the Philippines a very attractive place for American goods?*

BEAMAN: Oh, yes. In the stores, they liked American products, particularly records and music tapes. That was for the younger crowd, but there were other U.S. things - dresses, blue jeans, household equipment, especially air conditioners - that were sold.

*Q: Were we having any problem with pirating, intellectual rights, and all that at that time?*

BEAMAN: Yes, that was a problem in the Philippines, particularly in music tapes. Taiwan was the worst offender with respect to books. We kept an eye on the problem in the Philippines also, but there wasn't that much pirating. They didn't have much of a publishing industry. Taiwan did more pirating in books as well as music tapes.

*Q: Did you get many visitors for trade?*

BEAMAN: Yes. The governor of Illinois brought the biggest trade delegation. There were a few trade delegations like that which came through to talk business. We had also individual businessmen and smaller groups visiting. Our commercial attaché worked with such groups. We also had a small showroom featuring smaller American products. Exhibits were changed from time to time.

*Q: How solid did you feel the economy and the handling of the economy was at that time?*

BEAMAN: There, I had some doubts. There was corruption. Even though Marcos made this wonderful speech that he was going to stamp it out, there was not only corruption, but they would kill one another. Many carried guns. They would stick them in their belt behind their barongs. It's worse in the U.S. now than it was then, but, in any event, there was regular violence and robbery. I felt the Filipinos weren't having a good development. There were still a lot of poor people. It was most obvious around the U.S. air base. Outside the air base was a large pocket of poverty. You've seen pictures of shacks along the railroad. I felt that the rich were doing better in the Philippines than the rest of the people.

*Q: Was there any concern about the embassy, particularly the officer staff, being almost absorbed by the wealthy Filipinos. Their hospitality is well-known, but also, it's a hospitality with a hook. In other words, there is often a reason behind it.*

BEAMAN: I don't think we purposely cultivated only the wealthy. We were trying to maintain high contacts with the government. Of course, there were a number of parties put on by Philippine organizations. For example, whenever the Atomic Energy Commission had a dinner, I was always invited. We certainly concentrated on contacts with the government and business people. In our daily lives we had contacts with ordinary people who were largely friendly and liked Americans. However, as you were saying, did we get down to the poor? No, I don't think we did.

*Q: I was really thinking more of looking out to the middle class and the professional class.*

BEAMAN: Certainly, I think everybody was trying to cultivate as many Filipinos as they could. They were very friendly. There is no question about it. Most of the social functions had, from our standpoint, an aim of trying to cultivate friends. Some of the invitees were middle class. For example, there were teachers, journalists, and small businessmen.

*Q: Did you find yourself under a lot of pressure from Filipino contacts about visas?*

BEAMAN: No. The consulate got that. I don't recall anything along that line. When I was science attaché, some of the conferences got a little dicey. I can remember one instance where a fellow who was big, fat. He was chosen to go to some conference on an airplane, and we were paying for it. He wanted us to pay for two first class seats because he was so big. Well, we ended up doing it, but it was things like that that were petty really.

**THOMAS F. CONLON**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1964-1967)**

*Thomas F. Conlon was born in Illinois in 1924 and received his BS from Georgetown University in 1948. He served overseas in the US Army from 1943-1945. Upon entering the Foreign Service, he was posted in Havana, Surabaya, Singapore, Saigon, Le Havre, Manila, Nice, Canberra, and Bangkok. In 1992 Mr. Conlon was interviewed by Arbor W. Gray.*

*Q: Your next assignment was to the Embassy in Manila. How did this come about?*

CONLON: The Department was going through one of its reorganization programs, involving the appointment of so-called "country directors" for each country in the world. The idea came from Secretary Rusk, who wanted to have one person, usually a senior officer, immediately available for assignment as ambassador to that country. The idea was not a very good one, as it meant, in many cases, that "country directors" were assigned to a given country after serving as desk

officers some 5-10 years previously. It also meant that several junior officers would have to be available to support a senior officer, instead of the desk officer doing most of his own work, which was the previous system.

In any case, since the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs was being dissolved and Dave Cuthell was going on to another assignment anyway, he had no objection to my looking for another post. I knew that there was an opening coming up in the Embassy in Manila and I was able to get assigned there as First Secretary.

Manila was an extraordinarily complex and interesting assignment. There were so many things that we had in common with the Filipinos, and yet they were so different from us. I couldn't have asked for better bosses than Ambassador William P. Blair, Deputy Chief of Mission Jim Wilson, and Political Counselor Dick Usher. I was initially in charge of the External Unit in the Political Section and then the Internal Unit. Filipino politics are very complex, as they have continued to be over the years.

However, I had only spent six months in Manila when the Embassy in Saigon began to press me to return there for assignment. I felt personally that Vietnam was a very important testing place for the United States and, although I might have avoided returning there, I didn't feel that I could do this and still be consistent with my own views.

*Q: So you accepted reassignment to Saigon?*

CONLON: Yes, as First Secretary. Initially, I filled in as chief of the Internal Unit in the Political Section, replacing Ted Heavner, who was scheduled for reassignment elsewhere. After going on home leave Ted decided to return to Saigon, to his old position, and I was assigned as head of the "Provincial Reporting Unit." There were seven very capable young Foreign Service Officers assigned to it, most of them Vietnamese language officers, living in the provinces, working out of a central point, and reporting more or less on what they thought would be interesting and significant. My job was to keep in touch with them, review and send on their reports, and suggest other reports to them. Several senior officers from the Department told me how important this unit was, but it was apparent that few of them actually read the reports. I came to have considerable reservations about whether it was useful to have these guys risking their lives, frequently moving alone through a hazardous countryside, to produce reports that few people read. All in all, I felt that I was about 50% occupied, which was all the more disagreeable, since my family was still in the Philippines.

One incident occurred during this second tour in Saigon which made me reflect more deeply on how we should have responded to the Vietnamese generals' request for reassurance of support in 1963 in the event that they overthrew Diem. For a long time I had felt that, though it was regrettable, it was inevitable that we would reply that we would continue to support the non-communist side in South Vietnam. However, I believe that in September, 1967, presidential elections were held in South Vietnam, in which there were more than a dozen candidates. Nguyen van Thieu was elected president after a campaign which numerous American observers who came to South Vietnam for the event said was reasonably fair and democratic. Naturally, there were Vietnamese who did not accept the results and who were moving to have the National

Assembly decline to certify the election outcome. At this point Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, a superb ambassador and a very perceptive but tough-minded man, called in all of the political officers and told us to pass the word to our Vietnamese contacts that if the National Assembly refused to certify the election results, the U. S. would regard this as a request for us to withdraw our military and economic support for the Republic of Vietnam and to pull our forces out of the country, leaving the non-communist Vietnamese to deal with the communists on their own. This quickly ended that kind of maneuver. I wondered what would have happened if we had taken similar action in the fall of 1963 when a group of Vietnamese generals asked for assurances of U. S. support if they overthrew Diem. Certainly, we never encountered as effective a Vietnamese Government as the one headed by President Diem.

Here, perhaps, a word or two about my long suffering but dutiful Foreign Service wife, Joan, would be appropriate. At the time I went back to Saigon in June, 1967, we had seven children, all living with us in Manila. I was able to get back to Manila from Saigon about once every six weeks or so, spending a week each time. This left Joan with all of the day to day problems of coping with a large family, handling local and U. S. bills (which I had always handled before), and having only indeterminate status in Manila. She had ordinary Filipino license plates on the car but still had access to the Embassy and Navy commissaries and the dispensary, as well as the clubs which we had joined when I was assigned to Manila. Although Joan could have returned to the U. S. or gone virtually anywhere else in the world other than Saigon, she decided to stay in Manila. We had a very pleasant house in the Bel Air suburb of Manila, a good household staff, and the children were more or less content in school. Our eldest daughter, Peggy, however, decided that she would like to return to Washington, DC, to go to high school with one of her best friends, Kathleen Conley. Kathleen's parents agreed to have Peggy live with them in Washington. During my absence in Saigon Joan also had unstinting support from the Political Counselor, Dick Usher, and his replacement, Frank Underhill, as well as other members of the Political Section, who treated her as if she was still the wife of one of the officers in the Section.

Then, just before I left Manila for Saigon, our eldest son Paco (so we called him, as he had been born in Havana), then not quite 17, asked if he could go to sea for a year or so. U. S. registered ships were being taken out of mothballs faster than the seamen's union could provide crews. A special arrangement had been made under which young American males in good physical condition could obtain temporary Coast Guard authorization to be signed on as ordinary seamen. The union grudgingly accepted this situation. I had myself wanted to serve in the Merchant Marine during World War II, but my mother refused her permission, as she said I "would meet rough men" if I went to sea. Poor Mother! I met "rough men" in the Army Air Forces instead and suffered no permanent harm. She must have been thinking of Eugene O'Neill's novel, The Long Voyage Home, made into a movie about this time, which depicted seamen as boozing brawlers. Well, I decided that I would sign the necessary authorization for Paco to go to sea. This relieved Joan of some responsibilities, as Paco was in a rather rebellious mood at the time, and his being at sea meant that she did not have to deal directly with him.

I think that the experience did him good, and he ultimately came to take this view. In fact, at the end of his year of service, he decided to return to Manila and complete his last year of high school. However, he had done a good job on the ship, and the captain was reluctant to let him go. I prevailed on the shipping officer in the Embassy in Saigon to go up to Cam Ranh Bay, where



Paco's ship then was located, and "lean" on the captain to have him released. The task was made easier than seemed likely at first, because Paco had fallen down a slippery ladder while at sea, breaking an arm. This limited his usefulness on the ship. He was duly discharged, spent a week or so with me in Saigon, and then returned to Manila to finish high school.

Meanwhile, my 18 month tour in Saigon was cut short prematurely when I came down with hepatitis in September, 1968. I was in Manila for a short visit. I had had what I thought was flu. However, my skin turned yellow, as did the whites of my eyes. The Embassy doctor in Manila said that I had hepatitis and needed to spend at least three and perhaps six months in bed. So the Embassy in Saigon had to do without me. In fact, in November, 1968, while I was still in Manila recovering from hepatitis, I was assigned to Nice, France, as Consul General. The Department was aware that I was ill and no longer in Saigon. In this case the assignment was arranged by Rhee Shannon, former personnel officer at the Embassy in Saigon in the early 1960's, who knew that I needed a fairly easy assignment for the next year or so, due to my health.

**EDWARD WILKINSON**  
**Courier**  
**Manila (1964-1967)**

*Edward Wilkinson was born in Indiana in 1936. Mr. Wilkinson received his bachelor's degree at Purdue University and served in the army from 1957-1959. His career included positions in Philippines, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Taiwan, Ecuador, Korea, Thailand, and Germany. Mr. Wilkinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 2002.*

WILKINSON: I was a courier for two tours, a little over four years. The first two years, I was stationed in Frankfurt. Because the Frankfurt courier office was a relatively large operation, and because they had much smaller operations in Panama and in Manila, generally persons assigned to Frankfurt ended up doing two back-to-back tours there. But in my case, for whatever reason, I only did one tour in Germany and then was sent to Manila for my second tour.

*Q: Let's talk a bit about the system of couriers in the '60s.*

WILKINSON: Because of international agreements, if you are certified by your country as being a professional courier, you are able to take diplomatic pouches through other countries' customs procedures without their being inspected. Of course, there is a distinction between your suitcase, your personal items, and the pouches, which are sealed. So you go from point A, to point B, to point C, carrying the diplomatic pouch with an official certificate designating you as an official diplomatic courier. These procedures are spelled out in the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations. So the courier is responsible for moving official diplomatic mail from the U.S. to – and between – diplomatic and consular posts abroad.

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WILKINSON: Yes, I was transferred to the Philippines in November of '64. Out of Manila, we traveled down to Australia and to many parts of Southeast Asia, as far west as Karachi and Peshawar. We didn't go to China, though, a country we didn't recognize at the time. Nor did we go to Japan, Korea or Taiwan, all of which were serviced by the U.S. military courier service.

Manila was, of course, quite different from Frankfurt, a very different place, altogether. I must say I quickly fell in love with Asia.

When I got to that part of the world, I felt like I had, in a certain sense, come home. I don't know why. And let me add here that in March of 1965, I met the wonderful woman who was later to become my wife. We didn't get married for some years, but we hit it off, I would say, right away. Her name is Alicia, but she was known by many people in Manila as Lisa.

*Q: What was her background?*

WILKINSON: Well, she was born and raised in Bacolod City in the central Philippines, in Negros Occidental. She had graduated from the University of Philippines in Greater Manila, as did her parents before her. Upon graduation, she stayed in Manila to work. She first got a job with the Philippine government, but by the time I met her she was working for Scandinavian Airlines as a ticket agent.

One little interesting point about my wife, I think, is that as I mentioned earlier, my parents subscribed to National Geographic magazine. I used to clip coupons to send for information about other places. Well, Lisa's parents, too, subscribed to National Geographic magazine and she, too, used to clip the coupons and sent them off to get information about far away places. She did this, I think, for the same reason I did: a fascination with travel and with other places. So if there was ever a marriage made in heaven, ours might very well be it.

Also, I might add that for a limited number of years they had, at the University of Philippines, a School of Foreign Service. (I don't know why they eliminated it from the curriculum, but they did.) Anyway, my wife graduated from U. P. with a Bachelor of Science degree in Foreign Service. We dated during my tour in Manila, but at the end of two years, I went off to my next assignment. Fortunately for me, we got back together later.

**CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE, JR.**  
**Assistant Regional Security Officer**  
**Manila (1965-1966)**

*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 Reagon as Ambassador to Colombia in 1985. In addition to Colombia, he was posted to the Phillipines, Indonesia, Belgium, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Chile.*

GILLESPIE: The RSO training was perfunctory, in many ways, but interesting. By the end of February, 1965, my family and I were getting off a plane in Manila, where I was the Assistant RSO. It was a pretty good-sized security establishment. There were also some technical security people in a big Embassy.

William McCormick Blair was the Ambassador. His Deputy Chief of Mission(DCM) was Richard Service. My boss was a long-time Civil Service investigator who had joined the State Department security system. The Administrative Counselor was John Lennon, the uncle of the Lennon sisters who used to sing with Lawrence Welk. Jack Lennon was an FSO who had come into the Foreign Service through the examination process and was a very serious guy. It was a large Embassy with a lot of things going on. The Philippines was a fascinating place. People had told me that I would certainly use my Spanish there. Of course, you don't use Spanish there. Nonetheless, it was a fascinating, even shocking country in many respects. I think that at the end of February, 1965, when we arrived there, the Philippines was in a presidential elections campaign. Unidentified gunmen gunned down the Chief Justice of the Philippines Supreme Court, I believe, on the steps of the Supreme Court building. It was really a kind of wild place.

There was a major U.S. military presence in the Philippines. At this time the war was going on in Vietnam. My recollection is that...

*Q: We were just starting the major military buildup in Vietnam.*

GILLESPIE: In Vietnam, in early 1965.

*Q: What were your responsibilities in the RSO? One of the things that we don't often get in these interviews is what security officers do. I would like to get your views and any stories you might have in this connection.*

GILLESPIE: Sure. I learned that I was supposed to conduct investigations. This really meant conducting background investigations and security investigation updates, which involved interviewing people about other Foreign Service Officers, government employees, or people seeking government employment. So we did a lot of that. We did security briefings for newcomers to the Embassy in Manila about locking up and protecting classified material.

We also had special investigations. At that time, in the 1960s, there was a tendency toward homophobia and concerns about homosexuality and aberrant behavior of all kinds, including adultery, fornication, and sexual relationships between people who weren't married to each other. All of these were very important because they were viewed as opening individuals up to vulnerability through black mail and penetration by hostile intelligence people.

We had a whole range of things on the personnel front. We had all of the procedural security matters, such as the security of safes, security violations, and protecting classified material. We had a subordinate post, the Consulate in Cebu. You had to worry about people going back and forth between Manila and Cebu and whether they were carrying classified material on the airplane - all of those kinds of things. We also dealt with the whole range of physical security

matters - the safety and security of Embassy buildings and the classified material contained in them. Because of what was going on in the world, in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, demonstrations against the U.S. Embassy were frequent. There were strong nationalist and some communist elements in the Philippines who saw the U.S. - and particularly the involvement of the U.S. military in the Philippines - in very negative terms. They would direct their wrath at the U.S. Embassy. Crowds of people holding these views would come marching down Roxas Boulevard (formerly Dewey Boulevard), throw materials at the Embassy, and try to break through the gates.

There were two of us: the senior security officer and myself. We divided up the work. We were also responsible for the supervision of security activities and the security of our installations at our posts in Australia and New Zealand. As things turned out, I never became directly involved in that. The other officer handled that.

We also had a guard force of about 100 Filipinos. The Embassy compound itself in Manila, which was in downtown Manila facing Manila Bay, was a large plot of ground, covering, I imagine, four or five acres. What had been the residence of the U.S. Governor General and then the U.S. High Commissioner was now the chancery building housing the Embassy. Across the street from the Embassy - across Roxas Boulevard from it - were offices housing the Agency for International Development (AID) Mission and the offices of the United States Information Service (USIS.) We were responsible for the security of those places, as well.

Then there was the Seafront Compound, a large complex which included apartments, a swimming pool, housing for the Marine Guard Detachment, a commissary and post exchange kind of facility where you could buy food and other essential articles. I think that it was an extension of U.S. military facilities in the Philippines.

My job was to act as the American supervisor of the Filipinos who, in turn, supervised the Filipino guard force and to make sure that they performed their duties on schedule. We had a large Marine Security Guard contingent. My job as the assistant RSO was to make sure that the Marines were doing their job, that schedules were being met, and to handle all of the dealings with the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Marine Security Guard Detachment. In general, there was a whole range of activities which had to do with the physical security of the Embassy.

So I ended up going back to the Philippines. Our daughter was born in January, 1966. I had gone back to the Philippines in November. By that time the Philippines had had their presidential election, and a man named Ferdinand Marcos had been elected president. He was the great hope of the Philippines, as you may recall. He was a war hero, had graduated first in his class from law school, and his wife, Imelda, was a beauty queen. There could have been no knight in shining armor greater than Ferdinand Marcos.

Vice President Hubert Humphrey was sent out by President Lyndon Johnson to represent the United States at the inaugural festivities in the Philippines. I was assigned the job of shepherding the Secret Service people who accompanied Vice President Humphrey. The man who headed the advance party of the Secret Service was named Jack Parr. He was the head of the Secret Service

detail when President Reagan was shot and wounded in 1981 in Washington. The Secret Service people came to Manila in November, 1965, to prepare for an early December visit by Vice President Humphrey. We had all of them out to our house for Thanksgiving dinner.

My wife took me in again after all of this absence in Jakarta. She was still pregnant. My mother was with us. She had come out for Thanksgiving and Christmas, because we thought that the baby was going to be born in December, 1965.

The visit by Vice President Humphrey was quite a moment. He was everything that you would hope he would be. He said all of those wonderful things about our tradition of democracy and our legacy in the Philippines. It was a very exciting moment for Ambassador William Blair, his wife, Deedah, and all of the Embassy staff.

For some reason I was commandeered to sit in on the drafting of the reporting cables on the meeting between Vice President Humphrey and President Marcos. I think that we were still using "cablese" in those days to make the messages shorter. However, you had to type the cable on a manifold form, with carbons between the various sheets. So, if you made a mistake or wanted to change anything, it was difficult to correct, and you usually had to retype the whole thing. This meant that when you thought that you were all through with a cable, it really had to be proof read carefully. These reporting cables were classified Top Secret, because they involved Vice President Humphrey talking to President Marcos. They were important, and the Vice President was going to approve these cables. So everything had to be perfect. I remember that Dick Usher, who was the Political Counselor in Manila and a very senior officer, came to me and said, "Tony, would you please help us with these cables?"

I may be wrong but I think that Vice President Humphrey's chief of staff was Ted Van Dyke, who later went on to do other things in his own right. Van Dyke was the man who was going to check out all of the arrangements for the Vice President. We worked very closely with him. You're absolutely right. It all had to be perfect. The care and feeding of senior officials is part of the business, and you want it to be right. I had been in the Foreign Service, at this point, for 10 months. I had just come out of one rather tense situation in Indonesia and was thrown into participating in handling a vice presidential visit. It was quite a remarkable experience for me.

*Q: You were getting from Vice President Humphrey and everybody else a real sense of optimism about the Philippines.*

GILLESPIE: A definite sense of optimism. People felt that this was a wonderful development. The previous President, Diosdado Macapagal had been a fairly decent man, I think, but the Philippines had gone through a terribly violent campaign. There were lots of things going on. There was a tremendous amount of corruption. However, Marcos was seen as a man who could deal with the communist, subversive threat, which, in everybody's view, was real. There seemed to be an incipient revolt, a revolution going on. The Philippines has some 73 languages and dialects and thousands of islands. The idea was to try to bring it together.

It was very important to the security of the U.S. because of the bases, particularly at Clark Field and Subic Bay. The situation in Vietnam and in the Southeast Asian peninsula was getting very

nasty and difficult. Sure, the view was that the advent of Marcos as President of the Philippines was a great moment, and we should do everything possible to support him. He was the man for the Philippines. It was believed that he would further consolidate democracy in the Philippines and would deal with the economic situation. Of course, no one could express oral support for Marcos better than Vice President Hubert Humphrey. That was the message which Humphrey delivered: that we were with the Philippines all the way. This was a bright moment for the Philippines. There was a peaceful transfer of power.

*Q: What was your impression of Ambassador Blair? You were brand new in the Foreign Service, but by then you had also worked with Ambassador Marshall Green.*

GILLESPIE: That's right. I had seen Ambassador Blair briefly before going to Jakarta on temporary duty. I must say that the Blair's could not have been nicer to the people who worked with them. Mrs. Blair may have been a little detached, although I don't think that it was in any cold way. Ambassador Blair was extremely outgoing and pleasant. They both had the habit of going to the Seafront Compound swimming pool on the weekends and sometimes for lunch during the week. They were very accessible. To me that was great. Well, he was the first Ambassador that I had ever met. He was a political appointee, non-career, but I didn't know exactly what that meant. In any case he was just a very nice guy.

When I was getting ready to go to Indonesia on temporary duty, nothing happened. However, when I came back, Ambassador Blair made it a point to have me come up and talk to him about what had gone on in Indonesia and so forth. Ambassador Green and DCM Galbraith had sent nice letters back to the Embassy in Manila, saying that I had done a good job, and so forth.

Ambassador Blair, from what I could see - and I'm trying to think of it as I saw it then - seemed to be well clued in. If I remember correctly, there were tremendous difficulties with a resolution condemning Zionism in the United Nations.

*Q: This was the resolution that said "Zionism is racism."*

GILLESPIE: I'm not sure if that was the formulation at the time, but it was at least the precursor of that.

*Q: The resolution was being used as a way of sticking it to the United States.*

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Filipino support of our position was not a sure thing. The Philippine foreign minister at the time was antagonistic to our position. I think that he was the Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the Macapagal administration. He was replaced when the Marcos administration came in. There was concern that the Philippines might slip into this sort of third world, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist camp. So there were real challenges to our Embassy in the Philippines.

The situation in Vietnam was deteriorating and changing. Remember, there were Filipino troops PHILCAG - Philippine Civic Action Group involved there in Vietnam. So the Embassy had its hands full.

I used to go sailing with Dick Usher, the Political Counselor. Dick had a lovely, wooden, Dragon-class sloop. It was a beautiful boat. He learned that I had sailed as a kid in California and invited me to come out and crew with him. We used to race in Manila Bay. During our time on the boat Dick would talk about the political situation. There may have been another Embassy officer on the boat. The political situation was the meat and potatoes of some of the conversation that was going on. These were some of the issues that we were facing at the time in the Philippines. The question was how could we make sure, first of all during that election campaign - for most of which I wasn't present - and later on, that the Philippines would continue to support our position.

*Q: As Security Officer, both before you went to Indonesia on temporary duty and when you came back to the Embassy in Manila, what did you think of the issue of corruption? I'm an old consular hand. When I think of the Philippines, I think of massive corruption throughout the society. Obviously, this becomes a matter of concern to the Security Officer. How did you find the question of corruption?*

GILLESPIE: We were worried about this all the time. A new, multi-storied building had been put up for the Consular Section of the Embassy and for other U.S. Government agencies in the Philippines. This building was physically separate from the rest of the Embassy Chancery. My boss, Warren McMurray, was really concerned about the possibility of payoffs and suborning people - not so much the Americans but the Filipinos who worked there in the Consular Section.

*Q: Americans could be a problem, too.*

GILLESPIE: Well, they could also. However, his concern was that, given the nature of Philippine society and the way that the people looked at buying and selling things, corruption would be a real problem. So he was really quite preoccupied with that. He tried to figure out ways to check and double check who was doing what, and that sort of thing. The Consul General, Lou Gleek, was sympathetic to our concern. He also felt that this was a problem. So they worked very closely together to keep track of this situation and what was going on.

The overriding impression that I have of that consular operation was the concern about the physical exposure to demonstrators. Because of the way that it had been constructed and where it was located, the building housing the Consular Section and other agencies was probably the most vulnerable place for someone to throw Molotov cocktails and to have other, really damaging and, perhaps, really harmful things happen to the people working there. We were considerably concerned about that.

I came back to Embassy Manila about Thanksgiving time and stayed through Christmas. Our daughter was born on January 3, 1966. It was about January 15, 1966, that I got word that I was being reassigned and direct transferred to the Embassy in Brussels, Belgium. The officer who had gone from Jakarta to Brussels had been fired from the Foreign Service. The job in Brussels was open, and Marvin Gentile said, "Send Gillespie. He did a good enough job replacing this man in Indonesia. Let's send him." Here I'd been in the Foreign Service for exactly one year. I came in as an Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO). I was 30 years old. I was told,

"You're going to Brussels as the supervisory Security Officer. You'll cover the Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg."

**DONALD MCCONVILLE**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1965-1967)**

*Mr. McConville was born and raised in Minnesota and was educated at St. Mary's College in that state. After service in the US Army overseas, he joined the Foreign Service in 1962. Specializing in Economic and Trade issues, Mr. McConville served in a number of posts abroad, including Panama and Vietnam as Economic Officer and as Economic Counselor in Korea, Malaysia, Mexico and the Philippines. In Washington, Mr. McConville also dealt primarily with International Trade and Economic matters. Mr. McConville was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2001.*

*Q: Okay. I'd like to end at this point here, and we'll pick this up the next time. You went off to the Philippines when?*

McCONVILLE: '65.

*Q: '65, so we'll start at that point.*

*Today is the 26th of February 2001. Don, you were in the Philippines from '65 to when?*

McCONVILLE: '65 to '67, another two-year assignment.

*Q: What was your job?*

McCONVILLE: I was in the consular section there. About three-quarters of the second assignments at that time were in consular. That was the way they were dealing with staffing the consular section. It was a perennial problem. Actually it turned out to be a rather extraordinary experience. It was September of 1965 when I got there, and in October of '65 Congress, enacted the famous immigration law change that had been proposed by President Kennedy and then concluded under President Johnson. That was going to have a major impact in the Philippines. Amazingly enough, despite the fact they belonged to a former colony of ours, Filipinos were still subject to the Asia Pacific Triangle laws of 1924, immigration laws - a quota of 100 immigrant visas a year from our former colony. So it was really extraordinary when you think of it. Of course, there had been a large number of Filipinos that had migrated to the U.S. under work programs, mostly in Hawaii and some in California, during the period when the Philippines were a colony. But there was a tremendous demand from people who wanted to go to the United States - the United States had this aura in the Philippines - and so it put enormous pressure on the non-immigrant side of things with all these people trying to get a non-immigrant visa as a way of getting to the United States and then being able to stay in some fashion or another. There were



about 2,000 non-quota immigrant visas being issued annually. This was primarily two groups. They were all immediate relatives of American citizens, primarily spouses, and they were either spouses of GIs - we still had Clark (Air Base) and Subic (Naval Base) and a few other places there in the Philippines at that point - and these, of course, were mostly bar girls and so forth that these GIs had met. Then the other category were these Filipino workers who had gone to the U.S. particularly during the '30s. It was a very common sort of thing. They would come back for vacation, as they called it, in the Philippines. They often would be staying for two, three, four, five, six months longer perhaps, but they would typically be middle aged, probably around 50 years old by this time. They had been bachelors all their lives - there were many, many more men, of course, who had migrated than women - and they would go back to their villages in the Philippines where, by the standards of the villages, they were very wealthy men. They would seek out a young bride. It would be typically someone in their late teens or early 20s, and from the perspective of the family of the young bride, this was a godsend because she would marry this guy who by their standards was pretty wealthy and she would go off and take care of him in his later years and ultimately be able to help the family out a great deal and ultimately inherit from him. So it was an arrangement of convenience, but there were about 1,000 of those a year getting visas.

I mention this primarily because most of the whole operation in the consular operation had been pretty stable. There had been a very huge demand for non-immigrant visas and an enormous amount of fraud. No document in the Philippines was worth the paper it was written on and there was an attitude that personal relationships were involved in everything. So people of all sorts of prominence in the Philippines were constantly being besieged by wide assortments of people to help them get to the U.S. by sponsoring them or intervening on their behalf. They discharged this responsibility in varying degrees, by writing letters. All the Senators and Congressmen had form letters stacked in their office, and these would be handed out liberally. But if it was a little more important to them, they would send one of the staffers over with the individual. And then if it was more important, they would call personally, and in some instances when it was more important than that, they would come over along with the person. It wasn't just the politicians, it was people from all walks of life, and so you had all of this constant pressure. But other than that, the system had been fairly stable, but with the change in the immigration laws, I think the State Department had projected that immigrant visas from the Philippines would increase from about 2,000 to 5,000 annually. In fact, within the first year we were up to about 20,000 a year, which is the maximum quota of visas that you could issue in any one particular country, even though there was no national quota anymore. In fact, for what was then the third preference category, which was based on being able to establish you were a professional, in the Philippines something like three-quarters of all third-preference petitions worldwide were being sought in the Philippines.

There had already been a large number of doctors and nurses going to the United States on what were called exchange visitor programs. They would go to the U.S. on an exchange visit, which were really devices by the hospitals to bring these people over for anywhere from three to six years or something, and they'd finally be forced out and they couldn't get immigrant visas because there was only a quota of 100. So now these people were all applying for third-preference visas. At that time, as many as could get an approved petition would normally be able to get a visa, because there weren't the limitations that subsequently were applied so that you had

to wait years and years to qualify. But all of this came at a time when, on my second tour as a foreign service officer, I think I'd been promoted from the rank of FS-08 to FS-07. That was when we still had the categories; you began at FS-08 up through FS-01. I was the second-ranking officer in the visa section. The others, outside of my boss, were either staff officers - we had a couple of those, as I recall, normally two or three, maybe three or four - and then junior officers on their first tour on rotation. They would spend six months in the consular section, primarily on the non-immigrant lines, junior officers getting their six months there. So literally I was the second-ranking officer. As it turned out, the chief of the section was retiring that year.

*Q: Who was that?*

McCONVILLE: His name was Ray Bostianello. He was unhappy about the fact. He was one of these people that had been a staff officer at one time, had been through the Wriston program, converted to a foreign service officer, and he was disgruntled about the fact that he'd never had any subsequent promotion. So he was retiring that year, and he simply was not going to put out any more effort than he thought was minimally necessary, since he was being retired that year and he had no further interest. Now, the consul general himself was a pretty remarkable man named Lou Gleek, who had no previous consular experience whatsoever. He had been a political and economic officer primarily in Asia, and this was his final tour. He had been given this title of consul general, supposedly with an understanding that he in fact would spend a good deal of his time writing political evaluations and so forth and that the consular section pretty much ran by itself. He in fact was a rather amazing man. He taught himself the dialect of the Manila area. The State Department was not training anybody in this dialect at that time, so he was virtually the only officer in the embassy, this very large embassy, who spoke the dialect.

His name would appear regularly in some of the political gossip columns and so forth. He knew virtually everyone in the political and journalistic world in the Philippines. In fact, he actually was a godfather to Ferdinand Marcos' son Bonbon. When I arrived in September of '65, way back, and Marcos was elected as President two months later in November of 1965, here we had the consul general who was actually the godfather of Marcos' first son. But he had had very little involvement with the consular section except for the fact that all of the political types were forever sending cases over to him to do them a favor. Now we had this change in the immigration law where, rather than a well-ordered visa section, very well staffed and so forth, we suddenly went from 2,000 to an annual rate of 20,000 for immigrant visas plus all this handling of petitions and everything else with it. The State Department, in its wisdom, had decided that Manila only needed five additional local employees to handle the change in the immigration law and no additional officers, so we suddenly went from a situation in which we had been very comfortably staffed to one in which we had just enormous crowds there and all sorts of problems arising trying to manage it. Most of this fell on my shoulders because I was the second ranking man in the visa section and the chief of the section wasn't interested. In fact, once he left, retired, they didn't replace him at that time, and so I was the acting head of the visa section as an FS-07, and it was an extraordinary experience trying to organize all of this. We went through so many different situations with huge crowds, that we came up with solutions. There was an outside cover outside of the office building we were in, so we were able to set up a lot of chairs and a little waiting space out there and put in loudspeakers so we could call people from outside. There was just one thing after another, and I kept handling all of this and resolving

all of this, so as a management experience it was a pretty extraordinary experience. Now, in the meantime, as I mentioned, I had decided that my strongest interest in the Foreign Service was in economic work. That's what I came away from my experience in Panama with. I might add, as I mentioned early on in our discussion, when I first came into the Foreign Service, I really had only a vague notion about what the Foreign Service was about and my reasons for coming in were fairly nebulous. I really just wanted to work abroad. My experience in Panama and the training I had had as a junior officer had pretty strongly persuaded me by this time that indeed I thought I liked the Foreign Service and I thought I had a future in it and I wanted to specialize primarily in the economic side of things. But then in addition, my experience in the Philippines was rapidly persuading me that I also wanted to concentrate a lot in Southeast Asia or East Asia generally. I was fascinated by East Asia. I took a trip, for example, on my vacation I took when I was in the Philippines and managed to visit Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong on this trip and had been fascinated by all of this, and some of the training I had, like the Southeast Asia area studies, had awakened a great deal of interest in the area. So by this time I was persuaded that I both wanted to focus on the economic side and also wanted to focus on East Asia, so I thought that I needed two things, that I needed to get some economic training and that I also wanted to get some sort of Asian language. I figured that with the Department, while they wouldn't invest in both of those for me, my best shot was for getting Asian language from the Department and getting the economic training on my own, so I started taking courses at the University of the Philippines, night courses, while I was there in those two years, taking economics. I don't know how many credits I got by the time I got out of there, but I was going pretty regularly, a couple of courses each semester, and was getting a lot of economics, formal economics, and the school, the University of the Philippines, was taught in English and it was a very good experience. In fact, where they had the night classes was well within walking distance of the embassy. So I was taking advantage of those opportunities too while I was in the Philippines, and I was enjoying the Philippines immensely. Filipino people fascinated me. It was a very, very positive and warm experience. While the consular work itself didn't particularly attract me, the management experience I was going through was of tremendous value. As it happened, at that time, the inspectors when they came around - and Manila was inspected again like Panama was when I was there - the inspector who inspected the consular section was a very able fellow who actually had an admin background. Following his tour in the inspection tour, he went on to some very significant positions in the administrative side of the State Department. He was very impressed by what I had done in the visa section, so when I talked to him about my future desires, he recommended in the inspection report - and at that time they wrote individual inspections.

Here was some guy coming in and saw a lot of your peers, and he could make judgments a little bit broader than the individuals in the embassy who were writing reports. But in any event, he wrote a very favorable report on me, which was very helpful, but he made the recommendation that I be assigned - you normally then went back for another two-year tour, and that completed your sort of junior officer status; that would be in the Department - for just one year, which was almost never done, and then be given training in - my strongest preference by this time, I decided, was Thai language training; I had been fascinated by Bangkok on my trip over there - Thai language and this six-month economic course that had been developed in the Department a few years earlier and was getting very, very high credit. So, to my amazement, that indeed is what happened. So on leaving the Philippines I was assigned to a one-year tour in EB in what

was the Office of Maritime Affairs, but I was also being assigned to the six-month economic, or actually it was going to be Thai language training for a year and then six months' economic course, and then the expectation would be assignment in Thailand. In fact, normally if you took a hard language like that a year, you would expect to have at least two tours minimum in your career in that particular country, which was very fine with me.

*Q: Before we move on to that, I'd like to come back to the Philippine experience. You must have found yourself under extraordinary pressure from other people within the embassy to please take care of this visa and that visa, because this was sort of the main currency in trade in the Philippines for the embassy.*

McCONVILLE: Yes, that was very, very true, and even before the chief of the visa section left and I was in effect acting chief for the rest of my tour, I handled the overwhelming number of so-called appeals wherever they came. Now, the consul general did a certain amount of this because of all his connections, but he didn't really do consular work as such. He handled it well, and once in a while he would come to me and he'd have me somebody to complete a visa being issued or something. But in any event, yes, there was this pressure both from within the embassy and from anyone you knew, and I learned to deal with that. I had some of that in Panama, because you have it in almost every place you're at, but it was extraordinary in the Philippines. In fact, prior to my coming, two of the junior officers in the visa section had actually had a resolution passed by the Philippine Congress to declare them *persona non grata* because some Philippine congressmen had been upset with what they considered the way they were treated by these junior officers. They hadn't shown them the proper dignity and respect, and it was after I left - the guy who later on became chief of the consular section was a more senior career officer - he actually was pilloried for weeks and weeks and weeks by one of the talk shows on Philippine television. So there were great big pitfalls, but I learned to deal with it. With the people in the embassy, I recognized political and economic officers and so forth in that context, that they had to refer people, and so I would see the people that they referred to me. I made them no promises. I said, "I will treat this person just on the basis of the rules, but I will see the person and I will extend the courtesy," and I dealt with it on that basis. I didn't do any favors to the individuals involved, but I did see the people, and that helped them out a great deal. For most of them, this was sufficient. Now, once in a while someone would start to call me afterwards and further appeal, and then I'd get pretty tough with them. But I understood that it was important, particularly in the Philippine context, that they at least make this gesture and that, if I saw somebody, that helped immensely in relieving their obligation. The same was true of all these congressmen, senators and so forth. I developed a sense as to how important it was to them. Lou Gleek, as I say, the consul general, had confided in me at one point; he said that there are times when you get a sense that it was so important to these people that you almost had to find some way of dealing with it. He said he used to have a rule with some of the prominent people that he had to deal with all the time that he'd give them one a year, to somebody who was very dubious on a non-immigrant visa, for example, and that they kept insisting they would personally assure would be returning and so forth, that he would issue a visa and insist that the person, when they got back contact him and confirm that they were back, and so the next time this person, the sponsor, tried to appeal to him again, he would insist, "Now, look, you've still got this person who you promised me is going to come back and they still haven't shown up yet, so until then I'm really not going to be able to help you." These were the kinds of things that he used. That

was part of the experience as well. I had to deal with all of those pressures, and I succeeded in dealing with them in ways in which I managed not to offend anyone seriously enough that I got into hot water, but at the same time I held the line and it was important for the morale of all the junior officers and staff people who were handling the non-immigrant visa line that I wasn't undercutting them and so forth. So that, too, was part of my diplomatic learning experience.

*Q: Did you have the problem of corruption? One, you had the Filipinos who work within the embassy. That's always a problem because they're there - I was consul general in Seoul about ten years later, and I know the problem - but also the problem of corruption, not just money but sex or good times or what have you, with the officers.*

McCONVILLE: Yes, there was certainly the problem of corruption. Now, during the time I was there, we had no problems with the American officers. Subsequently there was a guy who was there when I first arrived - and this happened after I left; he was not in the visa section; he was actually in special consular services - who later got into a great deal of hot water and finally ended his career in the Foreign Service because he got involved with some sex scandal related to consular work. But we did have some Filipino local personnel, the FSN (Foreign Service National), who got into trouble. In fact, in the Philippines in any two- or three-year period, almost always there was some corruption problem that would emerge with the local employees. Now, the local employees we had on the whole were people of tremendous integrity. With Filipino people, everything was very personal with them, and if they felt that you were treating them well as an employee, they would show you loyalty that was just beyond belief. They would do almost anything for you. And you had to know they were under a lot of pressure all the time, so I tried to do everything I could to lift the pressure from them, to not put them in a position where they had to make any kind of decisions and so forth that were too significant. And I tried to keep a dialogue going with them so that, if they felt they were under any pressure at times, they could confide in me a little bit. In the usual Filipino way, it wouldn't be directly tell me what the problem was so much as let me know there was a problem and I could move them within our structure and get them out of the direct firing line. But there were a couple that succumbed during that period, and we had to deal with that. It was an ongoing problem. I had enormous respect for our local employees, and I tried to do everything I could to try to ease the pressure on them. If I saw any of them being badgered at all out there, I would quickly step in and insist that person, if they had problem, take it up with me and not one of our FSNs.

Because embassy pay in a situation like the Philippines was still pretty attractive, the level of education of our staff and so forth was really pretty extraordinary. In fact, we had one fellow who was college educated, came from a very good family - his mother in particular had had some prominent position in the Philippines - and he was handling a lot of our correspondence. He could write English beautifully and so forth. I would oversee everything that he did, but he would deal with a lot, even our Congressional correspondence. Some years later when I was periodically back visiting the Philippines and I was in the area, he and one or two of the other employees had opened up an office after they retired, opened up an office across the street from the embassy, where they were visa specialists. You can't blame them. I don't know what other future they had in the Philippines, and they probably did this better than a lot of people. In fact, the travel agents in the Philippines - we had some who would make a point of trying to deal with us on an above-board basis and would only send over cases to us where they either were very

confident of who they were and would certainly call or let us know about something like that or they would flag it to us in some way or another that they had to take this but they didn't want to be responsible for it, "Red flag; it's up to you." But it was an extraordinary sort of arrangement.

On the immigrant visa side, one of the other things that transpired at this time - this happened to be during the period when the baby boom was passing through the school systems in the United States and they had this tremendous expansion of public schools in the United States to deal with that - they were desperate for teachers. It was the sixth preference at that time. A teacher could qualify; if she had a job in the United States, she could qualify under the sixth preference. They'd get those approved. We would get very substantial numbers of sixth-preference petitions for mostly elementary school teachers. They really weren't all that well qualified - they had degrees from the Filipino schools, but their English was faulty and so forth - but these schools were so desperate for them that they would plead and plead and plead to get these visas approved. With this staffing problem, in the last half a dozen months that I was there - which was the summer; I was due out in September - that summer we were losing five officers in the consular section, five American officers, and as of midsummer we still had not had a single replacement named for any one of those five officers. I happened to be the fifth one who was going to be leaving in September. So by this time, our staffing situation was just extraordinarily severe. We had set up appointment systems for immigrant visas. We had two people doing immigrant visas, and each one would do 50 a day, so we'd have 100 appointments a day. Then if they weren't there or they couldn't keep up with that, I would help them out with the overload. As the staffing situation had gotten more and more severe and Consul General Lou Gleek was talking to me about it, I told him, "You know what's going to happen here come late July or August. We are going to start getting a flood of Congressional inquiries about these sixth-preference petitions for these school teachers, because all the school systems are going to be screaming that they have to have these people by the beginning of the school year." We already had a couple months' or more waiting list of appointments because the backlog just kept building up. So I suggested to him that we be prepared that when we get those we tell the State Department they're going to have to tell these Congressmen and Senators that we're very sorry but we simply don't have the staffing to be able to handle these people, they'll have to take their turn, and we don't make exceptions except for very dire emergencies, and it's likely to be November or December or later when we're going to get to their cases. Well, this in fact did happen, and we started to get flooded with letters and telegrams from Congressmen and Senators, including such people as then Congressman Hayes, who was very, very important to the State Department budget and so forth, very prominent Congressmen and Senators. So I drafted a proposed response to this in which we explained that we were very sorry but, you know, we weren't going to be able to take them out of turn. We sent it off to the Department in a cable and proposed that they respond to these Senators and Congressmen and we sent them the whole list of the names and cases they were involved with, rather than for us to try to do it directly from there. There was this deafening silence. The time was getting shorter and shorter. Then we got a cable one morning. Lou Gleek, the consul general, had had the backing of the ambassador at this point on this thing.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

McCONVILLE: William McCormick Blair, who was actually a law partner in Adlai Stevenson's firm, and he'd been first assigned by Kennedy to be ambassador to Denmark and then subsequently in the Philippines - of the McCormick farm implement family, a very, very wealth patrician. I still remember that morning. Lou Gleek came into my office with this cable from the Department in which they were telling us no, that we had to find some way of being more responsive. He slammed this cable down on my desk and he said, "Tell them no, goddammit, tell them no." So I started drafting a cable to respond again to the Department along those lines. Later on in the morning, Gleek came in with a second cable and he said, "Look, here's the second cable I just got. Maybe we'll have to modify that a little bit. Take it over and let's get together again." On that cable they named five replacement officers, all of whom were going to be expeditiously shipped out there. They were breaking into people's home leaves, they were transferring people from some other place, breaking assignments, and all five people were going to be showing up within the next six weeks or something like that. So I then drafted a cable as a compromise that we would add, I think, 10 of these teachers to our 100 appointments every day, so we had 10 teachers beyond that, and there would still be people who would be delayed into September and October, but it would at least deal as responsibly as we possibly could with the problem. The Department bought that, and that's how we dealt with it. When I got back to Washington - I left in September, and then when I had my tour in the Department - I stopped by the Visa Office just for a little debriefing over there and so forth, and they told me that, when that initial cable had come in asking them to send this kind of response to the Congressmen and Senators, it had provoked an enormously divisive debate within the Visa Office. There were those who wanted to support us all the way, and there were others who were fearful of the consequences and they were getting all sorts of pressure from the admin side of the State Department as well who didn't under any circumstances want to offend Congressman Hayes and others, Congressman Rooney, I guess it was. So when the cable had been sent out telling us that we should find a way to be more responsive, there had been great division within the Visa Office about that cable going out, but in fact what it finally had done, it had spurred people to get some assignments on track. It was absurd. As it was, we were just totally inundated, and to have a shortage of five officers by the time the summer was, with no indication of when we were going to get any replacement at all, it was just totally irresponsible on the part of the Department, and this is what it took to pry it all loose. So it was quite an experience for me. At one time - talk about pressure from the outside - Imelda Marcos' brother - she had several of them; the family name was Romualdez, and I think it was Eduardo Romualdez, brother of Imelda Marcos - twice was in my office on visa cases. In both cases, I had to say no. I learned in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia to do this: you could never say no directly; that could be very offensive. You had to leave them with the impression that in fact the answer was no but you had done it in a way that hadn't been offensive to them. You always leave some crack open that would give them some sort of faith. But in his case in both cases they happened to be people from very prominent families who were doctors and who had been exchange visitors and they wanted to go over as immigrants, and there was a very hard and fast rule at the time that you had to stay two years once you were out in the country you'd come from before you could be eligible for an immigrant visa. There was no way to get around it, no way to break that law. So those happened to be the cases in both instances, and I had to finally convince that we really couldn't help them out as much as we would have liked to. But whatever, that was part of my diplomatic learning experience too, particularly for dealing in East Asia and learning how to deal in those cultures, so

in that sense too my consular experience there was very rewarding and helped me a great deal in my future career.

**JOHN M. THOMAS**  
**Deputy Administrative Officer**  
**Manila (1965-1967)**

*John M. Thomas served as Deputy Administrative Officer in Manila, his only overseas assignment, after which he worked in the State Department in Washington DC in a variety of posts. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

*Q: Before we discuss that period, I'd like to cover your time in Manila, which was your only overseas assignment. You went as the Deputy Administrative Officer from 1965 to 1967. What were your duties just before you went to Manila?*

THOMAS: I was the Executive Officer of FSI. I was responsible for personnel, budget, general services, the registrar's office and the audio-visual program. Essentially the administrative side of FSI. The opportunity to go Manila arose and I took it.

I found that one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences of my career. I thoroughly enjoyed it. We had an excellent staff, we had an excellent Ambassador, two fine Deputy Chiefs of Mission (DCM) who professionals in every sense of the word. We had a professional staff.

*Q: The Ambassador while you were there was William McCormick Blair, a non-career man. How was he as an Ambassador?*

THOMAS: Excellent. He knew why he was there, what had to be done, did it very well. He had two DCMs while I was there--Dick Service, who was a professional of the first order and Jim Wilson, who had been transferred from Bangkok, where he had been DCM to Graham Martin. Jim Wilson was an excellent DCM. Dick Usher was the chief of the Political Section, Chet Beaman was in the Economic Section, Jack Lennon was the Administrative Counselor, Lou Gleeck was the chief of the Consular Section (the Consul General).

Manila was one of our busiest and largest posts. We had excellent people who worked together very well. We had the 13th Air Force at Clark Air Force base and the navy in Subic. A lot of military presence. The Ambassador did an extraordinary job of keeping all of the Country Team together. Just an outstanding Ambassador in my judgement.

*Q: How did the war in Vietnam impact on our Manila Embassy?*

THOMAS: We were heavily impacted in terms of reporting requirements on the political side. On the administrative side, we carried a heavy work load because we had to obtain tax



exemptions certificates from the Philippine Foreign Ministry and Treasury and Customs because much of the material which was going to Vietnam was trans-shipped through the Philippines.

We also had a very heavy consular work-load because of our relationships with the Filipinos. We had a large Veterans Administration presence because of payments to the Philippine veterans. It was a very large and active post.

*Q: How did you deal at that time with the problem of corruption? In terms of our employees and getting things done.*

THOMAS: We recognized that could be a problem--baksheesh was not an unknown term in the Philippines. However, it was not a problem for us. We had adequate staffing of local employees; the contractors we used were obtained through an open bidding process. We had only one incident during my tenure there of a local employee who was caught in a fraud action. We had other incidents that required disciplinary actions, but the local employees that we had in the Embassy were excellent. The possibility of fraud and malfeasance in the Consular Section was rampant, but remarkably, we had no major incident that I can recall. The American supervisory force in the Consular section, starting with Gleeck, was excellent. They were very dedicated people. It was just an excellent post. I should mention that Jack Lennon, who was the Administrative Counselor and my boss, was absolutely one of the finest individuals and one of the best professionals that I have worked with.

**ALEXANDER RAY LOVE**  
**Philippines Desk Officer, USAID**  
**Washington DC (1965-1969)**

*Mr. Love was born in Oakland, California and graduated from the University of California-Berkeley and Harvard. He served for USAID in South Asia and East Africa. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.*

LOVE: Then I got involved in the Philippines. Obviously, I was doing more on the Philippines, from the substantive point of view, because I was working on the Philippine desk. Eventually, I was appointed Philippine desk officer. So at that point I really "shifted out" of project work and into broader, programming work.

*Q: You left the Capital Projects Office?*

LOVE: At that time there was no Capital Projects Office. There were Capital Projects Officers on the various country desks. That was where we started. At that point the Capital Projects Officers began competing with the Program Officers over who was going to become the country desk officer.

So I became the Philippine desk officer and worked there for quite a few years.

*Q: When was that?*

LOVE: I'm trying to remember. That was perhaps from 1965 to 1969, or somewhere in there.

*Q: What was the situation in the Philippines at that time, when you were working on the Philippine desk?*

LOVE: At that time I actually thought that the Philippines was doing quite well. Let's see. Diosdado Macapagal was President of the Philippines. I thought that he was a pretty good President of the Philippines. The policies he supported were all right. President Marcos took over around 1963 or 1964, or somewhere around there.

I found a good opportunity to work in the Philippines with a lot of capable people in a lot of different sectors. At that time I became interested in a lot of different issues, other than project work. Mary Jane Hyle had been the Philippines desk officer at the time. The Philippines desk was part of an office which included South Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia. So there was some interaction with these programs.

Of course, the South Korean program at the time was huge.

*Q: Do you remember what our broad purpose was in the Philippines? What did we seek to accomplish?*

LOVE: Aside from the general objective of trying to promote broad based economic growth, our program was targeted very heavily at agriculture and population control. I remember those two areas as being predominant. Now, we had some project activity, including some efforts in the field of health. Agriculture and population control were probably the two biggest problems facing us.

When Wes Haraldson came out as Director of USOM [United States Operations Mission] in the Philippines, he took over from a predecessor who had been one of those "tycoons," a man named Jim Ingersoll. Haraldson, of course, was a career Foreign Service Officer who spent most of his time with AID. He was an economist by training. He arrived in the Philippines, perhaps in 1965, or somewhere around there.

This was about the time when we were struggling very hard to figure out what to do about the rice deficit in the Philippines. The Philippines had a major rice deficit problem. Of course, IRRI [International Rice Research Institute] was located in the Philippines. The IR-8 rice variety was the first "miracle rice" to come out of the IRRI research program. IRRI was beginning field trials of this seed in Los Banos. One of the major programs was whether or not you could get some of these "miracle rices" extended throughout the country to the point where they would begin to start making some impact on the rice deficit. There was a lot of resistance to it.

*Q: A lot of resistance?*

LOVE: Yes, resistance. The Filipinos would say, "This rice doesn't taste the same. You can tell that this is not good rice." It was almost like the Africans allegedly not wanting to eat yellow maize meal. I remember that Wes Haraldson gave a big dinner and invited a lot of the senior Philippine officials there. He served them various rices and said: "All right, I want you people to tell me which one is which." Of course, nobody could tell which were the "miracle rices" and which were not. Wes was trying to make the point, at least to the people at the top, that there really was no substantial reason not to promote the growth of the "miracle rices."

Wes Haraldson pushed very hard to get the "miracle rice" programs out. That got us into a variety of issues. One of them concerned access to fertilizer and whether there were adequate fertilizer supplies. However, and most importantly, all of a sudden there were quite different, credit structure problems than had previously existed. We were now looking at greater production "inputs" than we had seen before.

Among other things, this meant that the credit system had to be more effective. The history of the credit system in the Philippines was one of disaster piled on disaster piled on disaster, involving public sector credit systems which eventually went bankrupt and then had to be recapitalized and started anew. Of course, this was helped by politicians going out and telling the farmers who borrowed the money that they would not have to repay their loans. A lot of the loans were also going to people for political reasons. So the credit system didn't work too well.

Meanwhile, the Chinese moneylenders were out lending money at four times the usual interest rate and collecting 99.9 percent of their money. I guess that they were standing on the side of the harvest field when the harvest was brought in. They were also lending to the "right people."

The efforts to go out and convince people to try these "miracle rices" met with a lot of resistance on the part of farmers also. The farmers felt that they were taking a much greater financial risk than before. They were not convinced that this was worth the risk. When you get right down to it, you could say: "These dumb farmers don't know what's good for them." When you really looked at the "micro economic" aspect of rice cultivation at the individual farm level, the farmers had a very legitimate concern. They had to be convinced that the potential returns were large enough for them to take what they considered to be a large financial risk. Now they were going to have to borrow money to finance their rice crop. Previously, they didn't have to borrow money to pay for fertilizer and insecticides.

What started to happen was that the "IR-8" rice variety grew so quickly that the farmers who weren't planting that type of seed waited and watched the field next to theirs, where another farmer was planting IR8. The IR8 crop grew so well that farmers plowed their old crop under and replanted with IR8. Once they saw what was happening and realized what it implied, you had this "spread" effect. This process went from farmer to farmer and spread through the Philippines.

I don't think that the "agricultural credit" problem itself was ever solved. Experiments were tried with financing crops through rural credit systems, and these had some success.

*Q: Growing "miracle rice" required a lot more "inputs."*

LOVE: They required a lot more "inputs" and much more sophisticated systems than were in use previously. I would say that the technical side of the agricultural program, marvelous as it was, and it was called the "green revolution," was maybe the easiest change to bring about. Once you had the new seeds, the fertilizer, and the insecticides, this system kind of "sold itself," from the technical point of view. However, the managerial aspect of ensuring that these "inputs" were actually applied was a problem. In some cases problems occurred in connection with marketing and storing the crops.

As a result, the whole agricultural sector became a lot more complex in the areas where these new "inputs" and procedures were applied, particularly in Central Luzon. The Southern Philippines is basically a maize [corn] growing, rather than a rice growing economy. Of course, as I said, you had to use fertilizer with the new seeds. You had to have agricultural credit, and you had to have water. So, at that point, this consideration began to drive more concerns about irrigation.

We started looking at programs to upgrade the National Irrigation Administration in the Philippines and to identify some of the initiatives that might be taken in connection with irrigation. Now, these did not involve the construction of major water storage dams as such. A lot of systems were run on the river systems. Nevertheless, the problems of managing the irrigation systems were worse than the problems of managing the credit systems. So we found ourselves in an environment in which our ability to handle the credit problems and the irrigation problems was simply "enormous."

The private sector in the Philippines moved in on the fertilizer problem and began to take up importing, producing, mixing, and distributing the fertilizer. The private sector did that well. So, that got us out of the problems which we had had in some of the South Asian countries in connection with fertilizer production. Of course, the Philippine system of fertilizer distribution only worked to the extent that credit was available to finance it.

*Q: What was the "heart" of the irrigation problem?*

LOVE: There was a variety of problems. One of them was that the irrigation systems, in many cases, were owned by the government, in this case the National Irrigation Administration [NIA]. This meant that the NIA was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the system. The farmers theoretically would pay for the water and would do some of the maintenance at the lower end of the operation. Of course, the Philippine Government didn't have the resources to do the maintenance, and the people didn't feel any responsibility for maintaining them.

Also, the "social packaging" that you need to put together an effective, irrigation system was not available. Putting such a system together means that the people have to have ownership and accept responsibility for it. This was really not there. The systems would deteriorate and the water wasn't available where it was wanted, or it would be "ripped off" at the other end of the system. People would complain and say that this is a "political problem." The government isn't doing its job.

From the "cultural point of view, this situation was not quite as bad in the Philippines as it was in Indonesia. Indonesian farmers felt that they had a God-given right to free water anyway. Filipino farmers felt that they had a God-given right to "steal" the water. It was a little different "nuance," but basically it was the same problem.

We never really resolved the irrigation problem. We tended to try to solve the problems by "fixing" the institutions and throwing money at the problems, through the irrigation or credit end of it. We weren't really getting to the root of the problem, which was at the "user" level.

Working with the private sector projects in the Philippines did give me some opportunities to be exposed to the people who were really running the private sector in the Philippines. You don't really get this experience when you are working with the more traditional types of AID projects.

The classic example of this was the private development bank. This was because it was the Filipinos who approached the World Bank and said: "We want to set up a private development bank. We want it to be 'private.' We don't want a public sector, development bank because we know that we can't trust our government." The Philippine Government was supporting this. This was the new administration of President Marcos at the time.

So the World Bank called George Woods, who went out personally and did the "feasibility" studies. I didn't realize at the time that Woods was about to become President of the Boston World Bank. He was a very "smooth" operator. He was the man who "put the arm" on AID to put the subsidy money in there.

The Filipinos sent a delegation which included some very senior people from the Philippine Government, the National Bank of the Philippines, the economic planning office, and the National Economic Council. I would say that these included the six or eight persons who were the "creme de la creme" from the private sector. They included Washington Syup, the head of a major accounting firm in Manila. He was 42 years old. There were also some Filipino-Spanish businessmen on the delegation. Those people came to the U.S. as the "Philippine Negotiating Team." Of course, we got to know them pretty well because we were negotiating with them for something like three weeks. We spent eight hours a day, negotiating the terms of the agreement for over two weeks.

In the process I got to know these Filipinos very, very well. That acquaintanceship stood me in good stead for many years I could go to the Philippines 15 years later, call one of these businessmen up, and say: "I really need your advice on something." They would always respond. If you really want an assessment of doing business in the Philippines, you really have to ask the local businessmen who know what's going on, rather than American embassy commercial officers.

This experience of negotiating with these Filipino businessmen gave us credibility, which you get, even though you're "fighting" over a negotiating table. Eventually, this gives you an established rapport which I found very, very helpful.

At the same time I also realized that these Filipinos had a very "stilted" outlook on what the economy was and what the important issues are. They were much less knowledgeable about what was happening in agriculture and what was needed in terms of decentralized, financial institutions. They had somewhat of a myopic view in that connection. They were much more oriented toward what was going on in Manila and bigger industrial operations.

I also concluded that AID had far better connections with the Philippine private sector than the American Embassy in Manila did. The Embassy really didn't have the ability to go in and talk to private executives on a straightforward basis, to the extent that you might think. AID had better relationships, both with the private sector and with the public sector because of its day to day working contacts with these people. In many cases AID had more or less "grown up" with them. There were key Filipinos with whom AID had worked in the past, who would surface later on.

For example, Cesar Virata had become Philippine Minister of Finance. For a couple of years he was the Chairman of the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He is a brilliant economist. I remember talking to him one day. He said: "Look, I was one of your first 'participants.'" I said: "You were?" He said: "Yes. You guys sent me to Graduate School." Of course, he still appreciated this. I don't know whether there was anybody in the AID structure in the Philippines or in Washington who remembered what had happened to the participants. Somewhere in the AID Oral History I would hope that you could put together a profile of the participant training program as an element of the history, in and of itself. There was a big "payoff" from participant training programs.

So I got some contacts out of those negotiations which really made a big difference. Now, I can't say that I had the same degree of knowledge of and familiarity with the Indonesians. Of course, that involved President Sukarno's problems. We went into a deep decline with our program for quite a few years, until the Indonesians restructured their economy and came back up. By that time I was pretty much working elsewhere in Asia.

*Q: Before we leave this subject, you also mentioned the population program. Were you much involved with that or understood what was involved with that?*

LOVE: Oh, yes.

*Q: What were the issues and how did it work?*

LOVE: The Philippines is a Catholic country. The Catholic Church is very "hostile" to population programs. AID pushed these programs nevertheless and did so with some degree of success. You can look at other countries which have very high population growth rates and a high abortion rate. I think that there was a great desire on the part of Philippine women to control their family size. Of course, we were working with a pretty well-educated population. The Philippines had an excellent educational system started by the U.S. years ago. The Church was always pushing against population control programs.

The AID Mission in Manila was able to get population control programs established and functioning. The population control program got the support of Imelda Marcos. She sometimes

did some things well. She supported the establishment of a population control program when she was in a position of power and influence. She "allowed," as it were, the government population programs to go on. This was despite the fact that there were, within the Philippine Government, some determined opponents of population control. There was a man who was the head of the National Economic Planning Office. He was a member of a "hard core" organization called "Opus Dei." This was a Catholic organization which was very conservative in orientation. In brief, he "hated" population control programs. Here we were working with him as the director of the National Economic Planning Office. However, he was surrounded by people who wanted to support population control programs. Most of the time, he was not able to stop them. But, in subsequent years he was able to get himself into a position where he was able to block such programs.

*Q: Were there any particular policies which AID followed to try to cope with this opposition and make some progress?*

LOVE: Well, I think that when you got out into the countryside, where you worked with the people, you didn't have a problem there. I don't think that the problem was at the level of "delivery" of population control services.

Our approach to population control included two aspects. First, we focused on supporters of population control in the Philippine central government, those that were willing to support these programs and "got them on board." Then, initially, we started operations by working with indigenous NGOs [Non Governmental Organizations] and channeling money through them. The Philippine Government would cooperate in this approach. Even though the government theoretically supported population programs, it wasn't quite prepared to "take the heat" from the Catholic Church, which is very strong in the Philippines, both politically and in other respects. So the initial efforts were to work through the local NGOs, not through official government programs.

I remember that very well, because the local NGOs were really kind of "fly by night" operations. They were very small and very poorly managed. Their strength was really in the substance of what they were doing. We started channeling money into these NGOs, and there were a lot of them. One of the major problems was how this was going to be managed. We were providing them with money, but they couldn't keep the books, couldn't account for the money, or explain what was going on. There was a big debate in AID about how they were going to do this. A proposal was made that these NGOs should hire an American accounting firm to come out to the Philippines and start working with them.

At that point the man who was in charge of the capital development office in USAID Manila stepped in. He was a very interesting person. He had retired as Vice President of the National Lead Company. He had spent three years in the Philippines and four years in Thailand before he retired again. He brought a fresh perspective from his private sector background.

He was brought into a meeting in Manila on the subject of support to the NGOs operating on the population control program. He said: "This is crazy! You've got one of the biggest and best

accounting firms West of Chicago right here in Manila." It was this firm which I mentioned before, Syup, Gorres, and Velayo.

So the AID Mission in Manila went to Syup, Gorres, Velayo and said: "We have a problem. To start this population control program, we're going to have to work with these NGOs. They're almost all too small and inexperienced. They don't keep their records right. If we keep going this way, we're going to be in deep trouble with the auditors. Something must be done about this. If we don't establish better control of expenditures on population control, we won't be able to continue this program. Solving this problem is critical, because we can't conduct population control through governmental systems because of the politics involved."

The Syup representatives said: "Okay." So what they did was to set up a standard accounting system. They took on the whole NGO group. They ran schools for them and ended up as the oversight body for what was going on. When we got through with this process, we had a credible accounting system installed and an incredible accounting firm, which would certify the quality of the books, and who was working with the NGOs on a daily basis. And it didn't cost a hell of a lot of money.

*Q: Did they provide training as well?*

LOVE: They provided training as well. As I said, they went in with a standard accounting systems and they helped the NGOs with training in handling these systems. Syup became the "external auditor" to certify the books at the end of the accounting period. This was done at a far, far lower cost than otherwise would have been involved. They were always making the point that AID kept bringing in people from overseas when Syup had qualified accountants sitting right there in Manila. This was a chance for them to prove their point.

*Q: They were Filipinos?*

LOVE: They were 100 percent Filipinos. Well, they were often Chinese Filipinos. They were all local people and very highly qualified.

Washington Syup was the head of the accounting firm. He was an American citizen and had been in American intelligence during World War II, but he was born, raised, and lived in the Philippines. He is really quite a remarkable fellow.

That was the system for the delivery of population control services in the early days. Subsequently, the Government of the Philippines set up a Population Office which became much more active in population matters. That office was subsequently "blown out of the water" by opponents after Imelda Marcos left. I'm not sure how population control services are handled today.

If you look at the statistics, Thailand and Indonesia left the Philippines "in the dust," in terms of the control of population growth. Of course, the progress in Taiwan stemmed from different causes - e.g., higher incomes, better education, no religious opposition. I'd say that our most



successful population program in Asia was probably Indonesia. Foreign aid played the key role in Indonesia's success in reducing birth rates.

*Q: Is there anything else on the Philippines which you would like to comment on? If not, we can go on to some of the other countries.*

LOVE: Let me see. We had a big and successful rural electrification program. In the case of the Philippines AID went into the power sector some time in the early 1960s. We sent out a team of experts. This was a group that went around East Asia. It was headed by a representative of one of the old utility companies. They would go into a country and do a "sector" analysis, which they completed in the Philippines in 1961-1962.

Now, that group was put together in Washington. When they came in for the briefing, there were "fireworks" going on across the table between the private power companies and the electric cooperative representatives. I just sat there. I didn't know what the hell was going on. I grew up in California and didn't know what an electric cooperative was, nor did I have any understanding of the history of the "bad blood" between the "coop" people and the "public power" people.

This "joint" team went out to the Philippines, looked at the situation, and recommended a number of programs, including one to deal with the rural areas. The investment banking approach to power development was one option proposed by the Government of the Philippines [GOP]. The GOP said: "We will set up an investment banking function which will help finance small electric utilities and help them join together, in the way a lot of electric utilities did in the early days in the United States."

However, since there was a rural electrification expert on the U.S. team, they also proposed setting up a pilot project involving a couple of pilot rural electrification cooperatives. Subsequently, we made a loan to help to set up two electric power cooperatives. One of them was on Mindanao Island, and the other one was in the Visayas. At that time the Government of the Philippines was convinced that the private sector approach was the one that was going to work. Of course, from the economic point of view, this was not at all clear. So even though the government tried this, working with some Filipinos who were pretty sophisticated and could do the economic analysis themselves. But, they couldn't demonstrate that small "for profit" power companies would pay. The other options were either "public sector power" or electric coops. The electric coops were private sector - but non-profit.

We got the two pilot electric power coops started. Fortuitously, one of the coops that we helped to establish was in an area called Cagayan de Oro, in northeastern Mindanao. There was a fellow who lived in Cagayan de Oro named Emmanuel Pelaez, who had been Vice President of the Philippines under President Macapagal. He had been the opponent of President Marcos in the campaign for the nomination of the Nacionalista Party or the Liberal Party for President in 1965. If he had won his party's nomination, he would have become President of the Philippines. He is a wonderful, talented fellow.

He saw these Americans going around Cagayan de Oro and went down to see what was going on. Of course, he was no longer in the administration at that time but he had run and been elected

to the Philippine Senate. He became very interested in rural electrification and became a major sponsor of it. The two electric power coops did well. As a result of that, he said: "We've got to set in place an institutional structure that will take care of the rest of the country. We can't do this on an ad hoc basis, one after the other, the way you guys are doing it." So he spent some time on this matter. He was a respected lawyer who had his own law practice, as well as a Senator.

He did a lot of research and looked into what had gone on under the laws of the United States. With the help of the NRECA people, he drafted and sponsored a basic enabling law for the rural electrification program in the Philippines. This law was intended to set up a National Electrification Administration to oversee the cooperatives, set the rate structures, and also finance them. When we discussed financing the cooperatives, I said: "We are going to have no foreign exchange debt with these cooperatives, because eventually you will devalue the Philippine peso. There is no way that you can raise the electric rates sufficiently to offset that. You have to absorb the foreign exchange risk in a transitional structure in the central government and lend money to the cooperatives in local currency. If you don't do that, we won't finance anything." This was because I was sure that I knew what was going to happen to the Philippine peso. This principle of avoiding the foreign exchange risk was "burned into my brain" from my experience with the paper mill.

So we set up such a transitional structure. Senator Pelaez introduced the enabling legislation, the bill was passed, and President Marcos signed it.

President Marcos got actively behind this rural electrification program in the Philippines. He realized that the politics of supporting rural electrification were excellent. An interesting thing happened, which taught me another lesson about the Philippines. Once Marcos decided that this program was more important as a political and development tool than it was as a source of "graft," he put an honest administrator in charge of this program. Subsequent to that, I said to a friend: "You know, if you want to find out whether the President is serious about a given program, go take a look at the top two or three people he appoints to run the program. If they're honest, the President is serious about the program. If they're not honest, he is only interested in graft. It's that simple."

Of course, what happened was that when you had an honest administrator, you also had committed support from the President, things would go well. I'm not saying that there weren't some problems of honesty at the local cooperative level. There were, but not many. Again, we went out and hired a local accounting firm. We had them come in and set up financial control systems for the coop, and so forth. President Marcos then turned his not insignificant, political talent to promoting these electric power cooperatives. Subsequently, they spread like "wild fire." Philippine Government officials couldn't believe how fast the process of rural electrification was going. I believe that the technical assistance that came from NRECA on this program was some of the best that we got anywhere.

*Q: Were these subsidized operations? Did their economics work out?*

LOVE: Well, the coops that we were working with were given a subsidized interest rate. We told them that they would be responsible for carrying all of their operation and maintenance costs and

paying back the capital costs, plus the reduced interest. That was the target. I believe that they got a loan at 3.0 percent interest. So there was a subsidy on that.

What subsequently happened, as we really focused on it, was that the economics of coops varied. One model involved connecting the cooperatives into an electric power "grid" system. Then the cooperatives could buy power from the grid system at a reasonable cost. These coops were in very good shape. The economics of this system worked out.

If, on the other hand, the coop had to put in a self-generating system, involving a small, diesel generator, then they had much higher capital and operating costs, and the basic cost of power was substantially higher. After all, there are some 7,000 islands in the Philippines, and you have to do this in some places. So there were mixed results.

*Q: When they bought into the power network, was this loan at a subsidized rate of interest?*

LOVE: No, those loans were repaid at the standard rate of interest. There were some "nuances" there about what rates they would charge for the electricity. Traditionally, the power companies would give a big discount to large, commercial users of electricity anyway. So if a given consumer was a "bulk buyer," theoretically they would get such a discount. However, in terms of power distribution, this system worked. In terms of social experimentation, it also worked.

*Q: What was the impact?*

LOVE: I think that the social impact of organizing the people around electric coops was excellent. They went on from that to form cooperative local water supply systems and made some efforts to engage in some local manufacturing. We made an effort later on to figure out what the overall, economic impact was. Of course, the real impact of rural electrification comes in an area like Bangladesh, where you get an electric pumping system put in. It is in areas where electrification can help in irrigation that you begin to attribute the behavior of agricultural production to it and get the "surge" of identifiable economic benefits. In other areas it is much more subtle.

However, there is no doubt that this rural electrification program "jump started" services to the rural areas by at least 20 to 30 years. Two other results evolved out of that program.

One was water supply systems. They started out in their rural electrification efforts by putting in small pipe systems and electric pumps, with a "standpipe" and so forth. They also put in systems of security lighting, which was really one of the biggest and most welcome advantages.

We got very interested in rural water supply and started a local water utilities program, hoping to duplicate the success that we had in rural electrification with rural water systems. This turned out to be a much harder problem. It was more difficult to organize. It doesn't have as great an impact on people. We had turned electricity on in an area which had never had it. Electricity is a "galvanizing" agent. You go down to inaugurate an electric system at dusk, and the lights go on. If you ever tried to live in your house without power for a while, you begin to realize how dependent you are on electricity. The impact of electricity is amazing.

Now water supply is different. People have other sources of water. They don't react in quite the same way to the introduction of a water supply system, even though you've got the problem of walking some distance to get water. The management and economics of water supply are different. Plus, you keep creating a waste disposal problem. The more water you bring in, the more water you have to get rid of. The economics of water delivery are not particularly attractive, but they are manageable. The economics of water disposal are virtually "impossible." So we ended up supporting a program that did some good but was less successful. In fact, I was looking at that when I was in Asia last fall. There are still major problems there.

The other program was a fascinating offshoot. We were always trying to figure how to get more economical power sources out to rural areas. I had a phone call from a Mr. Rogers, who owned a small engineering company in San Francisco. He said: "We want to get \$25,000 out of one of your feasibility study loans which you have in the Philippines to do a pilot, geothermal project down in southern Luzon. What we plan to do is to drill a little hole and put in a five megawatt power plant. We're going to show everybody how to generate electricity out of it." So I said: "Geothermal?" I remembered from my days at Pacific Gas and Electric Company that PG&E had a huge, geothermal operation just North of San Francisco. I said: "Are you working with PG&E?" [Pacific Gas and Electric Company] He said: "Yes." I said: "Well, I'm on my way to Manila. When I come through San Francisco, why don't we just get in a car and drive up to look at the PG&E field? You can show me what's happening in the commercial operation of geothermal power."

I had called around and talked to all of the technical people I could find in AID in Washington. They had told me that geothermal power was an experimental process that you shouldn't play around with. I said: "Well, I think that I'll take a look at it, anyway." So I went out there, and Mr. Rogers put me in a car. We drove up to Geyserville, CA, North of San Francisco. I remembered an old article I had read in "Fortune" magazine on the use of geothermal energy. We went up to Geyserville, and the PG&E people took us through this big complex. They had electricity generating plants going full blast. Of course, the plants were much simpler, because you don't need boilers. All you have is a nice, clean room with an electricity generator in it. I looked around and didn't see many people working there.

I turned to the PG&E guy and said: "Well, how large a crew do you have doing this?" He said: "Oh, we're just here for eight hours a day. We do routine maintenance. At night, we lock the door and leave this plant alone. We have an alarm signal on it. If anything goes wrong, it trips an alarm signal. These things are almost maintenance free. We don't have any problems with it." And they had a big operation. As we were going around the facility, I noticed that the company that was drilling the wells for this operation was the Geothermal Division of Union Oil Company. What they did was to drill the well and then they sold the steam to PG&E. In effect, PG&E had said: "You deliver steam to our door. We'll take it, we'll generate electricity with. We're responsible for all of the plant and investment. You're responsible for delivering the steam. We'll contract with you for a fixed price, against which you go out and drill the wells." So I said: "Well, gee, this is quite a good thing."

So I went to the Philippines and went to see Senator Pelaez. I said: "I think that I've found a source of power for some of your rural projects." He was on his way to visit the NRECA convention in Las Vegas. He stopped in California and looked at the PG&E project North of San Francisco on the way.

Then I went to talk to a good Filipino friend of mine and an Annapolis graduate, who was Chairman of the Philippine Power Development Council. I talked to him about this subject. I said: "I really think that this may have good potential. You guys ought to look at it." So he sent a team to California and looked at the PG&E plant. He had some contacts with the President of PG&E from somewhere. They went to PG&E and talked to them about it. PG&E said: "We'll give you all of our contract documents and everything we've got with Union Oil. Your problem is that you've got to get someone who knows how to drill these wells. That's the tricky technical problem, not generating electricity."

So we talked to Union Oil Company and said: "Would you people be interested in looking at the possibility of doing something in the Philippines?" Meanwhile, the Filipinos had said: "To hell with the five megawatt operation. We want to know whether there's real potential here." We said: "Okay."

So we set up a luncheon at the State Department in Washington during one of the annual meetings of the World Bank. On one side of the table were the Philippine Minister of Finance, the head of the Philippine Power Company, the head of the Power Development operation, and two or three other Filipinos. On the other side of the table were the president and CEO of Union Oil Company, the head of the Union Oil Geothermal Division, and a financial executive of Union.

We started the lunch and we said: "We're just here to provide a forum for you people to talk about electricity generated from geothermal power. It sounds as if both of you have an interest in this." Then we sat back and shut up, and let the Filipino and American representatives start.

The Union Oil president asked if the Philippines has an investment law for petroleum. The Filipinos said: "No, but we're about to finalize one. It's patterned after the law the Indonesians have." The Union Oil president said: "We've been operating in Indonesia for a long time, and that law is perfectly all right with us." So then they went on, back and forth. Then the Union Oil president said: "We're interested in drilling wells in the same kind of framework that we have with the PG&E. We'll come out. We'll undertake exploration. If we think that it's promising, we'll put up the money, 'up front,' to drill wells. Then, if we can agree on a contractual relationship with you, we'll put in the investment and drill production wells." Everything seemed to be going well. Finally, one of the Filipinos said: "We want a 25 percent interest in your company."

The Union Oil representatives stopped talking, and I could see that they were thinking: "All right. Here it comes." Then the Filipino said: "No, you don't understand. We don't want this interest for nothing. We'll pay our way. We'll put up our share of the cost of drilling. We want to learn the business. We want to develop some expertise in doing this and we think that we can

only do this by participating with you in the operation. You'll have a 75 percent interest in the company. We'll pay in our 25 percent interest. We don't expect a 'free ride.'"

So the Union Oil president said: "Okay." The lunch was over, and we had a deal! So the Union Oil representatives left the diningroom and went down to another area of the State Department, where Mr. Rogers presented his little, five megawatt plant. They looked the proposal over and said: "Well, we're going to go out and drill a six inch hole, which is a production hole." I said: "Why don't you drill a 'pilot hole' first?" He said: "The steam is either there or it's not there. If it's there, we want to go ahead rapidly with a full scale operation. If we drill the hole and the steam is not there, we will pack up, and go home." Time is money.

So Union Oil drilled the hole, came back to Washington, and said: "We have enough steam for 50 megawatts of power." The Union Oil representatives said: "We want to put in two, 25 megawatt units." Eventually, they did so, but with Japanese financing. We couldn't get any American companies to invest in it. We went to GE [General Electric], to Westinghouse, and to Allis-Chalmers, but without results. The problem was that the steam which came out of the holes was "low pressure steam." With the improving technology of steam power plants, new plants kept getting higher and higher steam pressure. For the American companies, a low pressure turbine has to be an expensive turbine. They weren't interested in producing a lower pressure turbine. They felt that there was no market out there for it.

So Union Oil and the Filipinos went to Hitachi Company, and the Japanese said: "We don't know much about geothermal energy, but we'll certainly learn." So Hitachi representatives went to California. They hired a company in Southern California to "teach them" about geothermal energy. Then they went into production, and they manufactured the necessary turbines. That geothermal installation became one of the major sources of indigenous power generation in the Philippines. The Filipinos don't have any coal, to speak of. They've put in a huge, nuclear plant. It has never started into operation. It is located on an earthquake fault. At one point the Philippine Minister of Energy said: "Our geothermal production of electricity is now greater than the capacity of the nuclear generating plant. If we'd had any brains, we would have dumped the nuclear and gone for geothermal generation of electricity."

*Q: You were the catalysts.*

LOVE: We were the catalysts. I would guess now that the Philippines is the second or third largest source of geothermal energy in the world.

Furthermore, the "spin-off" to Indonesia was interesting. Indonesia also has a huge geothermal potential. They were going at it in a different way. After they looked at what the Filipinos did, they ended up contracting with Union Oil, I think, but maybe it was with some other firm, to follow the same approach. So this was an example of one kind of program "spilling off" into another.

We could go on forever on the subject of geothermal energy. However, the thing that the Philippines had, which was very similar to what California had and to the Locarno fields in Italy,

was clean, superheated steam. It had very little sulphur in it. Sometimes, when you drill a geothermal hole, you come up with substantial contaminants.

If you have too much in the way of contaminants, then you have two problems. One is that you can't put it through your turbine. Secondly, at some point, as the steam comes up through the hole, which is the problem in Turkey, the pressure drops, by definition, because the steam is no longer confined. When the pressure drops, the capacity of the steam to hold the chemicals in solution also drops. Therefore, the sulphur and the other chemicals suspended in the steam start precipitating out. In some cases these chemicals can plug that hole in a couple of days. So in order to keep the flow of steam going, you have to keep cleaning out the hole. The only way around that, really, is to go to a different, technical system.

*Q: Does this cover what you have to say about the Philippines?*

LOVE: I would say that about the time I left the Philippines, those were the last programs that we worked on. Now, the Filipino rural electrification people said: "We think that we've learned a lot. What we would like to do is to set up a regional training center for rural electrification. Would you put some money into this? We'll take care of the overhead and so forth if you'll help us out."

We put up a couple of hundred thousand dollars in there, and the Filipinos set up a rural electrification training center. The case that the Filipinos put up to us was that in the United States the cooperatives that were started in the 1930's were set up in rural areas, or at least outside of the urban areas. They continued: "Many of these cooperatives have been overtaken by 'urban sprawl' and are now part of major, urban areas. When we send our people to the United States to look at your rural coops, it is very difficult, in many cases, for these people to relate to what they have seen in their own villages, because the areas have been urbanized. So we think that if we could bring developing country people to the Philippines, we could show them what's going on here," and this would help.

So the Filipinos set up a program. The first group that they brought in was from Indonesia. They also brought in other groups from Bangladesh and Pakistan. The man who managed that first program was head of the NEA [National Electrification Agency] at the time. He was a retired Philippine Army colonel and a very smart guy. My assumption was that the Pakistanis, who were technically the most advanced in this first group, would be the best in this course, followed by the Indonesians, with the Bangladeshi's last.

After we finished the course, I asked the Filipinos to give me their assessment on how the participants did. The course director said that the Bangladeshi's were the best, the Indonesians the next best, and the Pakistanis were "hopeless." I said: "That's exactly the opposite of what I expected! Why is that?" He said: "First of all, the Pakistanis were arrogant. They think that they know everything. They didn't pay any attention to what was going on. The Indonesians were kind of in between. They were willing to listen, but they had their own ideas. The Bangladeshi's came and said: 'We don't know anything about this. We have a big problem and we want to get this program done.'" The course director continued: "Half of the Bangladeshi's couldn't speak very good English. I could see that those who could speak English were listening carefully to the

lectures and then were repeating the essence of them to those members of their delegation who couldn't speak good English. And they would stay up all night, working. I knew, when they finished, that these guys were serious about what they were doing."

They went back to Bangladesh and set up a program that really, in some ways, exceeded the Philippine programs. The Bangladesh electrification was used in those major irrigation areas where they were able to punch into their water table and add a third crop. A lot of that "spinoff" came from this proposal which the Filipinos made to us. It wasn't our idea. It was theirs.

*Q: That's interesting. You were working on some other countries at that time. What about the situation in Vietnam? Did you have much feel for that?*

LOVE: Regarding Vietnam, I'd say two things. First, when I got there, we were trying to build a major water system. Actually, it was a matter of getting water from one side of the Saigon River to the other side. This involved construction of a major pipeline system under the river and over to the fields on the other side. This was to increase the water supply. I guess that we had four projects there. So we were working on those.

Then we were working on the Thy Duc thermal electricity generating plant to supply the city of Saigon. Furthermore, we had done some work on a hydroelectric project upcountry, called Dan Heim. And we were also working on locomotives for the Vietnamese railways. These were all capital development projects.

*Q: What year was this?*

LOVE: This would have been from 1962 to 1963, just before the big American military buildup started. I found the Vietnamese very, very able people. They were well-trained, smart, hard working, and very easy to do business with. Of course, the security problem was beginning to get serious. For example, the hydroelectric project was useless because the Viet Cong would just blow up the transmission lines. They didn't blow up the dam because they figured that they would get it one day or another. As fast as we would fix the transmission lines, the Viet Cong would blow them up. So we ended up with the hydroelectric project not going anywhere, but we finished the water project and we finished the thermal electricity generating plant.

Then we got into a big, controversial contest on supplying the locomotives for the railroads. This involved a bidding process. General Electric underbid General Motors for the locomotives by a substantial margin. The consultant involved on this matter recommended that the Vietnamese railway service buy the General Motors locomotives. I said: "Well, we can't do that." So we went through a big argument about whether the GM locomotives were better and whether we should pay more for them. There was a real argument about that. Then, a picture was published in "Time" magazine of a South Vietnamese locomotive blown off the track, with its wheels up in the air, lying in a ravine.

We then realized we were having unrealistic discussions about discounted "cash flows" over a period of 20 years. I said: "Look, fellows, these locomotives are going to wind up being blown off the tracks by the Viet Cong. It seems to me that the cheapest thing that we can put on the



track that's going to work is the most economical. Don't tell me that it makes any sense, if we end up theoretically saving money over the course of 20 years. They're not going to last 20 years. We should urge the Vietnamese to go ahead and buy the cheaper locomotive and get on with it."

However, at that point, a change took place in the AID Mission. I remember that we had a meeting with a man from AID Washington named Walter Stoneman. He was a retired Army colonel who was the Office Director for Vietnam, which was still in the Asia Bureau. At the time of this meeting the AID Mission had asked for some support. I said: "I really don't think that that makes any sense." Stoneman said: "Whatever the Mission asks for, they're going to get. If we have to put these things on a C-130 and fly them out to Vietnam tomorrow morning, that's what we're going to do, because we have a 'can-do' attitude."

I said: "Well, as of now this business has changed." We had reached the point where we could see that what was dictating what was going on in Vietnam was the politics and the military priorities. This had nothing to do with development. During the first couple of years the situation had not yet deteriorated all of that much from the security point of view. We were still trying to carry out development projects, even though we were in an environment which was making it increasingly difficult to accomplish anything. All of a sudden, all pretenses were "off" and nobody raised any questions. If you did, you got "run over." So I said to myself: "To hell with it. I'm not going to work on this country any more." I just stopped working on Vietnam because of the change in the nature of the aid program. Vietnam programs were still under AID, but they were being handled by a separate bureau.

*Q: Well, you mentioned Indonesia. Was that a big part of your operation as well?*

LOVE: I worked on Indonesia during the early 1960's. Then, of course, we sort of "shut down" operations because of President Sukarno. There was a big, "blank period" during the 1960's, until he was overthrown [in 1965]. After that, we started going back in again. I did some work on Indonesia, then, but not quite as much as I had before.

At one point in the early 1970's I left the Philippines desk and shifted back into project operations.

*Q: Were you still on the Philippine desk at that time or...*

LOVE: No, for a while the projects I had been working on were handled through the desks. Then AID was running into problems in terms of procedures, tracking projects, and a bunch of other things. So, the Asia Bureau set up a Capital Development Office. They put Sy Taubenblatt in charge of it. However, the projects were still being handled through the geographic desks. At that point Sy was not "strong enough" bureaucratically to pull the projects away from the desks. When I got to the Philippines desk officer, I said: "I don't want to handle the projects. I'd rather have them in Sy Taubenblatt's office. We have enough problems, working on getting the program structured, drafting our strategy statements, and dealing with Consultative Groups and all the rest of that. Project details are very time-consuming and specialized. I'd rather have capital development people work on them in the office where you can handle them, as long as we're on the same wave length at the strategy level."

At some point, and I can't remember exactly what happened, Sy Taubenblatt ended up getting the project people assigned to his office, and we shifted back to a separate project office in the Asian Bureau.

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**Cultural Attaché, USIS**  
**Manila (1966-1968)**

*A New Yorker, Dr. Dillon was educated at Hunter College and Columbia University. After teaching at Sweet Briar College and Rutgers University, she joined the State Department, working in INR dealing with Latin American Affairs. Transferring to newly created USIA in 1958 as Deputy Chief for Propaganda Intelligence, she was subsequently posted to Guatemala and later to the Philippines as Cultural Affairs Officer. Other assignments include Assistant Director for Latin America, Fellow at Brookings Institute and Diplomat in Residence at American University. Ms. Dillon was interviewed by Allan Hanson in 1988.*

*Q: In 1966, then, you went to Manila as cultural affairs officer.*

DILLON: Yes. I had come back to Washington briefly and was involved in an inter-agency committee on Vietnam. For a couple of months I was director of the Latin America book program. Then I was asked to go as cultural affairs officer to Manila, and I was there from 1966 to 1968.

I had not been eager to go to Manila. I would have preferred to remain in Latin America. As it turned out, it was a fascinating experience and I loved the people in the Philippines. I told them they were the Latin Americans of Asia. I noted the Spanish influence, after all the Philippines had been under Spanish rule for about 300 years. The only thing that seemed strange was that not too many people spoke Spanish; they spoke English or one of the indigenous languages.

Again, I managed to make contact with labor union leaders and gave them some grants working through our labor attaché there, and met a wide range of people in the cultural and educational field and also in the political field.

One of the very interesting things was that Carlos Romulo of UN and World War II fame in the Philippines-- he had been with General MacArthur--at that time was both the president of the University of the Philippines and the Secretary of Education. So as a result of my job as cultural affairs officer, I had a lot of contact with General Romulo, as he liked to be called. We developed very close relations with the University of the Philippines and did a lot of things with them in terms of grants and seminars and held events on its campus, etc. We even managed to get our ambassador there for a Fulbright seminar, something which apparently had not been

possible for a while because there had been some student demonstrations against the American ambassador coming to the campus.

*Q: One of your responsibilities was chairing the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Commission, wasn't it?*

DILLON: Yes, I was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Foundation, which administered the Fulbright program. The ambassador was actually the honorary chairman, but he did not wish to be involved in an active way. Once in a while he would come to the meetings, but would just say, "Dorothy, you carry on."

I found that the staff of the Foundation was actually in the embassy, down the hall from the cultural affairs office. I found this a little bit strange, because, as you know, it's a binational commission.

*Q: Very unusual.*

DILLON: But there were a lot of things that were strange in the Philippines because the relationship at that time was extremely close, and there was very little anti-US feeling in the Philippines. The people who were in control of things were the people who had gone through World War II and there was this feeling of camaraderie, you know, of feeling for the United States, that we had fought the World War together.

But I felt that the Fulbright Foundation should not be housed in the embassy and I was casting about to see how we could put it in offices of its own outside of the embassy. As always, we had budgetary problems. Well, the 20th anniversary of the Fulbright program in the Philippines was coming up in 1968.

*Q: '67 probably, because last year was the 40th anniversary.*

DILLON: Well, whichever it was, '67 or '68. I suggested to the Filipino representatives on the board that maybe as a birthday present to the Fulbright Foundation they might be able to put a little bit of money into the Foundation. Up to this time it had been supported completely by US money, even though it was a binational foundation. A contribution from the Philippines would enable the Foundation to move into new offices and increase the grants.

Well, in any case, this worked out, and so before I left in August of 1968, we managed to get the staff of the Foundation out of the embassy and into offices of its own. A new director came in--the old director was retiring because of illness--and the new director was a former Deputy Secretary of Education in the Philippines. That was, I guess, the great accomplishment of my time there, in terms of the Fulbright program.

**JOHN N. HUTCHINSON**  
**Director, Regional Service Center, USIS**

## Manila (1966-1968)

*John N. Hutchinson was born in Iowa and educated at the University of Fayetteville. He served posts in England, the Philippines and New Zealand. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Smith in 1988.*

*Q: What were the years that you were in Manila?*

HUTCHISON: I went to Manila in early 1966. I came back from London, and there was no job for me. I'm sure this happens lots of times to people coming back from overseas. But here I'd been in a responsible job, I'd been acting PAO London, which is not peanuts in the agency, and had been asked to stay on in London while there was this transition from Bill Clark to somebody else. It turned out to be Bill King, who arrived sick and left sick. A bad appointment. Alienated himself from everybody in the embassy, I guess, but he was not well and didn't do anything.

When I came back, nobody had any suggestions on what I was to do. This is one of the great faults in the agency, I think, its inability to consult with and plan ahead for returning personnel you sometimes get terribly disconnected, as you know, from your own country, let alone your own agency, when you're serving abroad. So I'd been over there four years without leave, four long years away from the United States, quite happy with it, but you get really badly out of communication with everything. I'd lost all touch with the levers of power in Washington and so on. There ought to be a better way to handle this thing. Maybe there is now. With all the talk about career planning, it never seemed to me that it really got very far.

So I had to go around, trying to find a job. I went back to Jim Thomas, who worked for me for years and years, and who was very shrewd and experienced in bureaucracy. Jim said, "We're going to need somebody in RSC Manila. Would you like to go there?" The Philippines didn't particularly appeal to me, but I finally realized I had to do something, and I took the job. I went to Manila. It was a satisfying job in many ways. My wife was unhappy in that climate. It was very hard on her. It wasn't so hard on me, but it's not the greatest place to be, and it's probably far worse now than it was then. But the job at RSC itself was a satisfying job. There was lots to do there, I thought, in terms of straightening out things that had gotten kind of slack before I got there.

*Q: Who had preceded you?*

HUTCHISON: I can't think of his name. Nice guy. I suppose everybody thinks that he can move into a new job and do it better than any guy that was ahead of him. But this was during the tremendous build-up of propaganda for Vietnam. Although we were publishing and printing enormous quantities of what you might think of as the usual material for USIS posts all over Southeast Asia and, to some extent, to other parts of the world, the program was essentially for the military or for that combined operation that Barry Zorthian had, over there in Vietnam, built up to huge proportions. We were printing textbooks in Vietnamese, Laos and all kinds of exotic languages. We didn't handle the languages ourselves; the copy came in for our camera, all ready to go. But we were reproducing, for a while, in maybe 20 languages. We were turning out the largest magazine in Asia at one time, Free World, and later changed to another name, I forget,

Horizons? I don't know. I forget. Anyway, a really handsome, four-color magazine with special editions for, I think, 11 different countries, enormous quantities of posters and pamphlets and whatnot.

But for Vietnam, it became a leaflet operation, essentially, in addition to these huge quantities of school books. Finally, we were shipping two 707 plane loads every three days of printed material to Vietnam, right out of Clark Air Base. We were running three shifts 24 hours a day, while having terrible problems with salt water invading our wells and affecting our photo developing, our air-conditioning breaking down at a time when using printing paper has to have stable humidity, all kinds of problems, running day and night. We used, in the last year I was there, 14 million pounds of paper. We met our obligations on it. It was a hell of an operation. I think I had 350-450 employees, almost all Filipinos, some American staff.

One of the stalwarts of that operation was Al Roland, who came back to run the publications division at IPS, a really fine magazine editor. The printing side was Werner Sauer and later Norbert Marcian. We were turning out quite high-quality printing in just tremendous quantities.

**RALPH J. KATROSH**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1966-1968)**

*Ralph J. Katrosh was born in 1927 and raised in Kingston, Pennsylvania. He attended Virginia Military Institute. From there, he joined the military and became a part of the Third Army Palace Guard. It was here in Europe that he developed a desire to join the Foreign Service. Upon returning to the States, he entered the Foreign Service School at Georgetown University. He then went to the State Department to work with China in Taiwan. He has also served in Burma, the Philippines, Malaysia, Israel and Vietnam. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 28, 1992.*

KATROSH: I came back and the Department asked if I would like to go to the Philippines? Oh yes indeed. So in 1966 I went out to the Philippines under Ambassador Blair.

This is nice. The Philippines was our "colony"; in 1966 they were our colony. The interesting thing going on in the Philippines, I guess, was again making sure that the Philippines wouldn't get too far adrift from where we wanted them to be...a strong right arm for our Southeast Asian policy and providing us with what were then strategic bases, Subic Bay and Clark Field.

President Johnson made a visit to Manila while I was there. It took two months before his arrival to get ready and two months after he left were spent in repairing the damage. This happens all the time in most Embassies and I am sure you are familiar with it. That was one of the big events, the Johnson visit, and trying to get the Philippines to support us in Vietnam. Manila wouldn't send combat troops but they did send some rural reconstruction battalions there.

Everything was going swimmingly and I had a two year assignment there. I asked for a third and had it approved and then bang!

*Q: We are talking about the Tet offensive in Saigon, January, 1968.*

KATROSH: Right. Well, I was directed back to Saigon but I don't want to go. I am using all the chips I collected throughout my career trying to get the assignment changed. No way. Your family can stay in Manila. You only have to go for 18 months. They don't even have to move out of the house...it was a lovely house. Everything is going to be fine. You can catch a flight from Saigon to Clark and spend a weekend with your family. They knew I had spent quite a bit of time there earlier and was not very sympathetic about Vietnam...not hostile, but I would say, "let's recognize it." I told them that I didn't want to go back because we had lost it. Not go back? Okay I did.

**SUSAN M. KLINGAMAN**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1966-1968)**

*Susan Klingaman was born in Albany, New York in 1937. She attended Oberlin College. She then received a Fulbright Scholarship and went to Germany. She then attended the Fletcher School in 1960 and entered the Foreign Service in 1963. She held her first post in Dusseldorf, Germany and later served in the Philippines, the INR, and Denmark. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.*

*Q: You were in Manila from when to when?*

KLINGAMAN: February 1966 to February 1968.

*Q: What was your job in Manila?*

KLINGAMAN: I was number two of two in the external political affairs section of the Political Section.

*Q: Can you give me a picture of the Philippines in 1966 when you arrived there?*

KLINGAMAN: That was the first two years of Ferdinand Marcos's presidency. The Philippines at that time, rather Manila, was known as Dodge City East. All the male Filipinos were packing their pistols, even on the golf course where I played. The domestic political scene was a very disorganized circus, I would say. Philippine politicians had lots of enthusiastic energy, and the parliament was very active. There was a lot of hope that Marcos would bring order and discipline to the country; that he would bring economic development.

Our embassy in Manila was large. The embassy worked very closely with the Filipinos on all kinds of issues. The Philippines had been a colony of the United States for 50 years so there was a long history of working with the United States. But there was also increasing anti-American sentiment on the part of students in the Philippines. The Philippines had rather a split personality when it came to the United States, a love-hate relationship. We brought a lot of good things to the country like education and English and economic development. But now there were some in the parliament and in the government who wanted the Philippines to assert its independence from the United States more. But they also weren't quite sure where they were in Asia vis-a-vis other Asians.

The overriding activity as far as the American Embassy was concerned at that time in the Philippines was Vietnam. My job in the Philippines was greatly influenced by that. As the number two officer for external affairs I did essentially two things. One was to be liaison with the Foreign Office, primarily on United Nations issues. The person in charge of Philippine UN issues in the Foreign Office was a woman of ambassadorial rank, Ambassador Soriano. I had a very good relationship with her. Otherwise our embassy was very caught up with Vietnam. The Philippines did not send any combat troops to Vietnam, but they did send an army engineer battalion. Vietnam was a controversial issue in the Philippines.

I did a lot of public speaking to student groups on Vietnam. It was something that I personally struggled with a great deal. I was not convinced that the U.S. was on the right course in Vietnam. That sounds like very flip hindsight, doesn't it? But it's really true. I had taken a seminar at Oberlin on the relationship between communism and nationalism as political forces. We had done case studies of a number of countries including China and some in Eastern Europe. The conclusion was that both nationalism and communism were very strong forces. In Vietnam it seemed to me we had them combined in the North Vietnamese and in the Viet Minh. I was really struggling with this.

I thought that in Vietnam there was a very strong element of nationalism in the communist movement that would be hard for foreigners to beat. I was also skeptical that a communist victory would necessarily result in an expansionist Vietnam, that other countries would fall like dominos. I was really agonizing about this. I remember thinking about what I as an FSO should do if I thought U.S. policy was wrong. But I didn't think that a junior officer like me could do anything that would make a difference. There didn't seem to be any point in resigning over it. I remember once I expressed some doubts to a senior officer in the political section. He seemed surprised, and neither of us pursued the conversation.

I had to give speeches presenting the American position to some Filipino groups. I had lots of material. This was "the light at the end of the tunnel" days. We had all kinds of talking points on the history of the North Vietnamese incursions into South Vietnam, and all kinds of figures. I knew at that time the history of Vietnam and U.S. and French involvement backwards and forwards. When I talked with Filipino students I tried to explain the reasoning behind U.S. government policy. USIS provided me lots of facts and figures.

During that period we had the Seven Nations Summit meeting in Manila and I was very much involved in the logistical backstopping of that. It was very exciting. It was my first backstopping

of a state visit and this was a seven nation state visit. It took place in Manila. The city was painted up, literally, for the occasion. President Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird arrived; Dean Rusk, Secretary of State Rusk; and the chiefs of state and foreign ministers of the other six nations which were Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea. It was a large event.

I have a very nice memory of that event. During that time I was called on to...I think it was during that event, it might have been afterwards, in any event it was at a time when Secretary Rusk was in the Philippines. I was the duty officer at the embassy and a message came in for him and I was asked to deliver it to him. He was at the ambassador's residence at the time. I delivered the message to the residence and I had instructions to await his reply that I was to hand-carry back to the embassy to be telegraphed back to Washington.

I was just a mail girl, nothing exciting, but I delivered the message to the ambassador's residence and I sat down on a bench outside the front door of the residence to await the reply. I waited and I waited and eventually the door opened and out came Secretary Rusk and Mrs. Rusk with the ambassador and I was introduced. Secretary Rusk said that he had heard the duty officer was a woman and that he wanted very much to meet me. He shook my hand and he sat down and said he wanted me to know that he was very pleased I was in the Foreign Service and thought we should have more women in the Foreign Service. He wished me the best of luck. I was terribly surprised, very touched at how very, very nice he was. It is a very nice memory.

*Q: What was the reaction of the Philippine students when you went to talk to them?*

KLINGAMAN: They were very, very anti-U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But they were willing to listen. They always received me very politely. I explained to them that the U.S. government believed that American military involvement was needed to promote a democratic and economically viable South Vietnam. They listened to me. But they really felt it was U.S. imperialism on the march. We had a lot of demonstrations in front of the embassy, many, many student demonstrations. They were never violent. I mean they may have thrown a few bottles but it was not violent. Filipino students never asked me about my personal position. They probably assumed it was the same as the U.S. government position.

I did have occasion to go up to the northern Philippines to give a speech on communism. I was invited by a group of American Baptist missionaries. I think what they were expecting was a really strong anti-communist speech. I can tell you that my speech was very well received by the Filipino students in the audience. I don't think the missionaries liked it very well. Basically what I said was that communism finds its mass base where there are conditions of economic and social injustice that are not being addressed. There was a guerrilla movement in the Philippines at that time...the Huks. They were quite strong in that area. I was really directing my remarks so that people would see that this was why the Huks were getting support...not so much from students but from people living in similar conditions that existed in the Philippines. The students really received the speech very well. The missionaries didn't say they didn't like it but I think it was not what they were expecting from the American embassy.

*Q: Who was our Ambassador while you were there?*



KLINGAMAN: Our ambassador was William McCormick Blair, a political appointee, a liberal Democrat. Very closely connected, I believe, with Adlai Stevenson. He was a very good ambassador. He traveled a lot in the Philippines. He took junior officers with him. He always treated me as if there were nothing special about me being a woman. I liked him very much and I thought he did an excellent job. He was very good at making speeches. We prepared talking points for him for his different stops. He made a point of visiting as many provincial capitals as he could.

The DCM was Richard Service who was a career man, the brother of John Stewart Service...John Stewart Service being an Oberlin graduate. We all know about his problems as a China hand during the McCarthy era.

I don't know if we have time to mention it but I would just like to say that both William McCormick Blair and Richard Service supported me in my first two weeks in Manila. When I arrived I went into the political section. When I first arrived one of the junior officers who had been the ambassador's aide for a year and was scheduled to go to the consular section for a year tried to shoot me out from under my assignment in the political section. So I was called into the DCM's office the first week I was there and was told that there was another officer who would really like the position to which I had been assigned in the political section and how did I feel about that? I said I did not like the sound of that at all; I wanted a political assignment and this was why I was here. Service asked me to explain why I wanted political work, and I did. He supported me fully. I remember that.

*Q: What about Marcos? He was sort of the fair-haired boy wasn't he as far as we were concerned at this period?*

KLINGAMAN: He was called "the great white hope in Asia." People felt at that time that he was the one we could count on. He had an honorable record as a colonel in the Philippine armed forces in the military. He was considered to be talented, uncorrupted, and bright, and we placed high hopes on him. Now aren't you going to ask me about Imelda?

*Q: Yes.*

KLINGAMAN: Because she was of course also there! In fact I did meet her a couple of times. It was Marcos's wife who was the source of his political base because she was a Romualdez. The Romualdez family was a sugar family from the central Philippines and she was very early on known as the woman behind the throne, not necessarily in a negative way. Asian women, I guess for centuries, have been very strong behind the scenes and she was very strong behind the scenes. We knew that. We didn't know how it would all turn out. But she was very prominent.

I met her a number of times. I never knew quite what to make of her. I saw her give public speeches. She was a very good public speaker. She was very good in going around to various cultural events. I do remember seeing her deliver a speech to a Filipino women's organization. For some reason she had to leave early and I was leaving right behind her and saw her face change as soon as she was off stage. She became what struck me as a very cold and brusque

woman who had been very good at putting on a pleasant face when she needed to for public relations.

I did meet her personally one time, again as a message-bearer. Hubert Humphrey sent her a message for some reason. He had met her and later sent a letter to her. I had instructions to deliver it to her personally. So we made an appointment and I went to Malacanang, the presidential residence, and I waited and waited and waited and finally she came to the reception area. She chatted with me for maybe twenty minutes. I was impressed to be in the presence of the First Lady of the Philippines; it was an experience, which I probably would not have been given if I hadn't been a woman officer. As I recall she didn't say anything much. It wasn't a substantive conversation at all but I did meet her.

*Q: Is there anything else we should cover in the Philippines?*

KLINGAMAN: I just would like to mention that I started getting involved in international women's issues there. There was a UN Conference that I participated in. I would like to talk a little bit about that.

*Q: Great.*

KLINGAMAN: I had the opportunity late in 1966 to participate in a United Nations regional seminar on the status of women. I think it was probably the first one of its kind in Asia and the Pacific. It involved a lot of countries. The United States was actually only an observer at this conference. A woman came out from the United States from the private sector and I assisted her. It was a very interesting conference. I frankly don't remember a great deal about it but it was my first introduction to women's issues and my first introduction to a multilateral forum.

I also wanted to mention that while I was in Manila I attended a Filipino protestant church called Cosmopolitan Church, which was about the only protestant church in all of Manila with the exception of the British church where most of the embassy people went. I found it really a great opportunity to get to know Filipinos who were not in government. And there were also Filipinos who were active in the government in that church. One of them was the Ramos family. Foreign Secretary Ramos did not attend the church all that frequently at that time as I recall but his wife did and his children did. As I am sure you know one of his children grew up to be an army general who took hold of the Peoples' Revolution in 1986 and is now President of the Philippines. I just find that interesting to look back on.

*Q: On the women's issue, when you came in, was there such a thing with the women who were in the Foreign Service that you were able to get together with other women and sort of sit around and talk about the state of things and all that or was each one kind of alone?*

KLINGAMAN: Each one was pretty much alone although I must say my first two tours were overseas. In Dusseldorf I was the only female Foreign Service officer at the post and in Manila I was not the only one but there weren't very many of us. The women's issue was not really an issue at that time; it really hadn't entered into the awareness of most women, certainly not really of myself except as I mentioned a little bit on the Foreign Service oral interview. I think that

women FSOs pretty much felt that we'd do the best we could. I didn't really have an awareness of being special, different or alone at that time.

*Q: Probably it was healthier that way.*

KLINGAMAN: Well I'll get to that later. I mean in a way it was. It was healthy.

*Q: There seems to be a tendency to put people in boxes now; it doesn't work very well.*

KLINGAMAN: I would agree and I want to get into that a little bit later but I really didn't feel that I was being discriminated against in any systematic way. I didn't really feel that my male colleagues treated me differently, so I was quite content.

**JAMES M. WILSON, JR.**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Manila (1966-1970)**

*James M. Wilson, Jr. was born in China to American parents in 1918. He received a BA from Swarthmore College in 1939, graduated from the Geneva School of International Studies in 1939, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1940, and Harvard Law School in 1948. He also served as a lieutenant colonel overseas in the US Army from 1941-44. Mr. Wilson has served abroad in Paris, Madrid, Bangkok and Manila. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: What was the situation in the Philippines when you arrived in 1966?*

WILSON: In what sense?

*Q: Sort of the political situation.*

WILSON: Marcos had just come in, and he was considered in those days as something of a white hope for the country. Macapagal had preceded him. Relationships with Macapagal were very good in many ways, but the hopes for Marcos were greater. When I arrived on the scene, Marcos was in Washington on his first state visit. Bill Blair was with him, so when I arrived I became chargé immediately.

I should tell you that I arrived under something of a cloud in that the day after I got there, I went down to the embassy (It was a Sunday morning, I remember.) just to take a look at what was going on. I had come in by boat and I was out of touch with things. I walked in the front door and was smartly saluted by the Marine on duty; and he said, "Sir, you should know that Seafront is on fire." Seafront is the logistics, administrative section of the embassy compound up Roxas Boulevard from where we were. Sure enough, the commissary building had caught fire. So I had that for openers.

Then, two days later, I was awakened, this time about four o'clock in the morning, and told that there was an urgent message in the code room, eyes only for me from President Johnson. I hopped in the car and drove myself down to the embassy, and here was a long cable saying that after discussions with President Marcos, he and LBJ had decided to hold a summit meeting for the leaders of all the countries who had troops in Vietnam. They were going to hold the conference in two weeks and they wanted it to be in the Philippines. They wanted my recommendation by return wire as to whether it should be held in Manila or in Baguio.

*Q: Baguio being in the hills.*

WILSON: Yes, the summer capital. At that time, I had never even been to Baguio. I got on the telephone called up the air attaché and said, "Crank up your airplane. We're going to Baguio," which we did. I came back and recommended strongly that the conference be in Manila because of the lack of communication facilities for the media. This was the origin of the Manila Conference.

*Q: When you got there did you find a unified embassy? Each embassy has its own almost personality and it changes and it depends on leadership, the situation and all of that. How did you find the embassy?*

WILSON: It was a huge embassy, of course, and it still is. But it was even bigger in those days because it was supporting what was going on in Indochina. We had something like 1,200 people in the embassy proper, not counting the thousands of military dependents. The Peace Corps had 900 volunteers, the biggest in the world. There was a very active country team organization. Blair was very much on top of what was going on. We had a whole variety of military types there. We had 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force headquarters, JUSMAAG, and CINCPAC representatives, Philippines, representing all of the diverse U.S. military elements and we had the bases. The two principal ones were Subic and Clark. In those days, we still had the one at Cavite and another one down at Mactan on Cebu. We had several communication stations in various places and we had a major rest and recreation center at Camp John Hay in Baguio.

*Q: Was there any question about any of the officers at the time about the bases or was this just a given; we had them, we needed them, and...*

WILSON: There was an almost perennial base negotiation going on with the Philippine government. You took that for granted. You would button up one thing and another would start. There was also a continual drumbeat from certain of the politicians in the Philippine legislature raising one thing or another about the bases at times and there was a loud clamor in certain sections of the Philippine media - anti-U.S., anti-base, and very loud, although this was not reflected to a great extent in the Philippine government itself.

*Q: While you were there, four years is a long time, did you have major problems with the American troops in the Philippines?*

WILSON: We had a couple of fairly good sized incidents. One of the major bones of contention was, as you indicated, the status of forces arrangements. The original base agreement with the Philippines was quite different from base agreements with other countries, particularly ones in NATO which I had a good deal to do with earlier. In the Philippines, the major criterion for determining who got jurisdiction was whether the incident, whatever it was, occurred on or off base, whereas under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, this was determined by whether the offense happened on or off duty. That is a gross oversimplification though.

The Filipinos were very unhappy about the on and off base business and they didn't like the idea of the bases being under a foreign flag. This became a very sensitive issue politically. They also were concerned that some of the bases took up an awful lot of territory, particularly Clark and to a certain extent Subic Bay. This was, as I say, a running bone of contention during the entire time that I was there. We sort of agreed to disagree on some things, but on others there were active negotiations that were going on almost all the time.

There were also questions of whether or not rent should be paid for the bases and we insisted that this not be the case. The whole defense arrangement was based in the first place not on the war in Vietnam but on the basic defense treaty, which went back to immediate post-war times. Under those circumstances we felt that the bases were an integral part of that defense arrangement and should not have any rent connected with them. Besides which, the Philippine people were getting a awful lot in the way of revenue out of the bases themselves, not to mention employment.

*Q: Was there a problems with our involvement in Vietnam at that point because this is when the anti-Vietnam business had cranked up both in the United States and in Europe. We were picking up an awful lot of heat during this period.*

WILSON: That's right. But there were never any direct air operations conducted in Vietnam from bases in the Philippines. Ours was entirely a support operation.

*Q: Was this on purpose?*

WILSON: It was an agreed arrangement with the Philippine government, which had taken place before I got on the scene. Clark was a major supply point anyway and Subic, of course, was a major haven for all naval vessels in that part of the world: Cubi Point for the naval air and Subic shipyards for main ships of the line. We were very careful to observe the restrictions that applied on that. B-52 operations over Vietnam were conducted either out of bases in Thailand or Anderson Field on Guam. None of our missions originated out of Clark.

*Q: Was there an indigenous Philippine movement against the war?*

WILSON: Not much of one. There were some loud critics, yes. But the Philippines had PHILCAG [Philippine Civilian Advisory Group], the commander of which achieved a certain prominence later on as president of the Republic, namely Fidel Ramos. He was then a lieutenant colonel and also the son of the then foreign secretary, Narciso Ramos.

*Q: How about sort of the social activities of the embassy? I'm saying social but I mean business activities. One has heard reports particularly later on but I was wondering at the time that there were a lot of people with money and they could almost embrace the embassy staff. One had to be sort of careful of not getting too chummy. There was just too much money and these are sometimes the wrong people to be involved with.*

WILSON: Yes, we did have that problem though not as much I think in my time as you had later on. But as you probably know one of the Philippines major problems is what to do about the oligarchs who control the society as a whole. It was basic in a whole host of ways to the question of who controls much of the agriculture and a lot of the industry. You've got the 400 family syndrome going back to Spanish times. They still control an awful lot of the money and wealth. Yes, you had to be careful not to get too personally involved.

*Q: I would imagine that one of the perennial headaches there which most DCMs and ambassadors want to avoid like the plague is visas.*

WILSON: Oh, that is a perennial problem, a terrible problem. We issued more visas there than any other post in the world.

*Q: I know, and there are all sorts of problems about visas because a lot of Filipinos get visitor visas and then don't return. They have fake credentials, the whole gamut. Did you get involved in that sort of thing?*

WILSON: You are always involved. Fortunately, we had a couple of very good consuls.

*Q: Lori Lawrence was one, wasn't he?*

WILSON: Not in my time. Lou Gleek was the first one there, and Will Chase was the second. It was an impossible job. We had people crowding around the gates at five o'clock in the morning to get in and get their visas. The place was a madhouse. We had a huge section and everybody was overworked. We also had 24,000 private American citizens to look after.

*Q: Was there concern about corruption moving into the consular work at all?*

WILSON: No. There were a few incidents where corruption was alleged as I remember, but we looked into it very carefully and there was nothing. I think later we did have trouble with one local who had done something but the circumstances escape me completely.

*Q: What about dealing with Marcos? Can you talk about during this time dealing with him, how he operated and how we saw him?*

WILSON: As I said earlier, he was the white hope in those days. It wasn't until after I left in 1970 that he really kicked things over and declared martial law. Getting along with Marcos was really very pleasant in my time. He was doing all the right things, making all the right noises, from our point of view. He was by no means an American stooge, quite the contrary, he knew exactly what was going on. He was very smart, very quick, very responsive.

*Q: The old Philippine hands were always comparing everybody to Magsaysay, was this still sort of the...*

WILSON: Magsaysay's image was still very much around. Magsaysay was a very charismatic fellow in many ways but I don't know how effective he really was as president. His son was a congressman and then a senator, a very pleasant guy but he never achieved the prominence of his father by any matter or means.

*Q: How about Imelda Marcos, was she a power at that time?*

WILSON: Oh, yes. Imelda was a major force in the whole operation. She and the Romualdez family were quite influential in many ways. Imelda was very active on the social front and took on such things as building a cultural center in Manila. She was also Mayor of Manila and had all kinds of projects of one sort or another. I think a lot of that maybe stemmed from her experiences as hostess at the Manila Summit. She managed to take care of all the wives of the heads of government and did a magnificent job of hosting in the social sense.

*Q: Can you talk about what you observed at the Manila Summit?*

WILSON: It was really more of a public relations operation in the last analysis than it was of great political significance. It was designed to show the solidarity of the cooperating powers, and in that I think it succeeded. What the practical consequences of it were, though, is something else again. Both Thieu and Ky were there from South Vietnam. I can't say that it had any material effect in getting them any closer together.

*Q: How about the care and feeding of Lyndon Baines Johnson? That is usually equivalent to a major war or an earthquake.*

WILSON: I am sure you have millions of stories about what happens when any president travels. LBJ was somewhat unique, though, even in that regard. We had a whole series of logistics problems as I remember, not the least of which was the insistence on the part of the Philippine government that all heads of state stay in the old Manila Hotel. I remember a whole series of demands from Washington, including remaking the bathrooms in LBJ's suite and getting a super king size bed, all of this to be done in a very short period of time.

The worst came when I got a call about midnight the night before LBJ was due to arrive. It was Bill Blair, and he said, "You've got to come over here right away." I went over to the residence and he said, "The Secret Service was just here and they said that they had looked over the Manila Hotel and they don't think that the cables on the elevators are up to snuff. They are going to insist that LBJ not stay there." I said, "What are we going to do with him?" Bill said, "They want this embassy residence immediately - to take over the whole thing."

We scratched our heads, and finally Bill came up with a bright idea. He called up the admiral at Subic and said, "Would you be good enough to send down by chopper your two best engineers?" (We converted the tennis courts at the embassy, by the way, into a helicopter landing pad by that

time.) The Navy engineers arrived and Bill told them to look over the residence and the Manila Hotel and report. They came back and said that the cables seemed to be fair enough, but the embassy residence was a fire trap and shouldn't have the President in it at all. So, the Secret Service backed down, and LBJ arrived and went to his suite. I don't think he knew a thing about it.

*Q: Just what they wanted.*

WILSON: We had something like 750 take-offs and landings from that temporary helicopter strip during the conference, if you can imagine, and two hotels full of American media people alone.

*Q: It is incredible what happens.*

WILSON: We also had a lovely one that had to do with the ladies program. You were asking about Imelda. It seems that when Macapagal was president he had gone to Washington and in the name of the Philippine people, had presented LBJ as a present for the American people from the Philippines the hull of what had been the last four-masted ship to do the clipper run on the Pacific. The only difficulty with this was that it had an old steel hull and had been found rotting away in Australia early in World War II when it had been picked up and used as a coal barge, being towed back and forth across the Pacific. Nobody had bothered to put the cabins and masts and that sort of thing on it. They were someplace in a storehouse in Australia. This ship, called the Kaiulani, as I remember, had been floated and brought into Cavite harbor where it was docked.

The people from Washington arranging Lady Bird's program thought it would be a very good idea if Lady Bird went out and saw the Kaiulani. We didn't think it was such a hot idea because the ship wasn't anything to look at. They went out to see the Kaiulani anyway, only to discover that it had filled with water in the last typhoon and had sunk at its dock. Nothing phased the gal who was arranging this on our side came in and said, "Tell our navy to come in and raise it." The Navy took one look at it and said, "We can raise it, but it will cost you \$1,500,000 to do it." That stopped the American group for a while.

But then they went to see Imelda, and Imelda said she would see what she could do with the Philippine navy, which she did. She called in the head of the Navy and said the Kaiulani had to be raised. The good admiral got out the swabbies and a bunch of buckets and at low tide they bailed out the Kaiulani, which then rose majestically from its place on the bottom. Overnight, it was painted it a bright blue; and the good ladies all went by chopper the next day and had their pictures taken by the Kaiulani, and all was fine. The next day it rained like hell and the Kaiulani sank again. But nobody cared by then.

*Q: The Nixon administration came in in '69, did that make any change from your point of view?*

WILSON: Not really. Nixon, if you will remember, stopped in Guam on the way out and took the occasion to enunciate what became known as the Guam Doctrine to the effect that we weren't going to continue to help those who didn't help themselves. I found that very interesting



in many ways because Nixon had come out in 1967 before running for President and while I was chargé. We had talked for two or three hours about the overall situation, and when he finally asked for my personal opinion, this is what I had recommended to him among other things. I won't claim authorship of the Guam Doctrine by a long shot, however. Others, including Marshall Green in Jakarta, told him the same thing, I discovered later.

As President after 1968, Nixon got along famously with both the Marcoses, which in some respects I think may have influenced the decision not to step on Marcos's toes when he declared martial law four years later. But that is only speculation on my part.

*Q: It became sort of almost standard operating procedure - correct me if I'm wrong in this because I have not served there - but at least later for Marcos and his wife Imelda to sort of absorb visiting delegations, congressmen and what have you, and sort of embrace them so much that this must have been disquieting to the embassy. I would think that people were getting the wrong impression of the problems in the Philippines. Was this happening when you were there?*

WILSON: It was beginning when I left but I think it really got out of hand only much later on.

*Q: What about insurgency in...*

WILSON: The Huks? Well, the Huk insurgency was still dribbling on during the entire four years I was there. We thought it was under control a half a dozen times, but it would flare up again someplace else. We never took it too seriously at that time. That is to say, everybody remained concerned, but nobody could understand why they could not be completely eradicated. I was personally never too impressed when the insurgency was named as one of the principal causes for the imposition of martial law in 1972, but again that is a personal opinion.

*Q: How about SEATO, did that play any role or was that just a treaty?*

WILSON: Not much as far as we were concerned during the time I was in the Philippines. The secretary general of SEATO was a Filipino, a very affable former general but our principal concentration was more on Vietnam and support for the U.S. efforts. We did not become involved in any discussions in Bangkok on the SEATO business but kept a watching brief on what was going on. ASEAN, however, was beginning to come into prominence.

*Q: ASEAN?*

WILSON: Yes. The Association of South East Asian Nations.

*Q: Who was foreign minister while you were there?*

WILSON: I was there for four years, spending a total of 18 months as chargé between ambassadors. The first foreign minister was Narciso Ramos, who was the father of the later president; and the second one was Carlos P. Romulo.

*Q: He was sort of the grand old man.*

WILSON: The grand old man, that's it.

*Q: How did you find dealing with both of those men?*

WILSON: Narciso was a dream. He was a wonderful guy personally, a very experienced career diplomat. Romulo was something else again. I liked him very much indeed despite his foibles. He was a tremendous raconteur who had been everywhere, done everything, knew everyone. He didn't suffer from lack of ego, but was very well informed. He was very cooperative and we got along famously.

*Q: Were there any major issues during this time other than the on-going base negotiations which seemed to go on until Mount Pinatubo took care of everything? Other than that were there any sort of sticking points, problems?*

WILSON: We had a problem with Sabah as I remember. That was when Soapy Williams was our ambassador. The Filipinos claimed sovereignty over Sabah in Sarawak, which is in northern Kalimantan. The Malaysians got all huffy about the whole thing, and then the Filipinos made noises in the press about invoking the terms of the Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S., which we didn't think much of. Our press spokesman back here was asked a question about what the U.S. was going to do, and he tried to brush the whole thing off in terms that were something less than flattering to the Filipinos, or at least they took it that way. There was a major dust-up on that store before it finally quieted down.

We had a big hoop-de-do just as I was departing the scene, which I was right in the middle of, I am sorry to say. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee back here, most particularly Stuart Symington, decided to look into the extent of U.S. commitment abroad, since the pressure against the war in Vietnam was really building. He sent around a couple of gentlemen by the names of Pincus and Paul to take a look at what was going on. They visited each of the countries in the area where we might have commitments and arrived in due course in Manila where again I was chargé. We received them, briefed them, etc. The net of all this though was that I was summoned back to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on U.S.-Philippine relations just after Hank Byroade arrived as ambassador.

The Symington Committee held extensive hearings for three or four days in executive sessions, having brought back several other members of the country team to testify. Then, having recorded all of this, Symington insisted that he wanted to declassify what we had all said. This caused considerable problems, to say the least, on instructions, since we had been rather frank in our testimony. I finally left after about two weeks of arguing with Symington and Pincus over what could and could not be deleted for reasons of classification. The thing finally came out in somewhat edited form and, as predicted, it created a real stir in Manila. They ran the testimony with deleted sections in just about every newspaper in Manila for a week and I found myself being quoted all over the country. It was a major catastrophe.

*Q: Soapy Williams, G. Mennen Williams, was ambassador for part of the time you were there?*

WILSON: Yes.

*Q: He had been assistant secretary for African Affairs and all and had made quite a name for himself. He was very publicly known on that and having also been governor of Michigan. How did he work as an ambassador?*

WILSON: Soapy was splendid, but he was there for only eight months, having been appointed by LBJ. When Humphrey lost, Williams was obviously someone who was going to have to step down for political reasons. He had come out to Manila with the thought that he could follow the example of Frank Murphy, the former governor of Michigan, attorney general, etc., who was also an early, popular U.S. high commissioner to the Philippines.

*Q: At the very end of the war.*

WILSON: That's right.

*Q: He was the last one I think wasn't he or very close to that?*

WILSON: I'm not sure. In any event, Williams put very much of his heart and soul into the Philippine assignment and was very much liked - to the extent that some people thought he should run for president of the Philippines.

**HUGH G. APPLING**  
**Political/Military Officer**  
**Manila (1967-1968)**

*Hugh Appling was born and raised in California. He received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of California at Berkeley and then served in the U.S. Army. In 1945, Mr. Appling entered Stanford University for graduate studies in political science. He joined the Foreign Service in 1947. His career included positions in Austria, the United Kingdom (England), Germany, the Philippines, Vietnam, Australia, and Washington, DC. Mr. Appling was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.*

APPLING: Basically, it was to maintain the acceptability of the bases with the populace and the government. It was not hard because Marcos was in absolute control at the time and he was our ally and dependent on us. There was always talk of eliminating the bases but I saw this as trying to get the bases on better terms. Among the tasks I performed was the negotiation of the base labor agreement--the terms under which Philippine nationals were employed by the bases and their relationship with the labor unions, very interesting exercise.

*Q: How did this work out with the American military. They seem to be oblivious to local problems.*

APPLING: It is true of some military personnel particularly those who have only worked on bases at home which they ruled with military authority. However, when I was in Manila, the Defense Department was sensitive politically, and put people in charge who were aware of political reality. They collaborated with the pol/mil officer in the Embassy and I worked closely and easily with the base commanders and their staffs. But there were all kinds of problems. A sentry shot a bicycle thief and the hot question was about jurisdiction.

*Q: How did that play out?*

APPLING: Eventually the Philippines agreed to giving the military commander jurisdiction. They were willing to concede the point as long as the offender left the Philippines at once. It was very touchy. In general, commanders worked very hard with the local authorities.

*Q: How did we view Marcos at that time?*

APPLING: I don't think the embassy had any illusions about Marcos' power and his abuse of it. But at that time we were willing to accept a large measure of it. He was a duly elected president of the country and these were internal matters to a large extent. He was supportive of us in almost every way in the country and in the region. He was useful when the conflict in Vietnam was growing bigger and bigger.

**ROGER G. HARRISON**  
**Consular Officer**  
**Manila (1967-1969)**

*Ambassador Harrison was born and raised in California. He was educated at San Jose State and Claremont Colleges, Oxford University and Freie University in Berlin. Entering the Foreign Service in 1967, Ambassador Harrison served in London, Manila, Warsaw, Manila and Tel Aviv before being named US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Jordan, where he served from 1990 to 1993. He also had postings in Washington, primarily dealing with Political/Military Affairs. Ambassador Harrison was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.*

*Q: I was going to ask did you have any, you know, going through this, what were you picking up in the corridors? You know, where were the hot spots (for foreign service assignments), where do you want to go?*

HARRISON: You know, I think we're entirely ignorant about all that stuff. I mean the thing in the corridors strangely enough, no, I guess that was later. No, I mean everybody was sort of glamour placed. You know, I want to go to London, I want to go to Paris, I want to go to the places that I know. Nobody wanted to go, well, I think the intelligent thing to do out of FSI is go to State, stay home, get mellow for a couple of years and those people that did tended to do very well, and I wish I had done that. I think learning how the building operates is what you should do

and then you should go. I think, in fact, every incoming officer should spend a tour in the building before they go anywhere else so you know what the organization does, which you don't as a junior officer if you go off to the visas which is sui generis. It's what it is. My view of it hasn't changed a lot in the last 35 years, but my expression of that view may have moderated over time. Partly it was a reaction of how it was billed, you know: you'll be making decisions everyday and you won't be just some junior political officer someplace. You'll actually be on the front line. Giving out immigrant visas is a clerk's' job. I never saw the point of it. I mean, you know, they came to me as a vice consul sitting out there on the floor of this vast bureaucracy which was the Philippine consular section with a complete package of stuff in which this whole set of puritan questions that we asked of immigrants had been answered and which, if you had answered, and the one that was most often answered negatively, that is whether you have ever achieved the majority of your income from the proceeds of prostitution.

It's near a big military base, of course, in those days, so we saw a lot of people who had, then they had a waiver from INS from that which was also available. It was a great exercise in hypocrisy. I remember one guy came up once and one of the questions on the form, which I think, had been devised by Cotton Mather was, Do you believe in bigamy? It wasn't what you engaged in, it was whether you believed in it. This guy had put in yes, I do. It turns out he was a Muslim so here I had a chance for a natural substantive question for one of my interviewees. So, I asked him, "Yes," he said, "I am a Muslim I can have four wives." I said, "Well, let me put it to you this way. If you believe in bigamy, you're not a bigamist, are you?" "Oh, I only have one wife." I said, "Well, if you believe in bigamy, then I have to turn down your request. On the other hand, if you change your mind in the next 30 seconds and decide you don't believe in bigamy, then I can give you a visa." So, he had an awakening. But that was about as much substance as there ever was to it. I was working with three Foreign Service, what did we use to call them?

*Q: Locals?*

HARRISON: No, no, there were 20 locals there. No these were stamp officers and they would get through about 10 or 15 of these applications a day and I was sitting out there getting through as many as they could give me because I didn't see anything to do. I couldn't understand the intellectual basis of the activity I was engaged in other than putting the information on the visa. I was not overly happy and I thought I was wasting that year, and the next year, too, although it was intellectually more stimulating because I was doing citizenship, a lot of citizenship there because of that military presence, so I was bitter, but I was lousy at it. I was a lousy consular officer I guess as my supervisors would see me. I was kind of a jerk and not altogether convinced of the seriousness of the enterprise and not very good at it. You know, then I became a non-immigrant visa officer. We used to do about 200 interviews a day, 220 interviews a day, probably on any objective scale, half of them fraudulent, you know, half to 75% were not really intending tourists, politically acceptable to turn down about maybe 10% or 15%. You know, we would plow through these things every day and just cranking them out, sitting on a window on a stool which reminded me of my old A&W Root Beer days where I sat at a window on a stool, too and took orders. I didn't ever think that there was much more substance to it than that.

*Q: What was life like in the Philippines in those days? You were there from what, '67 to '69?*

HARRISON: '67 to '69, yes.

*Q: What was it like, I mean, did you get anything from being sitting on a stool in the consular section?*

HARRISON: Well, we all lived on compounds, most of us right in the city. I lived in an older compound, which had walls, actually it was a kind of a precursor of California today. It had walls and private police forces, all very manicured, all very nice. It was wonderful food, a lot of good restaurants in town and this sort of thin veneer of extremely rich people living extremely well and then this huge vast poverty stricken mass. Actually, it's a shocking thing. We came from California through Hawaii, even with jets in those days I think we were probably 15 hours out of Hawaii when we finally got there. Joanne was pregnant and we had an 18-month year old boy and so it was not a happy trip. When we got there after this incident at the airport which illustrated the situation Hawaii used to be in, which we can talk about, we drove through some of the worst parts of Manila which are around the airport to get to where we were going which eventually was the embassy and then to the Filipinos Hotel. It was then across from the embassy they had put us up. To sort of look at this poverty, which is the first time I'd seen that kind of thing or any Joanne had, people living in sort of corrugated kind of cardboard, vast settlements which are still there and may always be there, I don't know. So, yes, I think there was an impact of that. I think the greater impact of that was my boss's wife, Lou Gleek, was the consul general. She'd come out to the airport. There were a couple others on the plane with the head of the woman's association for the embassy when such things still existed. I guess it would be called the spouse's organization now and there wouldn't be anybody in it, but of course in those days they were quite large organizations. As we came straggling into the waiting lounge waiting for the staff to get our passports stamped we sat with these people and Mrs. Gleek spent the time berating the woman about some mix-up they'd had in the administrative arrangements for getting out there. So, we kind of looked on in stunned disbelief, but it turned out to be her personality. She was a Foreign Service wife of the old school who felt that the other wives in her section were chattel, and one of the wives I think that led to this revision which came four or five years later in the status of spouses in the Foreign Service, which has had some unintended consequences which I think have not been good for the organization, but which, you know, inevitably in the way of social progress were coming anyway. So, we were kind of stunned already and were also jetlagged of course, to our back teeth, and then driving through the worst parts of Manila on the way to where we were going, yes, that is a shock I think. I had seen none of that in Germany in my time. We also of course, dealt socially and so forth with a very rich group of Filipinos. We were in with kind of an upper middle class group of young people, but also every embassy function we would see the upper strata of Philippine society, people with a lot of money. That contrast was the other disturbing thing about the place and I'm sure that is still true, too. But, Manila sort of incorporated that contrast in itself. You could live very well in Manila in those days and many people did.

*Q: How did you get along with the powers that be within the consular section?*

HARRISON: Luckily, there was a man named Lou Crossen who was head of the visa operation and his wife, Maggy who was a wonderful woman who took us under her wing. In fact, I think

the first break in this general gloom that had settled over us in this Filipinos Hotel was when Maggy Crossen showed up at our door, having brought us a maid to look after the kids who in fact stayed with us the whole time we were there. Her name was Anita and she was 18 at the time, but Maggy Crossen who was just full of life and good humor was an angel for us. It was incredible the difference it made meeting Maggy and in fact, I tried to find them when I was sworn in as ambassador to invite them, but couldn't locate them. I think they may have been dead by then. Lou who as a very nice guy who was my, he wasn't my immediate boss, he was head of the operation. I was the vice consul. I had a couple of intermediate bosses, but also like him. All of that was fine. Lou Gleek who was the head of the consular section was a disappointed political officer who had had something happen in his career, which had been meteoric, but had stopped being meteoric four or five years before. He was just on the brink of being selected as an O-2 in the old system and didn't know which way he was going to go. So, we had that. He was on tenterhooks my first year and probably not at his best. He made an occasional shot at showing me the ropes, but you know, I think he was not in a good place in his career. It was a difficult time for him and he was married to Kyra, which would have been a trial in my view at any time. From that point of view, it was not a happy circumstance. In fact I discovered that I had thought I was getting along better with some of the supervisors than they thought, and I got very bad efficiency reports in Manila partly because, as I say, there was a certain jerkiness to my nature which offended people and partly because I wasn't very good at the work. I was intellectually dismissive of it and I think not a good attitude to take. I got an automatic promotion the first year that everybody got from 7 to 6. I'd come in as a 7 and then I stopped getting promoted for a long time and based in part on those Manila efficiency reports. On the back end of them, do you remember, they used to have two parts, one that you saw and one that you didn't. It was easy to get blindsided in those days and all of that was changed, too, in that general reform in the early '70s. So, you could go back and look at the part that you couldn't look at. There was an efficiency report in there that would have sunk Foy Kohler that had been written about a period they'd had a gap in my efficiency reports for two or three months, which was longer than the gap you're supposed to have. This was written in retrospect at the end of my tour by an officer who had not found me to be an engaging individual and so he did his best to do me in. Eventually I got it out of my packet, but not before I had gone through a long almost selected out process, kind of hanging on by the skin of my teeth for years.

*Q: Did you get any feel, I realize that this is a huge consular section and all, and you were buried in the bowels of that, did you get any feel for either the ambassador or the American Philippines relations in that period?*

HARRISON: Well, some yes, because one of the things I did was occasionally sub for the special assistant to the ambassador. This guy named Bruce Apt, who showed up interestingly enough on a documentary about Silicone Valley, he is now a psychiatrist out there. The angst of getting very wealthy very quick -- he treats people like that, which must be a very lucrative thing to do. But in those days he was a FSO and he was the ambassador's aide. Blair, was there, William McCormick Blair who was an aristocratic man in the best sense. I had had some dealings with him. Actually the first time we met him we were invited to a movie screening. We used to get Hollywood films, first runs before they were released. He got a very good movie called In the Heat of the Night and it was showing at the embassy. We were invited. Joanne was pregnant and during the showing her feet swelled up so she couldn't get her shoes back on. She'd

taken them off and she couldn't get them back on. So, we had to come back out through the reception line. She was barefoot. Of course, in those days we thought that sort of thing would do you in for good. She was really upset about having to walk through barefoot, but try as she might she couldn't get those shoes back on. So, walk through barefoot and she did. The McCormick Blairs were extremely gracious about that and everything. They were very gracious people. They had old money. He was replaced by G. Mennen Williams as ambassador; he had been governor of Michigan, carried a lot of water at the '60 campaign for Kennedy and at the nominating convention was rewarded with an ambassadorship to Manila and was a politician to the marrow of his bones who kept behaving as a politician once he got to the Philippines. Part of that was, he wanted to go everywhere and shake hands with everybody. So, he did and he wore out Bruce Apt who was supposed to go with him. Various of us were delegated to take over and go places with Mennen Williams. I made two or three trips. One actually fascinating trip I made with Mennen Williams was up to Angeles for a funeral. It turns out that Benito Aquino who was now I guess mostly forgotten but was later to play a key role in Philippine history.

*Q: Oh yes, his assassination and his wife's ascendance.*

HARRISON: At any rate, we went up to this funeral and I found out some of the down sides of being an ambassador. One was that you were in the place of honor always so in the funeral cortège you were right behind the exhaust pipe of this 1955 Cadillac hearse as it winded its way in a 105 degree sultry day to Angeles City which seemed to me to be 20 or 30 miles. I was actually getting lightheaded because there was this great press of people. There's no way of getting out of the way of this exhaust of this hearse. After that we went up to the compound, the Rimaldas compound. She was a Rimaldas, he did not come from money, but she came from enormous money. We flew into this compound that the Rimaldas family had in central Luzon with sugar. They had built for each member of the family this huge house in a compound in a circle around a circular wall around which they had built a golf course for their own use, which Robert Trent Jones designed. I think that was one of the. I've met some really rich people since then, but you begin to see what really rich people, how they live and he came out and we had a long talk with him you know, and I sat there. Part of my job, I had this briefcase full of paperweights. In those days they were plastic paperweights with a bust of Lyndon Johnson inside. Bronze bust of Lyndon Johnson. Not the world's handsomest man. Not something you want staring at you from your desk, but this we handed out. We handed these things out and medals and beads and bits of colored glass. I was the guy who followed along sort of giving this out as Mennen Williams shook hands, but I also went to this meeting with him. Then as we were leaving, Aquino said, "Well, I want you to meet my wife." So, off to the kitchen he goes and back he comes with Cora who's been fixing the food and she's shy and she's wiping her hands. I'll never forget on her apron as she walks out to shake hands with the American ambassador and for me it's always been a little bit symbolic of the social change since then that it turned out that we were talking to the wrong guy. We should have been out in the kitchen talking to her. Also, in some ways for me symbolic of the Philippines that he would have been assassinated on the ramp of the airplane. I think only the Filipinos would have thought that they could have gotten away with that.

*Q: It's just incredible. I mean, you know, the stupidity of that.*



HARRISON: Yes, and it was. It was a strain of absolutely profound stupidity of the ruling class in the Philippines. Impenetrable stupidity. It was which I think was never better exemplified, but Aquino was an exception to that. You know, he was an alert guy and an educated guy and I think a genuine informer although he was operating in a system where people were getting killed. Then we were at the funeral where one of his bodyguards had been shot, someone we were encouraging and but, you know, fate plays interesting tricks. It was actually she who becomes Prime Minister. He was cut off early.

*Q: Was Ferdinand Marcos or Imelda Marcos in the picture at that time?*

HARRISON: They were, still democratically elected, still darlings in Washington in those days. Imelda was seen as kind of Jackie of the Philippines, beautiful, beauty queen, gracious, well dressed and although of course, we had made a point of at the time, well shod. It was two or three years later that he decided the democratic process had become inconvenient, but there were already signs of corruption. He was moving to take over, for example, the Lopez family properties that he coveted. It was a kind of family oriented power grab going on from his family and its associates even then and of course, the corruption was endemic. Actually, it leads to an interesting story because the Humphrey-Nixon election took place when I was there and the reason it leads to that story is because all these families ran their own television stations. It was a mark of prestige and also politically useful. There were more television stations in Manila than in Washington, DC in those days. Desperately hard up for things to put on so you saw a lot of old farmer cartoons from the '30s and anything else they could get their hands on. They were mostly there for election campaigns. In election campaigns of which they got very active with political propaganda and they were also running on the largest network in the country 24 hour election coverage. So, they came to the embassy and asked for people to come over and be moderators for the election coverage and I was one of the guys chosen. I don't remember what the process was to go over and be one of the anchormen, one of two for this all day election coverage that we did with interviews and you know, we had a big map of states and we were awarding them. Actually we got tired late at night and started awarding them arbitrarily. Until then, based on ticker stuff coming in and so I became a television celebrity briefly in the Philippines as a result of that. It just leads back to the families and the fact that there were all these TV stations for this reason. He was still a democratically elected leader. I was not moving in those social circles, but I saw him a couple of times at general things that the embassy did. I thought it was interesting. Mennen Williams who wanted to fit in as a politician used to come to work in barang pallagos which were these heavily embroidered shirts that were formalwear in the Philippines whereas Marcos always wore a business suit to the office. We would many times have our ambassador in Philippines native dress talking to Marcos actually in French native dress, that is very expensive French suits that he wore, which felt really peculiar to me. I think it was a lesson to me about going native, which when that became an issue later I always staunchly resisted doing it. But he was a very nice man. He had a great skill, which I found later I didn't have, of sleeping whenever he had time to sleep. If he had 10 minutes, he could sleep for 10 minutes. Churchill had that, too. It's an enormous advantage bureaucratically to be able to do that. He was always very nice to me. He didn't look at me as a substantive part of his team, but traveling with him, which I did a couple of times, gave me an insight into sort of what ambassadors do and it wasn't altogether attractive to me at the time. All the schmoozing that has to go on. He was wonderful at it. He went to places in the Philippines where even the people there were a little uncertain about where

they were and he got out and shook hands and handed out trophies and Johnson paperweights. I remember we went up once to where there is a concrete marker where the Big Red One, a mission division, had come out of the hills of central Luzon after a terrific campaign in the Philippines in '44. They had lost a lot of people so they had erected this; well it was just cement about four feet high. It had been neglected. It was in this -- outside this -- Filipino village at the foot of the mountains, this concrete pillar painted kind of red, but that had worn away over the years. I don't think anybody visited this thing in decades, but he did. Up we went and the village was just astounded, an American ambassador had never been within 100 miles of there in any direction, but he did. He was marvelous. He just had a politician's drive and a politician's gift; no hand should go unshaken. I greatly admired him for that.

*Q: Did the Vietnam War intrude at all while you were in the Philippines?*

HARRISON: Oh, very little. I was still in contact with a lot of my classmates. A lot of them had gone CORDS (Civil Operations and Redevelopment Support Program) which was the program for Foreign Service officers who had gone off from our class to Vietnamese training and then gone to Vietnam as province deputy or assistant province advisors. We had a guy come into our class from the CORDS program to proselytize for CORDS and he's wearing a sidearm to show you that this was pretty macho stuff, none of this pantywaist Foreign Service officer business that the rest of the class was going to go to, but I had a wife and two kids. CORDS which was not a company in those days didn't have much appeal for me and I didn't go, but they did. For example, after Tet, one of them sent me a piece of the facade that had been blown off the embassy. One of these concrete hunks of plaster they have which I had on my desk for a long time. I don't know what happened to it. A lot of wives were there unaccompanied because of you know, there was a lot of activity. The way it impinged on me was that the fleet was based out of Subic Bay and the other side of Luzon from Manila and would come in every, I guess, they would be a couple of months on station, Yankee Station, and on to Vietnam to do flight outs for that time and then the liberty port was along Subic Bay and the fleet would hit along and 10,000 to 15,000 sailors who'd been in very dangerous and extremely hardworking situations on those carriers, and the men -- which they all were -- it was just a fantastic thing when they would come ashore. The Filipinos had constructed outside, and this was much truer than in Angeles City, which was the air force, which you know, they were there, but the navy guys weren't. When they came ashore and went into this bordello community which is what Blanco was, the mile long strip of bars, it created a scene that I hope never to see again, but was germane to my work. Well, it wasn't really, but it created a lot of those marriages which I later had to give the wives were going back to the States and I had to give them visas. The legal officers over there became friends of mine because they would call up and say, "We're sending down Corporal Smith with his wife." The navy would do investigations of the girls by Filipino employees, who would go off and sort of document their history in the flesh trades before they met these guys.

*Q: You were saying it was all a silent process?*

HARRISON: Well you can imagine, 15,000 sailors hit the beach all at once, deprived of women and liquor and even relaxation for three months and they're all in their early '20s. It was a scene out of Dante. It was incredible. So, I would be invited by the legal officers there, (one of whom was just our guest for Thanksgiving, these are enduring friendships) to go down and take a look

to review this situation. Incredible -- and also on the base. Those bases in those days were set up as R&R bases so they had riding stables, they had fabulous golf courses, they had pretty much any activity, they had baseball diamonds, there were country clubs; Subic Bay obviously should be fitting and so forth, but for the people on R&R from Vietnam they were wonderful places. It impinged on me to that regard, but to that degree. I never went there. Vietnam passed over me since I never served there and I was never in the military and I was never an active anti-war protestor and I was kind of removed from that experience.

*Q: You weren't picking up having a strong opinion about what to do there and all that?*

HARRISON: No, I was never a radical. I remember we went up to one of those backup pieces back in '64, the free speech movement at Berkeley and I was at San Jose. So, we drove up to Berkeley to kind of hang around and went to a teach in which is you know, kind of a cultural icon now and went in front of Sproul Hall and you know, looked at all the sort of blooms and things. At that time, I'll never forget it, I mean San Jose State was a conventional place. Fraternities and sororities were big, madras shirts and the women would spend a lot of time dressing before they came to school. When I taught, I went back to Calera College and taught a couple of times and you know, the only way to tell the students from the people who lived under the bridge was that the students were carrying books. Otherwise, the dress code was exactly the same and the degree of cleanliness, too. In '65 when this change began, it was a two-hour process I'm sure for women to get ready to go to class and I mean, they looked good. They were dressed and the boys, I guess we called ourselves in those days, were, too. I wore jeans to school. That was a big thing. That was as radical as I ever got, but it was unusual. Also, a backpack, a canvas backpack to carry my books around which was so unusual that my wife's cousin seeing me with this thing told her about it as an indication that I was not good marriage fodder.

*Q: Well, then here you were coming out, did you, what was your experience? I mean you had two kids, you had to have money and you were in a job where you were getting money. Did you feel this was for you or were you dubious?*

HARRISON: Oh, no, I was very dubious. I mean, certainly consular work wasn't for me. I always counted the days. I knew I wanted to be a political officer and there was no possibility of that for my first two years. So, I saw it as a necessary hurdle to get over and I was really, I thought I was wasting my time in broader career terms and in life terms. I was making money, but what was I making? I think I was probably up to \$9,000 a year, but we had to maintain an establishment. We had two maids. You know, we'd come out of a situation in graduate school where we used to put the baby in its baby seat on the dryer and put a towel in there so it would shake around and books around to brace him and turn on the cycle so he'd shut up for half an hour so I could do some studying. Suddenly we had a lavandera and an amah and a dressmaker and all this stuff. We were always broke. We were sort of living a life of someone with much more money than we had, but we didn't have much, we didn't have any. No, the money wasn't good. Everybody I knew was making more money back in real life and were doing more interesting things than I was doing. I was a vice consul, which was a title that impressed people. The relatives were pleased, but the actual work, that wasn't what I saw myself doing.

*Q: Did you have any problems while you were in the Philippines with people coming to you for visas and all that?*

HARRISON: Oh, yes. That was huge. That's all anybody ever wanted to talk to you about. I mean, it was, once they found out you were a vice consul. I'm sure if you talk to a vice consul in Manila today it would be exactly the same. It is. That was your social cache, that was your entree. That's why you got invitations, that's why people wanted to know you. That was a huge part of Filipino society, that visa process. And all the travel agents, too. In fact one of the innovations that I suggested and implemented was to make the travel agents wear their license on their shirts when they were inside the compound because before that they'd been filling up our waiting room coaching the applicants before they went to the window. So, no, that was, I mean, yes, that was another part of it I disliked. I mean, who wants to be sort of seen as the font of all travel documents. It's not a happy thing to get involved in. It was always at the edge of every personal relationship you had with a Filipino.

*Q: From your observation, was there a problem of the officers who were coming to the lure of money, sex, and prestige, what have you? You know, in other words was this something that you were watching from the side or not?*

HARRISON: I don't know of any case of that. There was a lot of it going on in Warsaw which was my next post, but and I guess after I left they uncovered a huge ring among the national employees in a Manila visa sale ring. I'm sure it was going on. It almost inevitably would be happening, but I never had any immediate experience of it. Certainly blandishments were offered from every hand, but you know, in that circumstance there will be people who are taking advantage. It wasn't obvious. Later in Warsaw it was more than obvious. It was sort of everyday cocktail party chatter, but that wasn't true in Manila. The one thing that was true in Manila that I should add about that experience is that as I said the people who went to the going away function; I mean we all went to the ambassador's residence for the welcome to post and then we all came back for the departure thing. There were a lot of people that I saw only twice in my Manila experience. Once at the hello and once at the goodbye. So, we had a good group of friends there, but that place was vast and you only knew 5% of the people you were serving with.

*Q: Okay, I think this is probably a good place to stop now. We'll pick this up in 1969 when you're off to Warsaw. Great and we'll talk about that.*

HARRISON: Okay.

**DAVID C. MCGAFFEY**  
**Visa Officer**  
**Manila (1967-1969)**

*David C. McGaffey was born in Michigan in 1941. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit in 1964. His career has included positions*

*in Farah, Manila, Kabul, Tabriz, Isfahan, Teheran, and Georgetown. Mr. McGaffey was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 1995.*

*Q: Where did you go?*

McGAFFEY: To Manila in the Philippines. The president of the Philippines was Ferdinand Marcos, elected and subject to normal electoral things.

*Q: This was from when to when you were in Manila?*

McGAFFEY: From '67 to '69. The place was something of a shambles with private gangs and shootings on a daily basis. People were feeling as if they lived on Capitol Hill.

*Q: Talking about the crime problem in Washington D.C. at that time.*

McGAFFEY: While I was there, professionally it was a wonderful job. This was the year that congress abolished the old immigration law that assigned numbers on the basis of previous immigration and there was what they called the triangle in Asia, the Asia-Pacific triangle, which was limited to 100 immigrant visas a year. They abolished it and went by a date system which meant that Manila had a backlog of some 45,000 approved petitions for immigrant visas. They had drastically expanded the consular section and I and four others went out there to join the three that were there. While I was there in the two years it was expanded to 15 and I found myself chief of a section supervising seven FSOs and about 20 Filipinos. Almost immediately I was given real responsibility.

*Q: Could you talk about the type of work you were doing and maybe some examples?*

McGAFFEY: The principal focus and the requirement was to process people for immigrant visas. The backlog was huge of people who had family, friends, relatives, jobs in the States and had applied and been approved but were waiting for numbers. Our job was just to get as many through the gate as possible and weed out those who had what was necessary and what not. One section was just interviewing and processing, and going through the paperwork setting up processes to get the paperwork out of the inefficient Philippine system to assist them. I was in charge of that section which kept expanding until one day when I was called into the ambassador's office. The consul general was there and some people from the FBI and the head of the regional INS office were there. They said they had some questions to ask me and the ambassador said "You don't have the legal obligation to answer these questions at this point but I would appreciate it if you would."

*Q: Who was the ambassador by the way?*

McGAFFEY: We had four ambassadors in the two years. I believe this was the former general, the youngest general, I can't remember his name. He was there just for a short time and then was replaced by Soapy Williams.

*Q: He was also ambassador to South Africa. We can add that.*

McGAFFEY: I had no idea what was going on but I answered the questions. It turned out that a plane load of people had arrived on a charter flight from the Philippines to Miami and had gotten off clutching their little yellow envelopes which when they tore the ribbons and opened, they found full of empty blank paper. Each of them said they had been interviewed by vice consul David C. McGaffey, paid him the \$500, and had gotten their visas from him. They were interviewing me to find out what exactly this was all about. It turned out that a representative of a veterans organization had been given office space in the consulate. He had scheduled these interviews during the lunch hour and would walk in and borrow my nameplate. He had issued some 5,000 immigrant visas which were supposed to include transportation but one group of people were impatient to go and instead of waiting for his arranged transportation they chartered a plane on their own.

At any rate, to cool things off for a while they shifted me over to head of the American services which was still immigrant visas. My job was to counsel all the American soldiers based in the Philippines or in Vietnam who had found a friendly young lady outside Angeles Air Base. Despite all these rumors about her being a prostitute they decided to marry her and take her home to mom and the kids. I had to interview them about her criminal record and ensure that they wanted to apply for a waiver which was not one of the most pleasant jobs.

*Q: At that time the law prohibited anyone who had been engaged in prostitution from being eligible for a visa and the only way to get it was to get a special waiver through their congressmen. The congressmen weren't delighted in having to do this sort of thing. What happened to the veterans administrator there?*

McGAFFEY: He had planned to leave about a month later but the FBI arrested him and charged him in the United States with fraud and misrepresentation. He was also charged in the Philippines. He had his choice of pleading guilty and being taken back to the United States to be sentenced in the U.S. courts or trying his luck in the Philippine courts. He pleaded guilty and asked for deportation.

*Q: What about other corruption because the Philippines has been renowned over the years for the problem of corruption? Did you or the officers you were serving with run across this type of thing?*

McGAFFEY: Yes and no. It was pervasive. There was a lot of anti-American feeling at the time. There was a noted television commentator who was doing an exposé series on those terrible people in the American consulate and was tearing down the character of person after person. He went through 14 officers and he concluded by saying, giving the list of 14 names, "and their ilk." Everybody turned to me and they gave me a little sign for my desk saying "their ilk." Everybody was wondering why he had not mentioned my name. I found out his niece was the fifth down in the pile of applications in front of me.

We were advised not to say what exactly our duties were out in public because if we did we would be inundated with requests, gifts, or what have you. On the other hand it was very mild and good humored. With the exception of this American who had accumulated very large sums

of money, mostly it was a matter of just juggling for a little bit of extra advantage. People were quite happy about being told no if it was done politely and they were not surprised when things didn't work out.

We did have arrested one man for consular fraud then we finally decided that we couldn't press charges and just had him cautioned and released. What he was doing was going down the line of applicants outside saying "I have a friend inside and if you pay me x amount of pesos I will give your name to him and he'll do his best and probably get you the visa. But I'll tell you what, it won't cost you a thing unless you get the visa. If you get the visa, you just pay me the equivalent of \$100 and if not, no harm done." So he signed up hundreds of people for this. He had nobody inside the consulate but some of them got visas and some didn't. Those who got visas were paying him the money assuming that he had done something. He certainly had not broken any U.S. law and it was very hard to figure out any charge that fit.

*Q: Who was in charge of the consular section when you were there?*

McGAFFEY: The consul general was a man named Lou Gleek. His wife was one of the famous dragon ladies. She assembled all of the wives of the new junior officers and declared them, in writing, her kindergarten and assigned them tasks like doing her laundry for her.

*Q: I thought that they had sort of passed.*

McGAFFEY: No, that was very much that day, which was why when I came back to the Department I joined the group that negotiated with the undersecretary for management about the status of spouses, wives at the time, and wrote for him the new Foreign Service policy on wives which he accepted.

*Q: Returning once again, you had the general whose name I forget but a very important man, Soapy Williams and who else was ambassador while you were there?*

McGAFFEY: I never met the man who was ambassador when I arrived [William McCormack Blair, Jr.]. He was just leaving and he was too high up to bother with a vice consul. There was a long interregnum and then the general came. He got reassigned and there was another interregnum and then Soapy Williams came. Soapy I knew from Michigan. I knew his family, knew his kids. He didn't think much about being an ambassador. He was a stump politician expert at making friends and influencing people so he said to the Foreign Service staff, "You take care of this embassy stuff, I'm going to go out and make friends." He stumped throughout the Philippines and was a wonderful personality.

*Q: Although you were in the consular section, and in a way almost not, but your responsibility was not political reporting but obviously you are sitting there talking to people more than probably anyone else, the consular officers. You were also talking to the young political officers who were dealing with the Marcos regime. At this time, we're talking '67 to '69, what was the impression of the Marcos regime? These things change over the decades but at that time what was it?*

McGAFFEY: The young political officers who I did talk to were not allowed to write anything or even look into anything about the Marcos regime, that was the job of the senior officer. They were assigned to extremely focused tasks of monitoring publications of this labor union or the other. I and a group of others started a group (I've even forgotten what we called it) which made ourselves available for speeches and discussions at universities. We went out on weekends and evenings to meet with what turned out to be almost always economic clubs at all the universities discussing U.S./Philippine relations. Nobody from the political section was ever interested in anything we heard at these.

In general my impression, and those of the other younger officers, was that people in the Philippines believed that the society was breaking down and that something had to be done or it was all going to collapse. There was a great deal of fear, a great deal of pessimism about the future. University students were interested in leaving. University faculty was interested in leaving. The maids were interested in leaving. A major career choice was to get into the U.S. Navy as a steward so that you could apply for citizenship. The warlords, economic or military, were taking over. The government had no authority outside the capital city. The military was believed to be corrupt. It was just a nasty situation and they were looking for a strongman, somebody on a white horse, to come and rescue them. Marcos was seen as personally a good man, a good war reputation, a try-er whose hands were tied by a corrupt legislature. His wife was seen as glamorous, exciting, a Jackie Kennedy type figure. As things got worse and worse and worse, it seemed fairly apparent that somebody would take over so it was not a surprise to me that it was Marcos, but he was only one of several candidates.

The system was not working, it was broken. The main street that the embassy was on was lined with things called day and night clubs. They had a prominent sign as you entered saying "gentlemen are requested to deposit their weapons here" and their armed bouncers who would not let you into the club until you deposited your guns with the gun check girl. This was daily life. The son of the consul was shot by a friend of his showing off the new gun that his daddy had given him. Despite the ambassador's recommendation, they chose to take him to court. He was convicted, sentenced to a fine and a certain period of probation. When they came out of court he ran over to the consul's son who had just gotten out of the hospital from a bullet wound in the stomach and said, "Hey, no hard feelings buddy and look what Daddy just gave me." He pulled out a brand new pistol that his father had given him as a recompense for this terrible ordeal of going to court. Society had broken down. I don't know what the official embassy image was.

**RUTH MCLENDON**  
**Philippine Desk Officer**  
**Washington DC (1967-1969)**

*Ruth McLendon was born in Texas in 1929. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University in 1949 and her master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1950. Her postings abroad following her entry into the Foreign Service in 1951 include Sao Paulo, Manila, Adelaide,*



*Rangoon, Bangkok and Paris. Ms. McLendon was interviewed in 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: Then you moved in '67, was it?*

McLENDON: In January of '67 I moved to the Philippine desk.

*Q: The Philippine desk. You were on the Philippine desk from '67 until when?*

McLENDON: Until I went to the War College in '69.

*Q: In this time what was the state of our relations with the Philippines?*

McLENDON: Incomplete effort to break the colonial ties. I had been in Manila. That was my first post as an officer. We had at the time negotiated the Langley Agreement, which would set up a preferential trade status for the Philippines. No, I'm sorry, the Philippines had preferential trade status from the time of independence. The Langley Agreement was supposed to begin to phase that out and it continued special preferences for American investors, special positions for American investors in the Philippines. When I had been on the Philippine desk we were facing the renegotiation of Langley and we had renegotiated the bases agreement, the military bases agreement, the other major source of problems for us in '65 I guess it was and we were satisfied with the renegotiation. I'm not sure. The Philippines thought they were satisfied until we came down to the finer points of interpretation. The Philippines was then and so far as I know still is, unsure of just how much they want to be independent of us. At the time I was serving in Manila, I think any honest poll of the Philippine public would have shown a majority preferred to remain with us or preferably become an American state. Even those who were most nationalistic in their talk were nervous about being on their own. They still had an inferiority complex. They didn't think they could survive in Asia with communists in control of China without us right there with our military. They didn't like to survive without a lot of assistance from us in addition to the packet that they automatically got with the bases. We were trying to roll back on that relationship and normalize it to put an end to this special relationship. Our military were perfectly happy with that special relationship as long as they needed their bases.

*Q: Well, then to put it in fairer terms, I mean this was at the height of Vietnam.*

McLENDON: Oh, this was at the height of the Vietnam War.

*Q: Subic Bay and Clark Field were absolute key bases.*

McLENDON: And the State Department we recognized that. We said, once Vietnam is over, then we can normalize, then we can talk about it and see whether we need those bases and see what, but no, we weren't talking. We were trying to encourage the Filipinos to think in terms of ending a special relationship. They talked about it a lot, but they didn't want to. I was lucky enough at that time to work with one of the smartest men I've ever known, Hoyt Price. Did you ever know Hoyt?

*Q: No. Hoyt Price?*

McLENDON: Hoyt Price, an economist. He had his Ph.D. in economics, but above his Foreign Service experience and his depth of knowledge in economics and his understanding of human nature, he had the soundest common sense of any man I've ever run across. When I talked with him I was curious about what we were going to do about the Langley agreement, what our position would be. I talked with Hoyt, what are we going to do to preserve these privileges, he said, "We're perfectly prepared to let Langley lapse and not replace it with any agreement. We are not prepared to give special preferences because the Philippines have to learn to compete." I said, "What about American investors?" He said, "Our position is that if the Philippines wants investments they will know what to do to make their country attractive to investors." I said, "Is this going to mean a lot of trouble?" He said, "If the Philippines wants investors, they will have to create the conditions for them. If they don't, if they really don't want that American investment, there isn't a treaty we could write with them that would be worth the paper its written on." I thought absolutely right. Absolutely right.

*Q: Yes.*

McLENDON: We sat down several times with them to negotiate and when it came to the final round, the negotiations collapsed because we wouldn't budge. Their chief negotiator requested an emergency appointment, an immediate appointment with the Secretary and of course was given it to appeal, make this desperate appeal, don't let this these preferences go.

*Q: Anything happen?*

McLENDON: No, the opposition was firm that on the basis of, of course we were paying heavily for the bases, we paid through the nose for the Philippines, what did they call it? Civil action?

*Q: Civil action group.*

McLENDON: Group.

*Q: In Vietnam.*

McLENDON: Yes. We wanted a shopping list. We wanted the numbers of how many countries were actively supporting us in Vietnam and their price tag on that one was just out of reason.

*Q: Quite a few Filipinos were working as third country nationals in Vietnam. I mean they and the Koreans were the two big groups that helped us maintain our forces there by working in the shops.*

McLENDON: That is still a major source of foreign exchange for the Philippines, a major cash income for the Philippines.

*Q: Yes.*

McLENDON: I mean not in Vietnam, but I'm thinking more of Saudi Arabia and places like that.

*Q: Were there senators or congressmen closely identified with the Philippines who got to you all the time?*

McLENDON: Well, it wasn't that they got to us all the time. The one who got to us all the time was the deputy under secretary of the air force. He was called up about every other day and was livid over something that had happened on the bases. We had a couple of nasty incidents on the bases when I was there. The first one involved a guard at Langley Point Naval Air Station who shot a Filipino who was trying to steal a bicycle and because he was armed only with a 45 killed him and you can't do much else with a 45, can you if you hit? It was one of those things. By the time we even had the embassy's cables reporting it, the Pentagon had already been geared up into action and we had Senator Russell's office calling and this senator's office and that congressman's office and they were all hauling out the big guns. The embassy very much wanted to give the Philippines jurisdiction over that case. Under the '65 bases agreement, the old bases agreement had been a question of whether an incident had occurred on base or off base and the '65 agreement was I think the one Japanese agreement. It was a question of whether the military personnel were on duty or off duty, if they were acting in performance of duties, then we had jurisdiction. In this case there was the proviso if his action while on duty clearly exceeded the bounds of his official duties. The argument that the embassy wanted to make was that his shooting the young man as he did in the torso and killing him was excessive use of force. Again, this is where Hoyt's common sense was our strength. When we talked about it with him at first I was eager to go with the embassy to demonstrate that we could give up jurisdiction. We trusted their judgment and Hoyt just looked at me and said, "If you were in the Philippines without diplomatic immunity, would you want to be tried in a Philippine court under those circumstances?" I said, "No." He said, "The Pentagon will never, never agree to that." He had a great deal of sympathy with it and when I thought about it I did, too because the young man had a good record. He had served with honor in Vietnam and I think he had been wounded. It was not a case of just a wild drunk or anything of that kind. So, the end result was that we took it. Our ambassador at the time was Governor Williams, Soapy Williams, an awfully nice guy, and just the nicest guy in the world. When we indicated that it was not going to be a clear cut, quick decision in favor of the embassy's point of view, he insisted on coming back to fight his own battle. It just consisted of having, talking to enough people and sitting in on enough meetings that he saw that there was no way. We tried to use what leverage we could to say all right, we'll agree that we have to claim jurisdiction, but you've got to clean up your act and for heavens sake, arm those guards with something less lethal than a 45 and give them clearer instructions and so forth.

It was a fascinating look into our relations, the heart of our relations with the Philippines and with the Pentagon. Just as I left the Philippine desk to go to the War College, there was another shooting. Oh, I'm sorry, as a result of the outcry over that case, the Philippines renounced the '65 agreement and we went back to the original bases agreement, the on base, off base. Then the next case that came up with a shooting that occurred on Clark Field or Subic, one of our personnel had been out in the jungle area on base shooting, hunting for wild pig. He shot a Filipino who was I guess bare from the waist up and to him he thought he looked like a wild pig. It was altogether a much worse shooting than the other one.

*Q: Let me just stop here.*

McLENDON: It was altogether a much worse case than the other one, but the Filipinos accepted it our claim of jurisdiction because it was on base. They had to.

*Q: What type of government, who did the Filipinos have at that time and what was our impression or your impression of it, who was the chief of state and what?*

McLENDON: This was during the earlier years of Marcos, Ferdinand Marcos. Washington was very high on him because he supported us in Vietnam and he had a beautiful wife and many of our leaders found her very charming. He frequently sent her back to Washington. She came two or three times a year during the time I was on the desk she was there. He didn't come at all. Our former consul general in Manila, Lewis Carson, had retired in Manila and had known Marcos quite well when he was a congressman and wrote for us an in-depth assessment of the man that was quite the most revealing I've ever read of any foreign leader. It was one of the first things that Hoyt gave me to read when I was reading in on the desk and after I'd read it I wanted to sit down and talk to him about it. I said, "I've read this." He said, "What do you think of it?" I said, "It's a great study, but why is everyone so high on Marcos?" He said, "What do you think of him based on this?" I said, "I thought he's very bright and he's a very shrewd politician, but I don't trust him. This is a man who could end democracy in the Philippines. I don't see any merit to him." I thought it was all there in that study if you read it closely enough. Again, this was something Hoyt and I agreed on, but we didn't go around trying to smear the chief of state of our area of responsibility. We didn't have the facts. We only had these hunches and then later, began to get the reports from American businessmen who had been there with experience of 30 years in the Philippines. They were saying we're accustomed to the Philippines and its ways and we're accustomed to paying the cut, but this administration is really beyond bounds. We had all of these warnings. That's why I couldn't understand once the Vietnam War was over why we still continued to be so tied to the Marcos regime because by then they had done away with elections.

*Q: Did you get any, was there any change in our attitude towards the Philippines, you were there during a major transition from the Johnson administration to the Nixon administration.*

McLENDON: Yes.

*Q: Did you get any feel for a difference?*

McLENDON: No.

*Q: Because we were involved in the war.*

McLENDON: There couldn't be that much difference because as long as we were dependent on those bases. We did what we could to make sure that Nixon was aware of Marcos and of the problems with his regime and to beware of Imelda. Do you remember that Nixon made that trip in July, I think it was July of '69 through Asia and Manila was one of his stops.

*Q: Yes, and he went to Guam and this was where he articulated the Vietnamese doctrine I think.*

McLENDON: Yes. Well, of course the Philippines were not high on his list of priorities at the time, but it was necessary for him to stop there because of the relationship. We prepared the briefing papers and our guidelines from the White House were to make them short and punchy and avoid diplomatic language. We took them at their word and tried to do just that, but the sixth floor used a red pencil on our efforts. They wouldn't let me describe Imelda Marcos, compare her to Eva Peron or Madam Nhu.

*Q: Were you getting anything from your Filipino contacts, how they regarded the Vietnam War and our involvement in it?*

McLENDON: In the Philippines?

*Q: Yes.*

McLENDON: They were terrified of communists. They had fought and were still to a degree fighting their own communist rebellion. In general they supported us in Vietnam, but I think like all of the states that were close to us in Southeast Asia they were becoming very nervous that we weren't doing better in Vietnam. Perhaps not as early as '69. I think I'm reading too much in that from my experiences later in Thailand.

**FRANCIS M. KINNELLY**  
**Economic/Commercial Officer**  
**Manila (1967-1970)**

*Francis M. Kinnelly was born in Brooklyn, New York in October of 1935. Mr. Kinnelly received a bachelor's degree in European history from Bowdoin College in European history in 1957 and a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Mr. Kinnelly then entered the U.S. Army, serving in Korea from 1960-1961. His Foreign Service career included positions in Manila, Bonn, and Madrid. Mr. Kinnelly was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 6, 1997.*

*Q: You were in Manila from - was it still '66 or was it '67?*

KINNELLY: It was '67.

*Q: '67 until...*

KINNELLY: Until summer of 1970.

*Q: From your perspective, when you got to the Philippines in 1967, what was the political situation in the Philippines, America's role there?*

KINNELLY: Marcos was in power. This was before he declared martial law. People were pleased that there was a more stable political environment, but there was still a good deal of anarchy. People were worried about communist insurgency, for there was even some of this fairly close, between Manila and Clarke Field. Filipinos carried arms under their long barong shirts. One time, I was sitting down to lunch with a Philippine businessman when his small 32 revolver clunked onto the floor. We were warned that if there was a car accident, not to argue with a Filipino because he'd probably be better armed than we were. There were signs when you boarded a plane: "Please check your arms with the stewardess," that sort of thing. We perceived some sense of corruption, but it wasn't the endemic type that came later. There was a growing movement of Philippine nationalism. To some degree, it was against the US, certainly against the Chinese. The Japanese had not yet come into the country following the war. So, we didn't have a feeling of being picked out because we were Americans, but more the sense of a strong revival of Philippine identity. One of my major responsibilities was to assist the U.S. companies there in being able to carry on their business in good fashion. They had been given special rights in the post-war agreements, the Laurel-Langley Agreements, that set up an independent Philippines. The Philippine government wanted to do away with these rights - rights, for example, to own land for commercial purposes. Other foreigners did not have these rights. There were a lot of small U.S. companies that had been there since the '30s or earlier, single proprietorships or small companies, plantations owned by Americans. We were trying in the Embassy to seek modifications of Philippine regulations or slow the movement of Philippine lawmaking that would restrict American firms, but I was also trying to help the American companies on an individual basis.

We had a small trade promotion operation going in the embassy which I never saw before or since. We had a large room devoted to a trade exhibits area. U.S. companies interested in getting into the Philippine market were encouraged by Department of Commerce field offices in the States to send us samples of their products. We would send out information on the exhibits, invite Philippine distributors to come and see these products. We had baseball bats, games, gardening tools, all sorts of wares the Commerce Department had encouraged U.S. companies to send over. It took a lot of our time. One of my successes was in doing away with this small exhibit program and in getting our efforts on to more serious activities in terms of trade promotion.

It was a very interesting world. You never knew quite what the Philippine government would do next. There were always surprises. They weren't always bad surprises. Our working relations with Philippine officials were very close. I remember very warm connections with Filipinos in general. In fact, the friendships I made with Filipinos have lasted better than those made in other countries where I've stayed.

*Q: So, what was the attitude of the embassy and then of your section? Was there any divergence towards the - to bring American rights into line with all other foreigners' rights? Part of sovereignty is not to give special concessions to a nationality, but that nationality hates to let go. Did you find yourself in some conflict?*

KINNELLY: No, there was no divergency that I recall within the embassy on this point. The embassy's goal was the straightforward one of maintaining special rights for Americans there.

*Q: There was no sort of philosophical idea that, gee, these people are independent, we've got to make a clear playing field for everybody?*

KINNELLY: No, I suppose we realized that this was coming down the path. Just before I got there, the Philippine government had decided to do away with these special rights for American companies. We were trying to delay, modify this decision as much as we could. Soapy Williams came as ambassador soon after I arrived. I remember, we had great big staff meetings of all the embassy officers once a week. They were rather stiff affairs. We all wore suits despite that tropic climate. Soapy came in the first day with a barong tagalog, the loose Philippine shirt, accompanied by the DCM who had just taken off his jacket in honor of the occasion. We liked him from the start. Even with Ambassador Williams, who had been so engaged in building American relations with post-colonial Africa, I don't remember any real concern for helping the Philippines move in this direction, asserting their complete independence from the US.

*Q: Were you watching or even involved in sort of the relations with the Marcoses? One hears about these rather fancy parties and sometimes, you might say, overly close collaboration between the Americans who were involved in American affairs and the Marcos court.*

KINNELLY: Not in terms of the parties. I was far too low in the embassy ranks to be directly involved. But, yes, we had one officer whose job basically was to deal with the Marcos family, Imelda especially, in terms of public relations and, I suspect, in terms of service, to be sure that we remained on good terms with them. He was really quite circumspect, reserved about just what he was doing. But we did know his mandate.

*Q: Did you feel any, not just the Marcos thing, but you're dealing with basically promoting American trade in the Philippines. Were you seeing reflections of a corruption problem of American industry or business trying to get involved and payoffs? How did we deal with that?*

KINNELLY: Perhaps it's naivete on my part, but I don't really remember real cases of corruption involving U.S. companies. I remember tales about the levels of corruption dealing with Chinese firms or Filipino firms and their jockeying for influence in the government. There are even today great landed families, Philippine families, with their own regional power bases and money. There was a great deal of jockeying for power amongst these families.

One other interesting aspect of my tour was that there we were dealing with the Philippines and all of its problems, whereas not too far away, the U.S. was engaged in a great conflict in Vietnam. This conflict seemed very distant, except that a lot of families of FSOs and AID people were lodged in Manila. The officers would come back from the war to spend a week or so with their families. I met some of these officers from time to time. But we were never really engaged ourselves in Vietnam issues. We were surprised and aghast to see in the news what was happening in America at that time.

*Q: What about commercial issues between the United States and the Philippines? I mean, what sort of things were you all engaged in?*

KINNELLY: Well, the first thing was the protection of American investments. Then there was trade promotion and efforts to eliminate trade barriers. Again, textiles reared up. One of the problems was the definition of remnants. The Philippines was a market for U.S. remnants from textile production and what was allowed in trade under the textile agreements and what was not allowed was an issue. I had a drawer full of sample remnants in my file cabinet. We also had a number of trade missions coming in. Here again we faced the problem of trying to get these missions to include traders, businesses that we thought would really succeed in opening up contacts in the Philippines. We would often find people coming on these missions who really did not know much about what they wanted to do or not having the wherewithal to pursue a good trade relationship.

*Q: How well do you think you all were equipped when a delegation would arrive to put them in the picture and steer them to the right place? What sort of apparatus did you have for doing that?*

KINNELLY: We had a very good staff of Foreign Service nationals, and the officers built up an extensive set of contacts. It was easy to meet people in the Philippine business community. But we had real problems with the Philippine infrastructure. It was episodic, but often we would have great difficulties in making telephone calls, even within Manila. We would have a trade mission planning to arrive in a week or two and I could simply not contact Philippine firms to set up appointments. I got in a car and went around. The mails were very slow. Trying to use the telephone was so frustrating. So much of it today is with e-mail and all. It was really primitive then. We had good relations with Commerce field offices and the Commerce Department itself. U.S. businessmen would come into them with a problem or a question and we would deal with the businessmen through them. That type of communication went very well. But American businessmen would be so aghast when they got over to Manila and found out they couldn't contact people five miles away.

*Q: Was the United States pretty much the major trading partner at that time with the Philippines?*

KINNELLY: Yes, we certainly had a dominant role in that period. We were beginning to worry about Japanese inroads, but they were really quite small. The main problem, it seemed, was Philippine protectionists wanting to develop their own industries. They had about 20 or so car assembly plants going, all very inefficient, rather than importing cars and trucks, that sort of thing. There was a lot of Chinese influence, but these were Chinese who had come over the past 120 years or so. There wasn't really much trade with Taiwan or other Asian countries at that time.

**WILLIAM PIEZ**  
**Economic Officer**



### **Manila (1967-1971)**

*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: Let's talk about the Philippines from '67 to '71. You arrived there in early '67. What was the situation in the Philippines would you say.*

PIEZ: Well Ferdinand Marcos was the president, having been reelected after, I believe, a reasonably clean but really a very adept campaign. He really knew how to run for office. One device he used was not to fix the balloting, but to fix the pre-election polls. As a big poll winner he would be swept into office through the bandwagon effect, which was always strong there.

*Q: And his wife too.*

PIEZ: And his wife. She was younger and attractive and very smooth.

*Q: Also in '67 the war was going hot and heavy in Vietnam. The Philippines was a support base.*

PIEZ: That was a major topic in our discussion with the Philippines at the time. The bases -- the Navy had a very substantial base there at Subic Bay, and the Air Force had Clark Field in Central Luzon.

*Q: What was the feeling that you were picking up. When you arrived there obviously one is all ears on what is going on. What was the impression you were getting on the support in the Philippines for our involvement in Vietnam?*

PIEZ: There was nominal support. I would say there was a general recognition by Filipinos of the facts. There was some concern about a communist threat should South Vietnam fall to a communist regime, but I think they saw that as quite distant. I think they felt that their democratic institutions were quite strong and not particularly threatened. Filipinos are quite devoted to elections and they really enjoy election contests. There were vestiges of a Marxist communist insurrection in central Luzon, but they felt that it was under control. While I was there the difficulties in Mindanao, in the far south, where there is a Muslim region became...

*Q: That was more of a Moro thing.*

PIEZ: Yeah, and that was a region that had been in rebellion from time to time all the way back to General Pershing in 1906.

*Q: What sort of things were you concerned with in your job?*

PIEZ: Well one of my tasks was to demonstrate the economic benefits that the Philippines got from our base presence and the support we gave them when they sent an engineering and construction regiment to Vietnam. It was not a combat outfit, but the Philippine army for a time did have a regiment located near Saigon engaged in community building and military construction. Anyway I was repeatedly asked by my colleagues, "How many dollars are we dumping into this country?" It was quite considerable. There were many Filipinos then, and still are, who were veterans of WWII, and who were able to draw veterans benefits and disability benefits. The U.S. Treasury maintained a large office in the embassy where they honored these commitments and mailed monthly dollar checks to a very large number of Filipino beneficiaries. Also they did social security.

*Q: It must have been a cultural shock to move from a small embassy like Kabul to this huge operation in Manila.*

PIEZ: Yes it was. Filipinos sometimes asked about how hard it is to live in such a poor country. I would tell them they were about a thousand years ahead of Afghanistan. You want to see poverty, go to Kabul. But there is deep poverty in the Philippines too. Unfortunately it is one of those countries with a small number of quite wealthy people, and a huge number of people living at really a subsistence level.

*Q: Which continues to this day.*

PIEZ: Yes, unfortunately.

*Q: My background is that of a consular officer, and of course I have never been to the Philippines. Consular ranks are replete with stories about consular problems in Manila -- fraud and all. We have had several consuls general who were implicated in one way or another -- either sex scandals or visa scandals, but all connected essentially to visas. How stood things when you were there? Were you hit with visa requests?*

PIEZ: Occasionally, yeah. If you accepted an invitation, well sometimes you wouldn't because you were sure that it would produce a request for visa assistance. That was always in the background.

*Q: How did you find social life there?*

PIEZ: It was very active. Although the Manila press took great joy in attacking the United States, individual Filipinos were remarkably friendly and hospitable, almost universally. They would talk about the happy colonial times. You always wondered what was behind all of this friendliness. Are they going to take you for something? But I think it was genuine. They liked Americans.

*Q: Well yeah. There was a mutual liking there. Americans like and often marry Filipinas. There has been a lot of immigration and the Filipinos have been relatively successful in the United States. Were you too far down the social food chain to get involved in the Marcos' big parties and all of that?*

PIEZ: No, I didn't do that. Certain embassy officers did. We had one officer whose job included dealing with Mrs. Marcos' personal requests all the way from providing particular cosmetics which she couldn't buy locally to participation at her parties and so on. It was a bit diabolical really. She entertained some embassy wives periodically at a bandage rolling event. This goes back to WWII when women would get together and prepare Red Cross gauze bandages. This was support for the local hospitals that didn't have very much money. Somehow or other this was the domain of the wives of political officers, so my wife didn't get to go. It sounded at first as if it was a kind of territorial thing, that the political officers in the Embassy were reserving it for their wives. Actually it was protection. They did it so that the rest of our spouses would not have to. Mrs. Marcos, at such events, would occasionally circulate a clipboard and ask all the ladies present to sign their names and put down a thousand pesos or five thousand pesos as their contribution to her pet project of the moment. It might be the refurbishing of a local park. She would have workers bring in sod and spruce up the park and paint everything and sweep the sidewalks. Really a dumping ground would become a beautiful park. Her project was supported by well-to-do Filipinos, and Americans, and others Mrs. Marcos would organize to contribute to park reconstruction, or a hospital, or an orphanage, and to burnish her image. That was part of life in the Philippines.

*Q: Were you able to travel much?*

PIEZ: Yeah. You could travel anywhere. A favorite destination was Baghio in the north because it was at an elevation of over 4000 feet and not so hot. So it was a way to escape the tropical heat of Manila which is virtually year round. The embassy had a cottage there. There was also an ambassador's residence, a summer residence going all the way back to 1908 or something. We didn't stay there. Its second floor bedrooms have beautiful polished mahogany floors. The floors were heavily pock marked by the hobnail boots of Japanese soldiers who occupied it during World War II.

*Q: Well now back to your job. What were the financial issues with the Philippines because that was sort of a tricky economy.*

PIEZ: Exchange rates, the management of reserves. I inherited from the treasury representative the monitoring of the central bank and the commercial banking system which was very active. There are about 30 commercial banks, and there was ample ground for uncovering information and reporting. The Philippine government also had a pretty good system for statistical reporting on the economic system. So you could draw from official records, something we didn't have in Kabul.

It was fascinating also to learn how corrupt officials, from Marcos on down, would manipulate markets or projects for their personal benefit. Some insiders would brag quite openly about their successes in such endeavors.

*Q: In so many countries our economic officers are really hobbled because you can't rely on the government figures.*

PIEZ: They were pretty good in the Philippines. Often they were slow in coming. A lot of this was inherited from the U.S. regime when the Philippines was a territory.

*Q: Was there a problem, we had so many Americans there, of Americans involved in financial schemes?*

PIEZ: There was one American whose name now escapes me who was quite well-to-do. He lived in Manila. The U.S. IRS (Internal Revenue Service) was doing its best to catch him somehow. They had gotten the Philippine government to seize a lot of his records and turn them over. Thereafter he refused to file a tax return on the grounds that he didn't have the records. That was a running dispute. It was strongly suspected that the Philippine authorities kept enough pressure on him to keep him paying bribes, but not enough to force him to leave the Philippines.

*Q: Now the four years or almost five years you were in the Philippines, was the Marcos regime changing from a popular elected one into a more almost a dictatorship?*

PIEZ: Well the beginnings were there. The real crossing point came after I left when Marcos declared martial law. But he had been working on martial law. At one point he very privately asked our ambassador what the U.S. reaction would be if he declared martial law. So we in the embassy knew he was thinking about it.

*Q: Were the Philippines a source of investment in the United States at all?*

PIEZ: Limited. There were American investors there in mining and ore processing, in the stevedoring business and the concrete business, but the Philippine government was extremely ambivalent about inward foreign investment. They frankly feared that foreign interests would be too competitive, make good money and then send their profits home. My private conclusion was they welcomed any American investor who was willing to come and lose his shirt. But if he was going to make a profit and take some of it home, then they really didn't like that.

*Q: Well what about the reverse? Was there an outflow of capital from the wealthy in the Philippines to the United States to make sure that when times got bad they had a nest egg outside of the country.*

PIEZ: Well I don't think capital flight was a major factor in the economy overall, although that changed as Marcos stayed in office and became more confident and greedy. Some corruption proceeds were exported, no doubt. Filipinos, if they had the resources, were careful to maintain some foreign balances and some foreign assets. I think that one thing they did was build a sort of escape kit. If things got really bad locally they had a car ready to go to the airport.

*Q: A green card.*

PIEZ: A green card would be perfect, but they would take less than that, any kind of visa and some funds abroad so they weren't going to starve when they got there.

*Q: How was social life?*

PIEZ: Well it was pretty active. For example, my wife and I, and sometimes our children too, would be invited to the annual picnic of a bank. All the bank employees would be there and the senior people would sort of show us off. Here is my friend at the American embassy. (Ask him for a visa.)

*Q: Well in talking to the Filipinos did they bring up the Vietnam War?*

PIEZ: I wouldn't say they often brought it up, although there would be plenty of reporting about it in the local press. There was an active English language press in Manila. And the English language papers had quite a bit of influence, and some of the columnists were really vitriolic. But if you ever met one socially they were just all sweetness and flowers.

*Q: How were your relations with that other foreign power i.e. the State Department and Treasury Department in Washington. Were there lots of demands for reports or was it fairly routine?*

PIEZ: I never felt pressure about what to report. There was plenty going on to write about if you kept your eyes open. I did do my part of the CERP. The CERP then included a comprehensive economic report twice a year and so a little bit of institutional rivalry was there because I wanted to write that report, and the commercial attaché would have been the one normally tasked to do it. I found they were all of them perfectly willing to have me do it. A little bit of laziness showing up, until finally at the end of my tour we got a somewhat different kind of guy as commercial attaché. His name was Walter Lenahan. He said that he wanted to do it. I said, "Fine." And he did a very workmanlike job, nothing for the embassy to be ashamed of. He later became a deputy assistant secretary at Commerce.

**G. MENNEN WILLIAMS**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1968-1969)**

*G. Mennan Williams was a personal friend of President Lyndon Johnson. He served in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and Ambassador to the Philippines. He was interviewed by Joe B. Frantz in 1974.*

*Q: How did you happen to get pointed toward the Philippines?*

WILLIAMS: I don't know. I haven't the slightest idea. My wife and I had pretty much decided that we weren't going to do anything outside the state of Michigan, and certainly not abroad, and

I suddenly had a call from Dean Rusk saying that they had an urgent job that he wanted me to take. My wife said I said yes right away, but I didn't. I told him that we hadn't thought about going abroad, and that we would talk it over and call him back. And we did. I'm glad we did. It was a beautiful experience.

*Q: No particular reason, though, for the Philippines?*

WILLIAMS: I have no idea whatsoever. I mean, as I pointed out--

*Q: It was sensitive, of course.*

WILLIAMS: --I didn't have anything to do with getting the job, and I never was told why they picked me.

*Q: Had you been particularly close to any of the Filipino leaders?*

WILLIAMS: Well, Michigan has had a long tradition of Philippine relations. When the Americans first went into the Philippines, there were a lot of Michiganders, and the University of Michigan had always been close. I think their judicial setup was set up by a Michigan lawyer, and of course my friend Frank Murphy had been the last governor general. When he was attorney general a lot of the Filipinos came to see him, and I saw them. Somewhere or another I think I had run into Carlos Romulo. But I have no idea why they picked me.

*Q: Did you have any particular instructions, any more than ordinary ambassadorial instructions?*

WILLIAMS: No, I don't think I had anything very special. My predecessor, Bill Blair, had had a very unfortunate experience in connection with some murder that had taken place at Clark Airfield. He just started off under a cloud, and he'd never been able to turn it around. Then the other problem he had was that his wife didn't care for it. Between the two, he really had a rough time, although he himself was interested in it and I think worked hard and mechanically did a good job.

I was advised of all of this, and they were very anxious that I get out there in a hurry. So I don't remember spending too much time in Washington. They had a first-rate deputy chief of mission, Jim Wilson. He really was a crackerjack, so that as far as the general administration, why, he did a beautiful job.

*Q: I don't recall, was there a gap between Blair leaving and your coming?*

WILLIAMS: Yes, about eight months. This was . . .

*Q: Wilson more or less acted as charge during that time?*

WILLIAMS: Yes. One thing they did--I guess it must have been a month or so before I went out--Dean Rusk told me they had the best embassy and the worst residence, and the DCM, Jim Wilson, insisted that they add a big reception room. They built that for me.

*Q: At your house? At the embassy?*

WILLIAMS: At the residence.

*Q: At the residence.*

WILLIAMS: The embassy was a great big place, and they had no problem there at all. I had a big office. It was about as large as this one. Then there was an enclosed porch, and there was a big outdoor area which looked right on Manila Bay. There was all sorts of room for everybody else, so there was no problem there. In the house the dining room was just adequate but the living room was inadequate, and in order to do diplomatic entertaining, you did need the extra room. It proved to be very useful.

*Q: So that really had been neglected prior to your getting there?*

WILLIAMS: Yes, yes.

*Q: The physical conditions.*

WILLIAMS: Yes, yes. There had been that discussion, but as far as any specific briefing I don't remember it, outside of letting me know what the problems were. Like a political campaign I had the first three or four weeks planned out, and so I lit running.

*Q: What did you do?*

WILLIAMS: I figured that what I'd better do would be to get out in the provinces and see the country, in addition to the normal duties of calling on everybody. Incidentally, I called on all the Filipinos before I called on any of the ambassadors. That was sort of hard on my relationship with them, but that worked out. Then they really were most appreciative that I visited in the provinces as much as I did. You could feel the waves coming back all the time, because most of the people in Manila felt that they had some home someplace else.

*Q: Did you make all the provinces?*

WILLIAMS: No. They had about eighty of them, and I wasn't there long enough. I made about two-thirds of them.

*Q: You made places like Leyte and Mindanao?*

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. I got to Jolo, which is about as far southwest as you could go, and I even got up in Batangas, which is halfway up into Formosa.

*Q: But when you say you made the provinces, what did you do? Did you fly in, or did you come in by boat?*

WILLIAMS: No, I flew in. That's one thing that you're well equipped with in the Philippines, because you have such a large American military establishment there. I would call up in advance, call up the mayor or the governor, or generally both, and they were always delighted. If it was the mayor, he'd be there and most of his city council and a few other people. They'd generally declare a school holiday, and the kids would be lined up going in. Then you'd walk into town, or drive in, and I'd always get out and walk down about two or three hundred yards of kids. Then they'd have a banquet, and then you'd speak someplace and go around and see some of the principal things. Occasionally there'd be conferences, that is, local conferences, and I'd go up there. I went up to Tarlac, which is the center of their rice growing, and of course we went out into the rice paddies. There were things of that nature that we did. It was very interesting and very instructive and very helpful.

*Q: To get back for a moment, you would have been named at the time that the, you might say, backbiting between Senator Fulbright and the President was at its peak over Vietnam and our policy. Did the Senator give you any problem on confirmation?*

WILLIAMS: No, I didn't have any. Being such a good friend of our own Senator Phil Hart, it was more or less an easy trot, and so we had no problems at all. I of course had known Bill, and we'd had some degree of friendship. I had quite a talk with him because, now that you mention it--which is nothing about Vietnam--Bill Fulbright had a feeling that we hadn't done right by the Philippines, that it had been sort of an imperialistic intrusion. (Interruption)

*Q: Go back to the start of that sentence on Fulbright.*

WILLIAMS: As I was saying, now that you mention it I remember that I had quite a talk with Fulbright, because he had some definite feelings that the United States had not treated the Filipinos as well as we should have. I think he talked about Aguinaldo and all of that. But he talked in sort of a very friendly way that I might be understanding of this and might be helpful in giving the Filipinos a square deal.

*Q: What kind of an actual situation did you find, insofar as what has happened to Filipino interests in enlistment with the United States?*

WILLIAMS: Well, it's sort of a mixed bag. On the long run situation, the United States had done an outstanding job when it came to giving the Filipinos an education. Even Carlos Romulo, when he was attacking the United States as it became popular toward the end, nonetheless emphasized that the Filipinos owed their good educational system to the United States.

We had two difficult situations when we were out there, which unfortunately came pretty closely together. One was that a young marine guard unfortunately violated the regulations and shot a young Filipino punk who was trying to steal a bicycle. He tried to shoot his legs, but just at that moment the fellow was ducking to go under a gate and he killed him. By our own rules, I think that we should have turned him over to the Philippine courts for action, and I'm sure the Filipinos



would have been very understanding. But the military were very obdurate, and the Congress was of the same mind. They were not about to give up our jurisdiction. So that caused a lot of hard feelings. We had demonstrations on [that]. We never had any bitterness between myself and the various people, but in the government they didn't understand it. Actually, some of their congressional leadership couldn't understand why I wouldn't make a deal with them. Because they agreed that they would save him harmless, but they wanted the appearance of our trusting their jurisdiction. That was the one thing.

The other thing was that our State Department spokesman, McCloskey, put his foot in his mouth and indicated that Sabah, which is in North Borneo, was a part of Malaysia, although the Filipinos had claimed it through a very strange personal relationship to one of the same rulers. Malaysia probably had a better claim, but McCloskey had no reason to say this. Well, that raised unshirted hell for some time. As I say, the two of them came together.

*Q: Any particular reason why he would have made a statement like that?*

WILLIAMS: He didn't come right out and say that "This belongs to Malaysia," but in a sentence he uttered it could be interpreted that he was including , Sabah within it. Of course, this was interpreted the worst way. No, he had no intention of doing this, but it was just sloppy language and it caused a lot of trouble.

*Q: What did you do, just let that kind of wear out, ease off?*

WILLIAMS: We got retractions from our government that we didn't mean this at all.

*Q: Kind of like "Quebec Libre"?*

WILLIAMS: Well, yes. It was at a time when Marcos was having some problems, particularly with the students, and this was a great rallying cry and could take their mind off of their other problems, so they pushed it pretty hard.

The only other--well, we had a problem relative to import duties. We claimed for the military that they weren't subject to it. This was not bitterness but determination on both sides, and we had about three months of sitting down negotiating across the table about these things. Some of their shipments were carried on our vessels, and normally the vessels would off load in Manila, so they'd have the stuff where they wanted. But instead we off loaded up at Subic Bay, where there was no question about any impost, because this was our territorial area. But we argued it out on a legal basis. After I left Jim Wilson came to a successful conclusion. Those were the sort of problems and nettles we had.

Overall what we were trying to do was to help them build up their economy, in particular their agriculture. Involved in that was an effort to get them to do what Marcos is talking about doing now, and that is land reform. But in the Senate all the big landowners held sway, and as a consequence, they talked a great game but we really couldn't get much going. However the miracle rice, which was a Rockefeller development, that really made a great difference in the life of the average Filipino. Because for the first time in their lives, they were self-sufficient, and

they even got to the point where they could export. Also, the rice farmer was able to hold on to some of the increased return; it didn't all go to the middleman or to the landowner. So that's what we were working on. Well, there was a constant problem about the military.

*Q: Is it a real feeling that it's time for the American to get scarce in the Philippines, or is that just something for me to talk about on some day I'm disgruntled?*

WILLIAMS: I think more the latter. Under the Laurel-Langley act, of course, I mean treaty, we have special rights which give American business an advantage over the other businesses, and this rankles a little. But first of all, the wages the Americans pay are higher than anybody else, so that the average Filipino gets a better break. Next to the Philippine government the U.S. government is the biggest employer because particularly in our naval bases we have great machine shops and everything. We have trained thousands, just literally tens of thousands of Filipinos, who not only have therefore learned a trade and have been able to go out and earn a good living--if they leave, [but] most of them don't like to leave because they get better wages with us--but all throughout the Pacific, in Vietnam and everything, the best laborers are the Filipinos because they're the best trained. While I was out there we completed the unionization of all of the people in the military branch who are in that kind of work.

So I think, going back to an appreciation of what we did in education, a kind of traditional friendship at the upper class level and what we've been able to do for the working people, that there was a pretty good relationship. Toward the end of my months there there was a sort of a radical build up. There were just a very small percentage of the unionists who were radical, and part of their business was to talk against the Americans. The other unionists were all associated with American unions in one way or another. Just a few of the university people in Manila were sort of pseudo-communist oriented, and they made a lot more noise than their real merits.

*Q: The Huks have just about disappeared as an element, haven't they? They've been kind of neutralized?*

WILLIAMS: Well, they disappeared as an ideological group. Magsaysay [former president] beat them back. They really got within about twenty miles of Manila at one time, but they were pretty much crushed. But if you go up into Tarlac province or around there, they still have guards, because there are people who are--oh, they're more thugs and brigands than they are any ideological group.

*Q: I would presume that if I for whatever reason were against Marcos I'd just automatically, as a part of the litany, call him an American tool, et cetera, whether it fit or not, I mean.*

WILLIAMS: I think there's some degree of ambivalence, because some of them run boasting about their American ties. Now that may become less popular than it used to be, but my next door neighbor, Osmena I think, was thinking of running against Marcos, and he made no bones about going to the United States to try to raise funds and so on. So with a certain element and in a particular time of the year you might say being anti-American is great, but on other occasion being pro-American isn't being too bad. Of course, that may have changed drastically since I left.

*Q: Did Vietnam give you much trouble?*

WILLIAMS: Just towards the end. The Filipinos at President Johnson's urging had sent some engineering troops into Tay Ninh in Vietnam. I know it was a very interesting operation. They had established a community where they helped them build roads. They also went around from village to village, and they had nurses and doctors. They'd bring all the kids in and the old people. I saw them pulling teeth, and all the kids, they'd take all their clothes off and scrub them up and clean them up if they needed any help and so on. They were doing that kind of a job. Well, the problem of course was that somebody in the Congress eventually found out that the United States was supporting that by paying the combat bonus. The Filipinos were paying for the rest. I suppose the United States was arming them, but they would have done that anyway. So there wasn't too much trouble between us and the Filipinos until this thing came out, and then of course some of the Filipinos were hitting Marcos over the head with this, as well as Americans hitting our administration over the head about it.

*Q: I wonder what the Philippine attitude is, that, "We're sort of hired mercenaries?"*

WILLIAMS: I went over and visited them in Tay Ninh, and they were very proud of themselves and what they were doing. Some of the students and some of these radical labor people kept saying they had no business being over there, but I think the military and most of the Filipinos thought it was all right. I should add one thing: toward the end some of the papers--and the Manila papers are just unbelievable, the Filipinos don't have liberty they have license, and they really are scandalous--started saying that, "We shouldn't be over there with our troops because the Chinese want to take over Vietnam. So they will send their bombs to us, and we don't want to be bombed." But I think that until toward the end, when this thing got a little hot, most of the Filipinos didn't know that they had anybody in Vietnam.

*Q: Did they have a real fear of the Chinese?*

WILLIAMS: Apparently there must have been enough fear so that the newspapers were trying to play this bombs thing. I don't think there was that much fear. The Chinese have been in the Philippines for a thousand years, and they say that the Filipinos are one-tenth Chinese. Marcos kept talking about Maoists, and there had been a time when not the Chinese but the communists in Indonesia had supported the Huks and the other. There was something about that.

I think primarily, by and large, the Filipinos were more against the Japanese than worried about the Chinese. They had the war memories. We would go and sit down with some dowager, and the subject would come up and she had been up in the hills running away from the Japanese. So that this is a personal thing to just about everybody. They were concerned about their economic penetration; they had some laws about that. When I was up in the Batangas I noticed particularly that you would go into shops and they had lots of Japanese stuff. As I was leaving, I saw that they were penetrating the market~. They passed a law that they couldn't come in without a Filipino partner, and so they had a lot of fronts that were moving in somehow.

*Q: A couple of questions to round off: was it a fairly widespread feeling among some Filipinos that this was a kind of Johnsonian reversion to racism in fighting the Vietnamese? This is a white man coming after the brown or yellow?*

WILLIAMS: I don't think I've ever heard of that, no. I mean, I'm familiar with that argument, but I never heard any of the Filipinos [voice it]. I don't remember reading it either. I certainly never saw it directed at Johnson.

*Q: Were you in a kind of a crossroads position there because of Vietnam?*

WILLIAMS: You mean people going through?

*Q: As far as lots of so-called VIP's coming back and forth from various countries?*

WILLIAMS: Not so much.

*Q: They came through Hong Kong.*

WILLIAMS: There was some, but not too many.

*Q: It wasn't a kind of Lisbon sort of situation?*

WILLIAMS: No. No, it wasn't that. Time-Life had a group of high executives that went through to the Far East, and they stopped off. Oh, we had a few, but we didn't really have a lot. I think many of them were coming out on military planes, and they came to Clark Field and maybe slept overnight and went on the next day without ever coming to Manila.

*Q: You didn't have to put up with a lot of people you didn't want to?*

WILLIAMS: No.

**WILBUR P. CHASE**  
**Consul General**  
**Manila (1968-1970)**

*Wilbur Chase was born in Washington, DC in 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University in 1942. Prior to becoming a Foreign Service officer, Mr. Chase served in the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, the War Shipping Administration, and the Coast Guard. In 1945, he joined the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Iraq, Canada, Germany, Israel, Turkey, the Philippines, and Washington, DC. Mr. Chase was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.*

*Q: You then went from a place which had a lot of business to one that was just overwhelming in business practically. This was Manila. You were there from '68 to '70. How did that assignment come about, and what were you doing?*

CHASE: Well, I was the consul general in Manila. I was in charge of the consular office.

*Q: I remember, because I was consul general in Saigon at the same time, and we used to look at your operation from some distance away.*

CHASE: We had fifty, sixty people in the consular section. And it was a... The Philippines had made official protests, because by law 20,000 immigrant visas could be issued to Filipinos, and we had missed, the year before I got there. The Filipinos were complaining of discrimination. For reasons, my predecessor hadn't been able to get things going, so I was asked to go over there and make the consular section produce.

*Q: Your immediate challenge was the management one then?*

CHASE: Yes.

*Q: Was immigration the main job of the consulate? You must have had quite a few other things.*

CHASE: Well, immigration and nonimmigrant visas, and we had a very high rate of fraud.

*Q: Was this fraud within the section, or was this fraud just fraudulent documents?*

CHASE: Any place you could think of fraud occurring, it occurred. Fraudulent documents, fraudulent saying I'm going over there to visit my dying mother who's visiting or something else, that can be fraud. Everyone was saying, well, I have to come back to the Philippines, and going in as a fraudulent nonimmigrant, that's one sort of fraud. Then we had a great deal of fraud in finding out who is making the application for the immigrant visa. And fraud to the extent of fraudulent documents: fraudulent police records, fraudulent education, like for the third preference professional, fraudulent for that. Then we had quite a lot of fraud, too, of people claiming to be US citizens who weren't.

We had a case of a fellow who made application as the spouse of a US citizen. He admitted he had been married before, and that marriage had been terminated in the death of his wife. Had the death certificate. We questioned the death certificate of the wife, whether it was valid, and got a suspicion it wasn't valid. The fellow then came in with a picture of himself in mourning in front of the tomb of his wife. Well, we had a local investigator, and in the course of his wanderings around, he ended up in the fellow's town and even ended up in bed with the wife. I didn't find out about being in bed with the wife until later. But he said, "Oh, yes, she's alive." The husband was threatening the wife that he'd have her killed if she ever revealed that she wasn't dead.

Then an American citizen who claimed that a child was his. He acknowledged that he and his wife were not married at the time the child was born, but he said, "It's my child, and I was there." We got evidence that this possibly wasn't altogether correct. At the Catholic maternity ward that

the birth took place on, the investigator went to the office and noticed that the pen that had written the entry before and the one after wasn't quite the same ink, didn't look the same, and that there were some erasures or something on this document. It was a bound volume which confirmed that this child was born at a certain time and all that. Well, the investigator, talking to the nun, finally the nun broke down and signed the confession that she had altered the record.

We said to the fellow, "Well, look, you couldn't be the father of the child because you were in Washington, DC at the time the child had to be conceived."

And he said, "Oh, I made a trip to the Philippines."

And he went through all sorts of things to establish that he had made a mysterious 24-hour visit to the Philippines.

Now there was a fellow who was kind of a friend of mine in the passport office, who was under all sorts of pressure from Congress to get this child documented. In fact, we were getting telegrams saying: "We want a telegram from you by tomorrow morning to confirm that the US passport was issued to this child."

I told the fellow who was head of the passport section, I said, "Look, just sign the passport. It has to be issued."

And the fellow said, "No, I won't."

I said, "Well, I sympathize with you on this. You don't believe this child is a citizen. I don't believe he is a citizen. But look, the State Department has told us to do it. They have seen all the evidence and they say we gotta do it. So look, you fix up the passport and bring it in to me and I'll sign it."

It took me about two days to get that fellow to even let his clerks go ahead and issue it. He always had an excuse. And I was getting quite furious, because I knew it was a fraud. So finally we got the passport issued.

And some months later, after we kept sending in these other bits of reports as we found them out, we then got a word from the department that, yes, they agreed that it was a fraud and so they were prosecuting this lieutenant commander in the Navy for malicious activities. I think he maybe got a bad note in his file someplace or other.

But this officer in the passport office, who had angered me a little bit, he said, "Look, you were right, it was a fraud, but they are a loving family. They are approaching this as if they are father, son, wife. Why not let them have the sense that this is a true, binding notion?"

And I said, "Look, the laws just aren't built that way. If you want to have the laws made to conform to that, fine, I'm willing to carry out." You know the guy I'm speaking of, I'm sure. His opinion on this lasted I think for about six, eight, ten months, and they were finally reversed, that love and affection didn't give citizenship.

Q: *What was your impression of the Philippine government and the officials you dealt with?*

CHASE: Corrupt.

Q: *Just corrupt.*

CHASE: I would say corrupt. The Philippine women were attractive, they were smart, and I generally thought that I could believe them. The Philippine men were just malicious--maybe in a very nice way. They are two-faced. There were some wonderful people out there, but so many of them were so bad. Now I should add in this that I am a little bit hypersensitive on them, in that one of my sons was shot by hoodlums.

Q: *Yes, I remember.*

CHASE: That kind of affected all my attitude toward them. Not just the attitude of the fact that my son was shot, but it gave me a personal relationship with a whole slew of different people, where I just found that they were doing everything a little bit wrong.

The police officer who went to court and said, "I arrested Eric Yagelo with the pistol." He told me later, "He didn't have the pistol when I arrested him. I had to go to his house and I found the pistol there. The maid let me in, and I told the maid that she'd be arrested for prostitution if she ever let anyone know that I'd come inside the house." I mean, he was an awfully nice guy, but he was instructed by Marcos to prosecute the case against the people who shot my son. And so he broke the law in every which way it was possible. He got the guilty party, but absolutely no due process.

Q: *Often the consular section can see a relationship between parties, within the embassy and outside, better than anyone else, because consular officers have things to give away, visas, passports to issue that people want. What was the relation, would you say, between the line of officers, economic, but particularly the political officers, and even the military officers and whatever you would call it, the ruling class of the Philippines, the very wealthy people? Was it close, too close, or objective? We're talking about a period of time, '68 to '69.*

CHASE: Were you trying to imply were we being patsies for Marcos?

Q: *Well, I'm not sure that Marcos was considered as bad a person then, but I'm just thinking almost of a class thing. I mean, were we co-opted by the ruling class of the Philippines?*

CHASE: No. I think I know the accusation or the implication. I have been in some countries, I've known some diplomatic officers who can't see any evil in the people with whom they're associating all the time. I've been some other places where the officers can only see evil. But in the Philippines I never got any idea that any of us were being co-opted by the nice parties that we were attending. We knew that these people were entertaining us for their reasons. Some of these people were wonderful people, true blue. We also knew that a lot of them were completely Machiavellian, and I don't think that we were being hoodwinked. Because I think that in my

relationship with them, when I was seeing our political officers, our ambassador dealing with them, that we were doing what we thought was necessary to advance the interests of the United States.

**VICTOR WOLF, JR.**  
**Principal Officer**  
**Cebu (1968-1971)**

*Victor Wolf, Jr. was born in New York in 1927. His Foreign Service career included positions in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, The Philippines, Denmark, Germany, Poland, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 31, 1986.*

*Q: Turning from Istanbul, you had a series of assignments which had little relation to movement of peoples, until you became the principal officer, the counsel in Cebu in the Philippines. The Philippines, within the last few decades, has been a major source--in fact, the major source of migration from the country to the United States. You were in Cebu from 1968 to 1971. Did you have much in the way of migration from that particular area of the Philippines?*

WOLF: Yes, we did. We had a fair amount. The problems that we encountered involving movement of peoples were two, and this is where the whole issue of fraud really began to arrive, at least in my experience. The first category of problem in movement of peoples that we faced in the Philippines was the movement of very large numbers of people with medical training--physicians, nurses, medical technologists--to the United States for training, exchange visitor visas, training in the United States, and then that which we learned from statistics, that many of them were trying to figure out ways of staying on in the United States.

*Q: One thing that interests me here is Cebu is far removed from the capital of Manila and Luzon Island, it doesn't look like a very wealthy area. To have trained medical personnel coming out of not a very rich country, from a provincial area, seems rather surprising. Why were you getting so many?*

WOLF: First of all, you must understand that Cebu is the second city of the Philippines. Greater metropolitan Cebu had half a million people. Secondly, although it is a poor country, it is a country that places a great store on education, so very large numbers of people have university degrees. Many of those degrees are not really worth very much, because many universities in the Philippines were--I do not know about now--run as family businesses. So we had three or four large family business-type universities in Cebu city, the University of the Southern Philippines, the University of Visayan State University, and so on and so on and so on. These were run by families, fairly prominent well-to-do families, and this was a large income. This was a large income source for these families. I mentioned the word Visayan. I should say the Visayan are the central island group in the Philippine Archipelago, that island group between Mindanao in the south and Luzon in the north.



Because these universities ran as businesses of families, and because the concept of educational standards is not as strong in the Philippines as it is in other countries, what that meant was if you had the money, you would be admitted. If you had the money, you would get your degree. That meant large numbers of people were processing through these diploma mills and they came out as physicians, they came out as nurses, they came out as medical technologists. Now, it is true they also had to go through a licensing procedure by the Philippine Government. You will not be surprised if I tell you that corruption is also a significant characteristic of Filipino society. And so many people were able to get certified as physicians, nurses, medical technologists when, frankly, they were unqualified. How did they do it? They paid bribes.

*Q: How did you deal with this problem, both unqualified people and people who wanted to go to the United States as non-immigrants, but actually were, in fact, immigrants?*

WOLF: The question of dealing with the unqualified medical technologists was really sort of a difficult one. We were not in a position in those days to challenge a physician, a nurse, a medical technologist who came in with a degree and who came in with an appointment from an American hospital as an intern, as a nurse intern, as a medical technologist trainee. If they produced the documentation indicating that they had completed the education, if they came in with a Philippine Government license or registration to practice their profession, and if they came in with the appropriate form that was issued by the hospital, I believe it was the form--I don't recall what the number was--it was authorized by the Immigration and Nationalization Service. There was nothing we could really do.

What we did was, we went to the Department and asked the Department of State to begin to investigate the qualifications of these people by going to the hospitals and acquainting the hospitals with what the educational situation in the Philippines was, that many of these people were not adequately trained. The curious thing was that many of the hospitals said, in effect, "We know that. We'll train them ourselves. The problem is we are so short staffed," because medical training institutions were not producing enough people in the United States to fill all of the positions of nurse and medical technologist spaces that were available. It was really, while I was there, a losing battle.

Sometime thereafter, there was an act passed by the Congress that tried to address the whole question of medical standards and the whole ECFMG examination process was considerably tightened.

*Q: ECFMG?*

WOLF: The Examination for the Certification of Foreign Medical Graduates. All of these people, at least the physicians, had to pass the ECFMG, but that whole procedure had been fairly loose. One of the things that I think was done by the act of Congress, which happened after I left the Philippines, was to tighten up the whole certification process. You had to meet much stiffer standards if you were going to be admitted as an exchange visitor physician, exchange visitor nurse, exchange visitor medical technologist. But that was the first issue we had.

The other issue was the issue of wives, foreign marriages. There were in California, particularly, a large number of American citizens of Filipino extraction, Filipino ethnicity, living. These were people who, when the Philippines achieved its independence in 1946, had been able through certain aspects of the treaty between the Philippines and the United States and the laws that were passed and enforced to implement the treaty, were able to become American citizens.

What happened with many of these people was they went to the United States, the men would go to the United States, work hard, make a lot of money, and then when they were in their fifties or sixties, they wanted to get married. What they did was send back to their home village, and there was a certain amount of fraud going on in the matching up of the men in the United States and the young women in the Philippines.

Q: *What was the fraud?*

WOLF: The fraud was that in some instances, a man would have his first wife come in, not for a wife, but to facilitate her immigration. It was a marriage in name only, and after a period of time, the divorce would occur, the guy would get something because he had gone . . .

Q: *He would be paid.*

WOLF: He would be paid, and the broker got a percentage. He got a percentage from the man and he got a percentage from the woman.

Q: *The broker being somebody in the Philippines or in the United States?*

WOLF: Usually in the Philippines. We were constantly trying to find out how this fraudulent matching of phony brides with phony husbands was going forward. It was a very, very difficult thing to do. My guess is that for every ring that was broken, another two came into existence.

**GUNTHER K. ROSINUS**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1968-1973)**

*Gunther K. Rosinus was born in Germany in 1928 and emigrated to the Cincinnati, Ohio in 1938. He received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Harvard University. In 1951, Mr. Rosinus joined the State Department, serving in the Information Research Bureau and as a Southeast Asian Affairs analyst. When USIS began in 1953, he transferred. He served in Germany, and Japan, and with the Inspection Corps. Mr. Rosinus was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1989.*

ROSINUS: That brings me or brings us, I should say, to the Philippine experience, in the sense that I earlier referred to a major program we launched in the Philippines as having shown the soundness, I think, of the integration of all the elements of public diplomacy. But let me back up

a minute before going to that to mention the major thrust in the Philippines and the setting in the Philippines when we got there. I went first as CAO and then ended as Deputy Country PAO.

We encountered a Philippines in 1968 that was increasingly and stridently anti-American, particularly among the university students, the younger university professors -- the intelligentsia, if you will. The barricades were going up, the street demonstrations were taking place, the media also, of course, was affected. A lot of misinformation about the American presence, about the economic history of the Laurel-Langley agreement, about foreign investment, about military jurisdiction, a lot of feeding of emotional fires.

We sat down and asked ourselves what might be the best approach. Again, we came to the idea that we were going to try to speak directly to the issues through a cultural program, a cultural/informational program. We created what was called the National Student Leaders Seminar.

In brief, it was called the Tagaytai Seminar because it took place in a very lovely, scenic setting above a volcanic lake so named. What we did was to go around the Philippines and gather from all of the leading universities key student leaders, particularly student leaders who had been in the vanguard of some of the anti-Americanism, and asked them to come up for five days to Tagaytai. For five days, we had a live-in seminar, from morn to night -- and often well into the night!

We asked them to come up and spend five days with us. We thought the best thing to do would be to try to inject elements of fact and rationality into what had become an extremely emotional, anti-American setting.

We called upon both American and Philippine resources to lead discussions, mornings and afternoons, with fun in the evenings, on a wide variety of political, economic and sociological subjects grouped under such topics as "The Complexities of Change", "Agenda for the '70s", "Youth and National Progress", "Reflections on the Realities of Change", "Development in the '70s".

These young people were interested in the development of their own country and the development of their own identity. We tried to expose them to the fact that these things were not being blocked by the United States, that there was a history of relationships that had certain facts and legacies, and that there was a history of military bases that had certain facts involved in it and that had certain tradeoffs if they were going to try to get rid of them, if they were going to get rid of them.

There were tradeoffs in foreign investment, if they were going to try to shut it out and what the penalties would be; that there were internal problems in the process of development, in the process of policy formulation that could not simply be ignored by shouting slogans on the barricades.

We tried to expose them, in other words, to the aspects that these titles indicate, to the realities of foreign affairs, of U.S.-Philippine history and relations and of national developmental problems. Yes?

*Q: Now, these four booklets that you have here, these paperbacks, are they a reportage on the conference subject matter or are they booklets that were prepared as preparation for or as a result of those conferences?*

ROSINUS: These are booklets that contain all the presentations by the speakers at these conferences as well as student questions and discussions. We were able to enlist in the Philippines, because we had superb contact at all levels of Philippine society, from President Marcos on down-in retrospect, a name that raises other problems, but nonetheless, he was the head of the country.

*Q: He was somewhat of a different character in the earlier years, too.*

ROSINUS: Exactly. He was, up until martial law and the subsequent years following that.

We were able to gather all kinds of interesting people from the universities and from government, ministers of government, leading professors, political and civic leaders, developmental specialists, the leading population specialist in the Philippines, for example -- incidentally, Marshall Greene, then Assistant Secretary for Asia, I believe, used to get a great kick out of her name, her name was Mercedes Concepcion. Marshall used to get a kick out of the fact that here was the leading Planned Parenthood expert in the Philippines who was addressed as "Miss Concepcion".

*Q: We had a specialist on family control and planned parenthood whose name was Philander Claxton.*

ROSINUS: I'll be damned. There you go. The two of them could have easily gotten together, right?!

At any rate, these seminars became really high-powered things to which, year after year, the student leaders were eager to come. They started suspiciously in the first year. As a matter of fact, we were told after the first seminar that one student had brought a disassembled rifle in his bag because he was convinced that the CIA, which was one of the bugaboos of Philippine nationalism, that the CIA was going to swoop down on these poor students and do something dreadful to them.

Well, this turned out to be a really fascinating series. The booklets you are talking about contained the presentations by both Filipino and American speakers, and there is a great variety - the whole political spectrum is represented here, from nationalists to internationalists, from leftists to conservatives, all exposed to discussions with these students.

They were assembled in these booklets. These booklets became a very important part of this totality of public affairs approaches that I mentioned to you before in terms of the total impact of this project. There were, during my time, five of these seminars and booklets, from '69 to '73.

The program was continued after martial law, but it soon shifted its focus because, for obvious reasons, the student disquiet and intellectual disquiet had been severely dampened by the imposition of martial law, so there was no way of really gathering that force again for further discussions.

*Q: Let me ask you, once these books were compiled and published, what kind of a distribution system did you have to get these out, and how widely were they bought and used in the Philippines?*

ROSINUS: These books were issued in 25,000 copies each year. They went, of course, to all of the participants in multi-copies to enable them to provide them to their friends. It became a matter of honor to have been chosen for the Tagaytai Seminar as time went by because this recognized their student leadership.

They went out to all the students, to all those who had participated, to all the speakers, to all libraries, all universities and media in the country because we had an extensive list, of course, for our magazine distribution. We had the *Free World* magazine in the Philippines, we culled that list. We know, for example, that the booklets achieved wide classroom use throughout the Philippines.

It went to all the developmental institutions because the subject dealt so much with the political and economic development of the Philippines and the historic and potential U.S. role in it.

It went also overseas. I recall in 1980, during a speaking tour for CINCPAC in Southeast Asia, going through the Southeast Asia Studies Institute of the University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur. The director took me through the library and as I was ambling through the library what should strike my eye but five copies of the Tagaytai Seminar booklets sitting up there on the shelf and having been pretty thoroughly thumbed through apparently by non-Filipinos.

*Q: Did it also have a bookstore distribution?*

ROSINUS: It had a free bookstore distribution. We were not able to go into the selling business, although we had requests from the leading publisher in the Philippines, could he please publish it and sell it. At that point, for some reason, we were unable to do so. I don't recall what the legal problem was.

*Q: Turned down by the headquarters in Washington, I presume.*

ROSINUS: I think it was, as I recall, for some legal copyright or god knows what reason this was done, but at any rate, they got a very extensive distribution. These seminars were wonderful for those of us who stayed with the young people and their intellectual compatriots during those five years because it certainly steeped us in Philippine thought and Philippine problems.

All you have to do is look through the Table of Contents of these booklets and you see the sort of stuff that is dealt with, everything from U.S.-Philippine military relations through constitutional convention problems and social forces and reform population problems, foreign policies for the '70s in the Philippines and just the whole -- across the board.

*Q: Who initially was the instigator of this -- whose idea was it?*

ROSINUS: That was my -- my instigation was to set up such a seminar and, of course, my staff at that time particularly Jack Crockett, who was in the Philippines for many years, was extremely helpful in helping to formulate some of the thoughts.

*Q: You were the one that organized this thing and established it in the first instance?*

ROSINUS: Yes, in this fashion. There had been a student leader seminar a couple years before that had dealt with building democracy or something of that sort -- a more theoretical, somewhat more cultural concept.

*Q: Was that the citizen's education project?*

ROSINUS: I don't know whether it was part of that.

*Q: I have the feeling it was because that was something that was instigated by Earl Wilson and it had sort of an up and down ride. Finally, he was unable to persuade enough people of its value so that after one very excellent trial in Korea, it sort of fell by the wayside.*

ROSINUS: I see. Well, this was a project that Ed Mattos had put together as cultural officer in the Philippines a few years before I came and, as I say, it had brought students together to deal with such questions as democratic growth and development and things of that sort.

So, we took the idea of putting student leaders together and then we determined how these students could best be selected and put together in a much longer seminar setting and then we reformulated the whole approach in terms of what the subject matter should be and the nature of the speakers and so forth and moved on into this seminar series.

It did demonstrate the unity of public affairs approaches, I thought very well, and here is where I quote again from this point I made earlier about the fallacy that information and cultural programs are separate and separable. I wrote at that time that an actual field example could perhaps best illuminate this fallacy:

"The recent (1977) Leonard Marx Foundation Award for creative communication in public diplomacy was given for a project toward Philippine student leaders during a time of rising anti-American sentiment and challenge to the American presence.

"It was a project that ultimately had impact far wider than the students involved and reached even onto the floor of the Philippine constitutional convention. [We can talk about that a little after I finish this little quote.]

"Essentially the project was a five-day seminar, that is, a cultural/academic framework. Within the seminar, the discussions centered on developmental policies and on U.S.-Philippine relations, which was an informational exercise. After the seminar, selected student attendees were chosen for the Pacific Student Leader project, which was an exchange program activity. From the seminar came a series of publications distributed throughout the Philippine Islands and other places, which was a book and publications project.

"None of these elements in themselves could have had nearly the effect that the totality of the package did have, a fact that supports in microcosm the contention and experience of every good PAO for the last twenty years, that the sum of all public affairs tools applied in a meaningful fashion is greater than its parts; and that goes double for all the elements of USIA and State/CU, including the Voice of America."

So, that was a point I made subsequent to those seminars in a later writing. But to get back to the seminar, what were some of the impacts? Well, for one thing, there were clear and identifiable changes of mind among a significant number of the student leaders away from emotional radicalism and, interestingly enough, many of them ended up in important positions within their own society, dealing with some of the realities and complexities they had come to appreciate during the seminars.

Many went into opposition during martial law and remained in opposition, came out again with the new government. So, in a sense, our contacts in those days helped bridge the transference from the martial law regime with which we had been dealing to contact with the new government of Mrs. Aquino.

One of the guys, for example, who attended the seminar is now a senior advisor to the Foreign Minister. A number of the resource people whom we used at that time are now in government with Mrs. Aquino.

Others of the former students are involved in international affairs of various kinds; others are in banking and in economic institutions and in universities at high levels. Interestingly enough, they formed their own alumni group, having some pride in being Tagaytai graduates, which continued to bring them together and provided contact with the embassy.

When I went back in 1980 to the Philippines, some, eight years after the last seminar that I had led, some thirty or forty gathered for a special party again, as graduates of the seminar. All of it is to me a confirmation that there was some real intellectual and emotional impact through this integrated approach to public diplomacy.

The books, I am sure, have been well used throughout the Islands and beyond.

*Q: They were all in English?*

ROSINUS: These are almost all in English, some Tagalog, but of course, the Filipinos use English -- that is no problem at all -- in their university structure.

I mentioned the constitutional convention. That was an important political evolution on which we had also focused at that time.

It was literally some "founding fathers" getting together in the Philippines to evolve a new constitution for the Republic. It was, of course, cut short by the imposition of martial law, but while it was going on in 1971, parts of '72, my office was very quietly but very much involved both by virtue of the fact that many of the delegates to the convention had also been resource people for us at the seminars and by virtue of the booklets having been in their hands, and by virtue of contacts made with them in other ways, particularly the American Studies Seminars, which we had also given a political direction that had relevance to their constitutional concerns.

We became very much involved in providing information of both a policy nature and a political nature in terms of constitutional language and experience in America, how was this framed and how was that framed and feeding facts in on the U.S.-Philippine relationship that, I think, visibly helped in the framing of their own language, proposed language for constitutional changes, to avoid some of the more extreme language that might have been inserted had we not been in such close touch with each other about, you know, nationalism, the thrust of nationalism, let's say, on military base relations or military base sovereignty or military base jurisdiction, language about foreign investment; that sort of thing.

There could have been, I think, probably much more radical formulations had we not been in such close contact with one another. Our political section of the embassy realized this and was very complimentary about it and utilized our contacts extensively for their own purposes.

*Q: Who was ambassador at that time?*

ROSINUS: Henry Byroade was there at that time, just before William Sullivan came. Sullivan came after martial law and just before I left. G. Mennen Williams had been my first ambassador, former governor of Michigan, great guy to work with, very pleasant person.

*Q: Who was the PAO?*

ROSINUS: Hank Miller was originally the PAO and let's see, Les Squires, with whom I worked as deputy. So, those were interesting years, but they were brought to a screaming halt by the martial law imposition. But I think the legacy lingered and, as I say, those people who worked with us in those days from the radical spectrum of the student movement are now, under this new regime, once again politically and economically active in much more responsible ways.

*Q: I think that is one of the best illustrations of the joint contribution of cultural activities, intellectual activities and the informational activities into a single integrated program.*

ROSINUS: You just cannot separate them.



*Q: I agree that too often it has been thought the posts should be separate. I don't agree with it myself, but anyway, we have talked enough, I guess, on that particular front. Do you have anything else that you wanted to say now about your years in the Philippines, any significance?*

ROSINUS: In the Philippines, we had, of course, one great advantage as Americans. We could talk with almost anyone, even the most anti-American public exponents, because of the historic relationship, which they deemed to be special also, of course, and which was special even as they were trying to break away from it, and because of the great Philippine proclivity for personal contact.

They are a wonderfully gregarious people and put personal relationships above all else, I think, so that we were able to stay in touch with these most radical people, to get them to attend such seminars and, therefore, to provide some facts and some reason to dampen some of the emotional excesses of that time.

*Q: You said that you felt that these conferences did in a number of instances really change the attitude and mind of. ...*

ROSINUS: No question, yes, no question. We heard that from them. We saw it in their continued contact with us after they left the seminar and we heard it from the presidents of the universities who had sent them, who were thankful.

*Q: It is very heartwarming.*

ROSINUS: Yes.

*Q: One of the cases in which you do see some result of your efforts.*

ROSINUS: That exactly.

*Q: Not all is invisible.*

ROSINUS: Very invisible most of the time, but effective over the long run, which is why I think the concept of USIA's function as I previously described it, namely to project our open society and all its ways and then the policies that flow from it, is the only kind of permanent setting in which you can have faith that something over time will be promoted, namely openness and dialogue and information and rationality.

**HENRY BYROADE**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1969-1973)**

*Ambassador Henry Byroade was born in Indiana in 1913. He graduated from West Point in 1937. He served in the Hawaiian Islands from 1937-1939. While still in the service, he received a master's degree from Cornell in 1940. In addition to Egypt, his Foreign Service posts included South Africa, Afghanistan, Burma, the Philippines, and Pakistan. He was interviewed by Niel M. Johnson on September 19, 1988.*

Q: *Then from Burma you went to the Philippines in '69?*

BYROADE: Yes.

Q: *Under the Marcoses. I see you have an autographed picture here from Imelda Marcos.*

BYROADE: Yes. Marcos had been in power about four years; was President when I got there. He was reelected just a month before I got there. Then, during my tenure things got very much worse in the Philippines, daily demonstrations, riots, which turned into violence. The Government almost fell apart. Senior politicians had their own private armies; everybody had a gun. It was a lawless society, and boom, along came martial law. I worked very hard on Marcos to keep him from doing that.

Q: *From doing it, or doing it?*

BYROADE: From doing it. He never used the word "martial law" but he talked about the possible necessity of taking "extraordinary measures." It was clear he was talking about some kind of curtailment of civil liberties. I felt pretty strongly about the democracy that we put there, our background in the Philippines, and I thought there would be a terrific uproar in Washington if he did. I told him that. But eventually he did it, and I was wrong. I predicted a grudging acceptance on the part of the Philippine people, because democracy at the very village level was really perking along in great fashion. The national pastime was politics in the Philippines, and they took it seriously. Everybody was running for sheriff or the president of the school board, or something. I was surprised; the Philippine people--I'd say 85 percent of them--thought that things had reached the stage where martial law was a good idea. They banned things like private armies, and everybody cheered; and they picked up all the loose--not all--but they picked up thousands, hundreds of thousands, of guns that everybody had.

I remember in the Baguio Country Club, at the reception desk, there was a sign that said, "Check Your Gun Before Entering the Dining Room."

Q: *Sounds like the "Wild West."*

BYROADE: Yes, it was. People liked the first moves under martial law. Marcos brought in a group of bright, young, fairly honest, very well-educated--mostly in our universities--technocrats, and gave them the ministries. The economy went forward, and the business community had new confidence. I would say the first year of martial law was the best government the Philippines ever had. And it then, of course, went on to deteriorate into corruption. We know now the extent of it, which hadn't started all that much when I was there, I

think. But it certainly became a great hindrance to the Philippines later on. The fortune that the Marcoses...

*Q: Did you see evidence of that when you were there, that they were, let us say, expropriating funds, or misappropriating?*

BYROADE: Not much. I think, looking back, I think some of it had started. Of course, we were foreign diplomats; we don't have access to their bank accounts. You hear rumors. But I would say, considering Philippine politics, as a general rule, by the time I left it hadn't gotten out of hand. Power corrupts, you know, and it eventually went to the point where the Marcoses owned a share of almost everything in the Philippines.

*Q: Was there an issue over the American bases there, with Subic Bay?*

BYROADE: Not in my day. There are always problems; there are problems around the bases, an accidental death or something, and there's a demonstration about it. We had good relations in general on the bases; we had a great problem with criminal jurisdiction. Philippine lawyers wanted to try all our cases. In most countries around the world they surrender that right to us, and we court martial our own people. The Philippines are very touchy about that, but there's a lot of graft connected with the courts, and so on. But they weren't big problems. The bases were able to operate very efficiently, and as a matter of fact, they still are today.

*Q: If there was, let's say, an opposition party, or leadership of opposition as there was perhaps in Germany with Schumacher and Adenauer, did the Ambassador feel free to have direct contacts with the head of opposition parties?*

BYROADE: In my first week in Manila, I met secretly once for about four hours with [Benigno] Aquino, who was the head of the opposition. We talked from about 10 o'clock until 2 o'clock in the morning. I was impressed with him in the beginning, but not later on. I don't think Aquino would have been the answer for the Philippines.

*Q: Aquino?*

BYROADE: Yes. I'm talking about her husband, not Corazon.

*Q: Her husband, okay, he's the one that you talked to.*

BYROADE: She was there for the whole discussion. She didn't say anything.

*Q: What was your impression of him?*

BYROADE: I was extremely impressed with Aquino for the first couple of hours, a very articulate man. He said a lot of nice things about what he wanted to do for the Philippine people and so forth. Towards the end he said things like, "Byroade, don't make any mistake about me; I want power in the Philippines, and I'm willing to kill to get it, and I've done so a lot of times."

*Q: He actually said he was willing to kill?*

BYROADE: He did. You know, it really turned me off on him. Now, the story is that Aquino, during his years in jail and his stay in the United States, turned religious, and became quite a different man. I never saw him after I left the Philippines; I don't know. People say he wouldn't have made such a statement later on, but I don't know.

*Q: Do you think that Marcos was willing to kill to prevent him from coming back into power?*

BYROADE: No, I do not think so. Marcos was a very smart politician, and was far too smart to pull such a stupid thing. My guess is supporters of Marcos killed him deliberately, but I don't think Marcos did that. It's Marcos personally now I'm talking about; I'm not talking about the family or anyone else, I'm talking about Marcos as a man. I think he was too smart to have a hand in that.

**RONALD D. PALMER**  
**Philippine Desk Officer**  
**Washington DC (1969-1971)**

**Political/Military Officer**  
**Manila (1971-1975)**

*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: Let's talk about that. That was 1969-71. Then from 1971-75 you were political-military officer in the Philippines. When you came on the Desk what was the situation in the Philippines and what were our interests there?*

PALMER: I came to the Philippine Desk at an extremely interesting time. President Nixon was going to East Asia at that point. I came on the Desk about July at a time when the papers were being put together for his visit to Manila. That was an extremely interesting introduction. I did a fair amount of the writing of some of these papers.

My first real introduction to the fast-track bureaucratic world was the receipt of a copy of a memorandum from Henry Kissinger to the Secretary of State.

*Q: Kissinger at that point was head of the National Security Council.*

PALMER: Kissinger had written to the Secretary to say that there were many people in the Philippines who thought that the bases were a major problem in our relations and that we needed to have a study of the value of the bases and the various legal and political issues involved in operating them. This task fell upon me in 1969. So I had to organize from the Desk, the legal, political/military and the political responses to questions that were raised. Frankly we did the writing of the original papers on the basis of which negotiations were commenced in 1970-71. It was fairly clear that we had more base land than we needed. A lot more because as I recall in those days Clark Air Base was 130,000 sq. acres, or something like that.

But there were also questions about the extent of our unilateral control and jurisdictions (I do not mean criminal jurisdiction). It seemed to me that it was possible to contemplate the issue of joint control, joint operation, etc. Although some of those concepts were not really further developed until the 1976-77 negotiations under Ambassador William Sullivan, they actually had been in place for some time before that.

The Philippine Desk in 1969-70 was an extremely active place because at that time the Marcos government had been in place since 1966. There were a lot of things being attempted in regard to future relations as well as an effort to try to deal with some of the lingering post-colonial problems. There was sugar, which is always a problem with the Philippines.

*Q: What is the problem with sugar?*

PALMER: There is the question of the sugar quota. The sugar issues in general are one of the more complicated and sticky problems. There are questions about tariffs, quotas. As it happens a good deal of the Philippine sugar is also finally processed in the United States. So there was always that.

And there were questions about the coconut levy also. I forget now exactly what the issue was, but there is always a problem between soy bean oil which is produced in the United States and any oil that comes from the outside. Coconut oil, of course, has sought to have a place in the US market for some time, just as palm oil has more recently. Let me tell you, the soy bean lobby is a very implacable enemy to have.

Hemp is another issue. It has now been replaced by plastic. There were issues also about the so-called Laurel-Langley Agreements under which Americans had the rights of nationals to operate in the Philippine economy.

So I had two very active years working under Dick Usher, a very fine man, who basically let me carry on the question of inter-Departmental negotiations which was handled by the Under Secretaries Committee in those days. The Under Secretary at that time was Elliot Richardson. The man on his staff who was responsible for these papers was Arthur Hartman. So I was able to meet those people and work with them early on.

I was recruited, if that is the exact word, for the Embassy in the Philippines by Hank Byroade, Ambassador Henry C. Byroade. Byroade handpicked his staff. The Deputy, the number two, was a man by the name of William Hamilton. Frank Maestroni, who went on to become an

ambassador, was the political counselor and I was the political/military guy. Terry Arnold, who later on was a terrorism expert, was the chief of the economic section. Frank Ready was the Admin Counselor.

Byroade basically said to us as a group in 1971, "I recruited you, I got you because you are suppose to be among the best at your trades in the Foreign Service. You have my blessings so go out and do your jobs. I won't look over your shoulder. If you need me I will be there. But basically I expect that you will be able to do whatever it is you are supposed to do." It was the most exhilarating, active, energetic, fulfilling kind of experience.

*Q: What was the atmosphere...we are covering both the time at the Desk and in the Philippines, 1969-75...toward the Marcos regime? This was early on. Later he has fallen into great disrepute. How did you look at it and was there a difference between how you saw things and the official line at the Embassy?*

PALMER: I think one way to understand the Philippines is to reflect on what happened in the decade of the 1960s. Recall that Richard Nixon when he was out of government was very well received by the Philippine government. In those days he was working for Pepsico and he had occasion to travel around the world. Whenever he would come through the Philippines he would be extremely well-treated by the Philippine people. A general characteristic of the Filipinos is that they are very hospitable, generous folks, Nixon never forgot that they had made an effort to be helpful and pleasant to him. So that when he became President the Philippines always had a place in his heart.

There was no question in the staff in the Embassy, either before or after I got there, that Marcos was one of the good guys. He came to power in the elections of 1965, and was thoughtful and intelligent. He was like politicians elsewhere as honest as he needed to be. But there was little of the great stench of corruption that attached to him in later years.

While I was on the Desk there was a period, I believe it was 1970, when neither the President nor anyone close to him at a political level could travel. This was the time that Imelda Marcos' Cultural Center in Manila was to be inaugurated so Nixon called upon his good friend, Ronald Reagan, to go to Manila to represent him. So at that time I was able to talk with Michael Deaver about making the visit for the Reagans as successful and pleasant as possible in Manila. And believe me, the Filipinos can make a very pleasant visit.

Byroade got on very well with Marcos. They were men who understood each other. I will even venture to say that it was my impression that Marcos looked up to Byroade who was a very experienced officer. Byroade, as you know, had been the youngest man to make general since the Civil.

*Q: He had been a West Point officer who...*

PALMER: He came out of West Point in about 1938 or 1939 and went to China where he built roads and airfields for Stilwell. It was in that process that he was promoted very rapidly. He also became very good friends with Zhou En-lai. Eventually he was the Chief of Staff for Marshall on

Marshall's mission to China. So Henry Byroade was a man who was handsome, was popular, both women and men as well as his staff liked him. He was well suited to getting along with Marcos. They were men's men together. I think Byroade used to play some golf with him, etc.

So, there was a rather macho atmosphere between the two. You know that Marcos was macho and we had a manly Ambassador that had already proved himself. This was his fourth or fifth Embassy.

Byroade was a man who got around the country, who liked the people, who would go out to parties and enjoy himself. He set a kind of standard so we were all very active in the life of the country. Most of us developed relationships with the Marcoses and their supporters and family as well. In fact, when Ambassador Sullivan came to the Philippines in 1973, after martial law was declared, and I will come back to that... I used to go with him to play a game called pelota (like racket ball) against Marcos and his bodyguard. I certainly was not on intimate terms in the way that the Ambassador was with the Philippine leadership but I had good relationships through the entire Marcos establishment including General Ver, the head of the Presidential Security Guards. I also knew many of the leaders of the opposition.

Martial law was declared in September, 1972. It was the case in 1972 that things felt quite serious, quite bad somehow. There was a certain amount of communist activity. There certainly was the Muslim fighting going on in Mindanao, that few people remember now, which was very, very bad in the early seventies. The atmosphere was depressing. Through the summer of 1972 there had been unusual typhoon activity. Central Luzon was under water; it was raining cats and dogs and this kept up for weeks and weeks on end. It seemed to me that the country, the people and even the government to some extent became depressed, as you will in that kind of setting. There was almost a palpable sigh of relief when martial law was declared. There was no question that Ferdinand Marcos was the most popular man in the country for a good long time after the declaration of martial law.

One of the first things that he did under martial law was to have a person who was trafficking in heroin taken out and shot with television cameras looking on. That led very quickly to the drying up of black market sale of heroin. This is an important point because it looked as if there was going to be an epidemic.

You may recall there was a heroin epidemic in Bangkok in this period which touched the International School there. It touched the school in Manila as well. There were men who were literally giving candy to kids, small children, which had heroin in it. Obviously after the child became accustomed to that they were asking for money. There were several children at the Manila International School who developed a heroin problem.

So there were many reasons why martial law was popular. There was a feeling that the President was somehow going to take hold of things.

Another thing that was very popular about martial law was that there was a curfew. The curfew was initially put at 12 o'clock. The Philippines has traditionally not been very easy to govern place. Manila has been spectacular in that regard. There was a good deal of weapons carrying.

First, the martial law authorities said that anyone carrying weapons would be subject to severe penalties of law. Second, the curfew was absolute--anyone caught out after 12 o'clock would be jailed automatically.

This had several results. One, the level of violence went right down and two, the Philippines is after all a Latin-influenced society and there had been a certain tradition either from Spain or from Latin America, of the mistress, the *duerida*. With martial law, daddy really had to get home by 12 o'clock so Marcos was very popular with the wives.

I left the Philippines in 1975, Marcos was still very popular then. Martial law was still going on. The curfew had been put back to 1 o'clock in the morning, but it was seriously enforced. I recall once when I was duty officer I had to be out after the curfew and one could feel quite nervous about being out there as the only car on the road.

*Q: I was in South Korea from 1976-79 where they had a 12 o'clock curfew. We all liked it for many of the same reasons. We had teenage children and knew where they were.*

*Now one last question...two questions I would like to ask, what was your impression of William Sullivan, the Ambassador? Was he there long enough while you were there to compare him to Byroade?*

PALMER: I had two years of William Sullivan. I suggested to you that Byroade was very much Chairman of the Board. Or perhaps another way of saying it would be that he was very much a general. He kept control of the overall strategy but basically he gave his commanders field authority. I am using a military analogy here but it is one that applies. It seems to me, he was like a confident businessman also. He delegated authority. He was very self-confident. He had twice weekly meetings. A Tuesday meeting and a Thursday meeting. The Thursday meeting was a larger one, the country team meeting. His Tuesday meeting was really for chiefs of section or senior officers. It was a very informal kind of meeting. I thought the world of Henry Byroade and think the world of him now.

I found him a delightful person, someone extremely good at engendering high morale in his officers. He expressed concern about me at one point before martial law was declared because I had come to know some of the senior Filipinos and was getting invited to all kinds of parties being given by folks who had Marcos or at least Imelda in their social circle. In those days the Philippines unfortunately resembled Madrid more than a tropical country because the party would be given and dinner often wouldn't be served until after midnight. So I was getting home at 2 or 3 in the morning because you couldn't really leave these places early. So he said to me once, "Look, I am being paid to do this, but I don't really like it all that much. You have a very heavy job and I know that you get to the office early. I can sleep and get my rest, but you need to be careful about burning your candle at both ends." That really touched me. I said, "Well, you know, I really don't know what to do." [As political-military officer I was chief on the American side of the bases joint renegotiation committee. I was chairman for the American side for the Bases Joint Labor Committee, the Criminal Jurisdiction Committee, etc. All of these activities involved people at the colonel level from the bases and we would get together at the bases or they would come to Manila. Also we had some very vexing problems with regard to criminal



jurisdiction that sometimes required terribly long and complicated negotiations. So I was really working my tail off.] So I said to him, "But I am meeting all these people and they are being very responsive. What should I do?" He said, "Well, I guess you just have to grin and bear it."

So, along came Bill Sullivan, who had a daily staff meeting at 8 o'clock every day. Although martial law had cut back on social activity somewhat there were still plenty of activities making a 8 o'clock staff meeting every day very hard. In addition, he had his secretary come along to note actions assigned at the staff meeting each day, all of which were to be completed by close of business that day. Well, the Philippines was a hard place to have this kind of managerial style because there was a good deal to do every day. I don't know where he had developed this management style, but there were very few things that you could tie up by the end of the day in the Philippines.

I had known Sullivan for years because he was working on Vietnam back in the late sixties when I was working on the Philippine side. In any case at one point, Nathaniel Davis, who was a very able officer who became Director General, was trying to interest me in studying Russian and working on the Soviet Union which in those days was a fairly elite kind of FSO activity. I recall going to a party in the early sixties where Sullivan was.

So we had a very good man to man relationship, but as manager to subordinate our relationship was clouded. I had gotten along very well as an independent operator under Byroade, but with Sullivan he wanted a much tighter control on Embassy activities than Byroade thought necessary. His man in achieving this tighter control was Skipper Purnell, Lewis M. Purnell, who was the DCM. Purnell came to the Philippines with a very Indonesian perspective, being used to a different kind of atmosphere. Actually he and Sullivan had the view that the bases were the problem in bilateral relationships between the US and the Philippines and the way to improve bilateral relations was to get rid of the bases (this is, of course, a gross simplification of their views, I assure you).

Well, I was inclined to their view, but it was 1975, not 1990, and we were only recently out of a fighting role in Vietnam and the question of our stability, what our word, our commitment, our credibility were worth were very real. People were worried whether the US would stay in Asia. So, I found myself in a very difficult position with a man who in a jocular way, and sometimes not so jocular way, basically had the view that the bases were getting in the way of development of a good relationship between the United States and the Philippines. I was very much like the boy who was holding the dirty end of the stick. I felt very strongly that the bases needed to be maintained, that we needed to find a way eventually to walk away from the bases relationship but not at that time. I was in agreement that sooner or later, however, this would be in the interests of both governments.

*Q: We are talking about that on your watch there Vietnam had fallen...*

PALMER: Well, Vietnam fell in 1975. By then Bill Sullivan and I had sorted things out. I had had two years with Byroade, 1971-73, in which I had very fine evaluations and had a great experience. My third year I got very poor marks and I had to write a rebuttal in my evaluation because I took it as a matter of fact that I had been brought there essentially to work on the bases.

Whereas the concern of the DCM was that I was not doing enough in the terms of more general political-military reporting. Frankly, Skipper Purnell and I did not get along.

But as time went on, as it were, my personal relationship with Sullivan got better and better. My chief of section was Frazier Meade. I got along very well with Frazier, but he was trying to do what the DCM wanted. I was also but our priorities were different.

It is funny, a friend of mine who has known me since I went into the Foreign Service, saw me recently and we had a good chance to talk. He said that I was well-trained but possessed of more independence than was typical of FSOs of my generation.

So I am very sympathetic to whatever it was that Skipper wanted to do with me. Perhaps he wanted to mold me to make me more a person to go in the direction that he felt would be more useful for me. Yet, I was then an old O-2, as was Meade, and Skipper's way was not mine. More than that I am sorry to say that if the Ambassador's policy was to speed up the relinquishment of the bases, my own concept was that it should be done as slowly as possible.

So, I may claim success that perhaps I shouldn't claim. My attitude towards some of these issues that had to do with the bases was when in daily meetings the Ambassador would say to me, "Ron, what about....?" I would say, "Bill, what about it?" He would say, "Well, it is terrible." I would say, "Well, you know it has been going on that way for about 20 some years. There are things about the way in which things are done here that just don't bear too close looking at. There are rocks that you don't want to pick up because you won't like what is underneath. There are practices which have developed that are just historical practices. They are not neat but it is the way things work." He found that very difficult. His quite proper attitude was, "I don't want them to work like that, I want them to work in a neat and rational manner."

*Q: You were operating on a good American saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."*

PALMER: And, believe me, we were working with 17,000-18,000 American servicemen of whom say 12,000-13,000 would be at Clark, and 5,000-6,000 would be at Subic, with wives and children living outside the bases in Olongapo, which is near Subic, or in Angeles City which is adjacent to Clark Air Base. There were many opportunities for vice and various other kinds of problems. It was an untidy situation just by definition.

At one point one issue that made Bill Sullivan very unhappy was the issue of Camp John Hay. Camp John Hay was situated in Baguio, north of Luzon. There was a very small Air Force establishment there and a runway. The three most important features at John Hay were the slot machines in the Officers' Club, the Officers' Club itself, the Base Exchange and a golf course. Most of these facilities were used by Filipinos. He said, "Why is that?" I said, "It is because John Hay is the price we pay for being in the Philippines." Let it suffice to say that he didn't like that.

*Q: What you are saying here Ron is something I think we have all run across...the tendency for the new man to come on board and try to tidy things up. In many cases it is best not to tidy things up. It is uncomfortable but this is how things work. If they are really not out of control, you almost have to turn a blind eye to them if you want to do things well.*

PALMER: The thing is to understand. However, understanding takes longer than most people realize. Understanding can take months before things sort of fall into place. Since Sullivan, I believe, honestly liked me as I liked him, he gave me an increasing amount of leeway. I know he wasn't happy with me, but he gave me a certain amount of rope to hang myself. All this time I was working, working, working, trying to get him not to see things my way, but to develop that sense that things were here a long time before he got there and would be there a long time after he left.

Finally I developed the notion of him going to spend some time at John Hay himself because there was a very lovely house there for the American Ambassador. When I said before that the cost of doing business in the Philippines was John Hay I mean literally that if Marcos or other leaders wanted to spend some time playing golf, have a beer or visit the PX, or whatever, they had cards that permitted them to do that. There was a certain amount of control kept over this whole business by the local base commander and his commander at Clark. It was again one of those things that one had to live with.

So I was finally able to get the Ambassador to go and visit Baguio. He found the golf course wonderful, the house wonderful and he went back again before too long. I am not exaggerating when I say that after a while his attitude towards John Hays changed. He met Filipinos there and saw that there were reasons that John Hays was useful to us even though things were untidy. In time he came, to use the metaphor that many Filipinos had used with Byroade, that pulling out almost had a kind of sexual decoupling kind of meaning in the case of the Philippines. This was wasn't Germany or Japan, this was emotional and it would take a while to sort things out and telegraph our intentions in such a way that we would not be disruptive.

So things finally got to the point in terms of our relations where he would have me advance his travel which was very unusual since I was the political/military officer and not the political counselor. I went to Ilocos Norte in the north which at that time was being governed by Marcos' sister to prepare for a visit by Sullivan. We had a great time...two Irish politicians. Then I went south to Mindanao to do the same thing. Great fun.

So my fourth year, my second year with him, was a much more positive year. I had four wonderful years, but I thought my third year was going to kill me because Bill Sullivan was a man who, if he respected you, would get along with you, but if he got down on you, life could be terrible. He got down on the defense attaché and I had to do his work in some respects, including when the Commander-in-Chief, CINCPAC came to the country. I ended up being the escort officer, which is obviously a defense attaché type of job. Similarly they had me being responsible for the Joint US Military Assistant Group because of the political/military function and because they could work with me. I really got stretched to a fairly-thee-well in this experience.

*Q: In your contacts, what was your impression of the Philippine military at that time?*

PALMER: I thought then and I think now that Eddie Ramos who was the head of the Constabulary at that time was a great man. He was a West Point graduate as you know. He is the

Secretary of National Defense in the Philippines. (He is presently the President of the Philippines.) I knew most of the other commanders as well. I would say they varied. There were some who were probably better tennis players than they were military officers. It was clear that it was better to be stationed in Manila. To get the equipment and support for the operation that was going on in Mindanao it was probable that some officers were better off being in Manila in terms of being able to get that support. I did have the feeling though that the people who were fighting against the Muslims were at the end of a very long line and it was not always clear that they got the support, perhaps even political support up the line that they should have had.

So, at the field commander level I thought many of them were really quite outstanding. Some of the senior officers seemed to be quite good, some were corrupt which was quite evident. On the whole, my impression of the Philippine military was not as high as that of the Indonesian military.

*Q: Were you there when Vietnam fell?*

PALMER: I was there when Saigon fell.

*Q: How did this reflect itself? What were you doing?*

PALMER: When Saigon fell, we started getting vessels...it is relatively not far from the Philippines to Vietnam.

*Q: What kind of contact were you getting from our Saigon Embassy because obviously you were going to be the first port of call for anything that happened?*

PALMER: We were reading the newspapers. I obviously didn't see the cables because they were held very close. It was not obvious until quite late in the game. There was a moment when the whole central highlands fell and it was clear that there was nothing blocking the advance of the North Vietnamese troops or the Viet Cong forces. It was pretty clear then that the war was coming rapidly to a conclusion.

We started getting people telephoning us from Vietnam, especially from Saigon trying to get their friends out. They were trying to get help from the Philippines and our Embassy to send in aircraft and boats to get people out. For most of that period I was sitting in Manila. Had I been at Subic where the impact of refugees and the movement of such ancillary forces as we had in the region out of the theater occurred, I would have been more involved.

I do recall after the pull out occurred seeing Ambassador Graham Martin walking like a ghost up and down the halls of the Embassy in Manila outside my office on the second floor. I think he was a fair, pale man in any event, but he was as white as a sheet and seemed to be in shock. It was quite striking to see him because he had come to Manila a refugee, and only days before he had been the American overlord in Vietnam.

We had to deal, frankly, from the perspective of the US Embassy in the Philippines The US had important interests in the Philippines. The US hold in Vietnam was broken but we were still in

the Philippines and we had a legal basis for being in the Philippines. The bases agreement called for us to use the bases in a certain way. The fall of Saigon was an unusual situation and for those reasons we were able to prevail upon the Philippine authorities to allow boats, aircraft, etc. to come into the Philippines along with lots of people. But it was a very strange situation from the Philippine point of view and they were sensitive about their sovereignty.

Looking back, I think the Philippine Government deserves considerable credit for being as supportive as it was at that time in terms of responding to the situation of people coming out of Vietnam.

**RICHARD B. FINN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Manila (1970-1971)**

*Richard B. Finn was born in Niagara Falls, New York in 1917. He joined the Foreign Service in 1945. His career included positions in Japan, France, and the Philippines. Mr. Finn was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.*

*Q: Then you moved to Manila, 1970-71, as Deputy Chief of Mission. How did that job come about?*

FINN: Well, Marshall Green asked me if I would like it. He was the Assistant Secretary. I thought it would be interesting to take it and learn a little more about the area, so I did. I didn't know much about the Philippines. I didn't know our ambassador there.

*Q: Who was our Ambassador?*

FINN: Henry Byroade. The Philippines was a very interesting place. The culture gap between us and the Philippines is surprisingly narrow. They speak English and the Catholic faith is strong. But I have often felt that although they are engaging people, and well educated, they can't run a government. Somebody said that we brought them democracy but we didn't give them the sense of responsibility and a bureaucratic system that would support a strong democracy. That is largely true. This was the time that Marcos, who had been running the country as elected President, began to get nervous. And there was a fair amount of communist activity. I hadn't been there more than a few months when they suddenly told us that everybody had to have a bodyguard assigned to him. So you had people guarding your house, people riding in your car when you went somewhere. It was a scary experience.

*Q: Henry Byroade had been Ambassador in a number of places. How did he operate?*

FINN: Byroade was a shrewd man. He felt that he had to get along with Marcos. Marcos was the Philippines for most diplomatic purposes. So Byroade made sure that he got along well with Marcos and Mrs. Marcos. Both of them were very engaging, attractive people. I went over a

number of times when Byroade was on leave and found them very interesting people to meet with, very receptive, very friendly, very helpful to the United States.

One situation that was really very difficult for all of us, and particularly for me. This was the time of the Allende scrap in Chile. Mrs. Marcos told Byroade one day that she and her husband were terribly afraid that the Philippines faced a very similar threat in the form of communist threat to the government, a political threat at first but backed by violence to attempt to take over the government. Naturally this was reported to Washington. I think Mrs. Marcos had gone to the United States sometime around then and she also told people like Richard Helms of the CIA the same thing. It was pretty scary in Washington to have the wife of the head of a friendly government say that the country was under the threat of a communist takeover as in the case of Allende. So Byroade wanted to give support to Marcos.

Byroade was very unhappy with me because when he was away I took out to lunch the leading opposition figure, who was Benigno Aquino, who was later assassinated and whose wife became President of the Philippines. I looked upon my job requiring that I know what was going on in the Philippines. Aquino also happened to have very good Japanese connections. I remember going to a dinner in his house given for a prominent Japanese visitor. I didn't think I was consorting with the enemy or with the potential communist threat to the Philippines. You couldn't believe for an instant that Aquino, who was a very articulate, talkative man who knew all about America and had a lot of American friends, was somehow or other an agent of the Kremlin, even though the Philippines was a kind of wide-open place.

*Q: In a way did you feel that the Marcoses were calling the shots as far as naming what the threat was which inhibited us from dealing with this in a normal way?*

FINN: I think that is right. Marcos, in my opinion, was blowing up what was admittedly a nasty problem, as it was for a long time afterward in the Philippines. But never an unmanageable one or one threatening to take over the whole system in the Philippines. When Marcos and his wife said these things to Byroade, Byroade, I think, felt that we had to take some steps to protect ourselves and the American position in the Philippines.

*Q: How was this threat seen by the political section and the military section in the Embassy at the time?*

FINN: Nobody would try to claim that there wasn't a leftist threat. Whether it was an Allende type of threat--of course we didn't know that much about Chile--Allende, after all, was strong in winning elections. Marcos might not have been able to win an election, so one could say that if there was an election Marcos might lose and that would reinforce an Allende-type argument. Marcos' popularity had been going down as the country was not in very good shape. So there were enough bad things and scary things so that we were battenning down the hatches.

*Q: At the time how did you and the Embassy view Marcos?*

FINN: Frank Underhill was the political officer then. I think he would have agreed that Marcos was motivated in good part by a desire to retain power as much as fear of a genuine communist

threat to the state. So that we had to be careful to separate the two forces and not become the tool of Marcos. In some ways, I felt, the Ambassador was willing to report on to Washington the Allende argument without saying definitely that there is some truth to it. But how much truth there was, how serious the Allende type threat was, was a little hard for us to estimate and we did not want to overreact. So I think we went along with the head of government, who was our friend and supporter and would do almost anything we asked him to do.

*Q: What led to your early departure?*

FINN: I think the atmosphere in Manila and Byroade's feeling that I was not in sympathy with the Allende argument; I also felt that Mrs. Marcos, in particular, was an actress who was dramatizing the situation. Byroade said I was trying to "undercut" him.

I had more problems with Byroade on the personal side. He did not like my wife. My wife went to a New England college and is a serious person. Byroade was well known for seeking out attractive women. I know having talked to others that Byroade had a reputation for this type of thing. He told me once that Mrs. Marcos offered to set him up with a "pad downtown" anytime he wanted it. He could have a place to stay and girl friends and anything he wanted. He said the problem was that he was too old to take her up on it.

He called my wife in one day and said, "I understand the Embassy Women's Club is raising money for a scholarship fund for young Filipino women to go to America for education. I want you to know that my wife and I don't believe that Filipino women need more education. So your group should give up this plan to have an education scholarship program." My wife found that pretty hard to take. She was a blue stocking type and not his type of woman.

*Q: Being married to a blue stocking type myself, I know exactly what...*

FINN: Yes, but it shouldn't happen in the Service like that, but it does. At the end Byroade called me and my wife in and started by telling her that what he was going to say might give her a nervous breakdown but he would say it anyway. He had decided that the best thing was to get me and my wife sent home. So he did. The Department did not argue or investigate.

**KENNETH A. STAMMERMAN**  
**Commercial Officer**  
**Manila (1970-1971)**

*Kenneth A. Stammerman was born in Kentucky in 1943. He graduated from Bellermino College in 1965 and entered the Foreign Service in 1966. He has served in post in Israel, the Philippines, France, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Stammerman was interviewed in 2000 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*Q: You were in Manila from when to when now?*

STAMMERMAN: I was in Manila from early 1970 through December of 1971.

*Q: When you arrived in Manila, who was the ambassador?*

STAMMERMAN: The ambassador all the while I was there was Henry Byroade.

*Q: He had quite a reputation in many ways. He was the youngest general in the Army in WWII. How was that? I realize you were some distance removed, but...*

STAMMERMAN: Actually, I only saw and spoke to Ambassador Byroade twice, when I arrived and when I left. It was a massive embassy there, and unless you were a fairly senior officer, you didn't even deal with the ambassador. He was very much involved in the base negotiations and there were a lot of things happening in the Philippines at the time. Marcos was consolidating his rule. They had one election while I was there, which was the last semi-free election in the Philippines for a long time. So, he was very much involved with them, so even if you pulled duty, which was seldom, the embassy was so huge that the duty officer would report to the DCM, not to the ambassador. I had almost nothing to do with the ambassador. The only connection I can think of at all was when my spouse was required to help with one of the charities that Mrs. Marcos was sponsoring, they rolled bandages, some medical charity Mrs. Marcos was at. All the embassy ladies were drafted. Most of us, the junior officers especially, thought that the Marcos' were crooks, which they were, and people in the Embassy should have nothing to do with, and this was a source of some resentment that we would even lend our assistance in anything she was involved in.

*Q: What was, as you saw it when you arrived there in 1970, what was the political economic situation there?*

STAMMERMAN: The main issue was working out the American relationship with the Philippines at the close of the Laurel-Langley arrangements. These were the arrangements that had prevailed from the time of independence in 1946, full independence, until the early '70s. So, we were negotiating with them the base rights, the Clark Air Base, Subic air base, and we had lots of other bases around, including Cubi Point. At the same time working out Laurel-Langley, which gave the United States preferred commercial and economic access to the Philippine economy. There was a lot of embassy staff involved. There were some overflows that were from Vietnam as well, but mainly it was Laurel-Langley. The political section was consumed with the future of the Marcos government, he was again consolidating power, moving towards taking total power. At the time there was a lot of private armies running around, so that was going on.

*Q: When you went there, what was your job...were you still rotating?*

STAMMERMAN: No, this was two years straight commercial work. I was working in the commercial/industries office. And that meant promoting American products, and putting on trade fairs, and trade missions, and calling on businessmen and that sort of thing. Helping American businessmen sell their products, helping Filipinos who wanted to go to the States and buy stuff. And of course the embassy, we often got involved with businessmen who needed visas. One of the biggest visa mills in the world, renowned. In that embassy, everything revolved, not



everything, a lot of things revolved around visas. Everybody we met either wanted a visa or had a daughter or cousin who needed a visa.

*Q: Who was consulate general at the time? Do you remember?*

STAMMERMAN: It changed... A guy named Larry Loren came out, midway through there. Before then, I can't remember who it was. But Larry came out to clean the place up.

*Q: How did you feel about that?*

STAMMERMAN: He was... He had a good reputation. A friend of mine was a second tour visa officer in charge of the NIV section. They had 8 or 9 junior officers on the NIVs in the morning, it was terrible work. Overwork. And he would handle appeals, and he thought Larry was doing a good job. I didn't know him particularly. I met him, but you know. He had a good reputation.

*Q: You mentioned being a little bit, about the impression of the Marcos'. You are still basically a junior officer, did you see a divide in the embassy between the more senior and the more junior officers?*

STAMMERMAN: Very much so. As far as we could tell, political people, section people we knew or talked to, saw the relationship with the Filipinos as being very important to the U.S. position in southeast Asia. The status of the bases was overriding, almost everything revolved around Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. We had our econ section, but we are all concerned with Laurel Langley, that was important, but if the crunch came between giving up our commercial position, we had a very favorable commercial position, and the bases... everybody understood that the bases were what was important. And the key to the bases it seemed, was placating Marcos. Because, the junior officers would talk about it and discuss it, it seemed that that was all that really mattered. There would be times that thing would come up, you'd see things and you'd ask, and you'd be told, "You didn't see that." Or, "That's not happening, don't worry about it, it's none of your business."

*Q: What would this be? Corruption? Or...*

STAMMERMAN: No, corruption, we reported it immediately, it was standard. No, it was American military activities, both bases. Things like that. It was none of our business. Anything to do with the status with forces that might involve the embassy, we saw it as none of our business. The cooperation between the American and Filipino military was simply none of our business.

*Q: You mentioned that there were still armed groups going around. Was it sort of a war lord situation or moving away from a war lord situation?*

STAMMERMAN: The way it was set up there, most provinces were under the control of a warlord. As for Marcos, the Lopez family of Cebu was now on his side. Again, we knew some missionaries who had worked around Clark airbase, and they would tell us the (Communist guerillas) Huks control the area at night and the Government controls the area during the day.

They were all corrupt. Neither was better or worse than the other, you got to be worried if you got stopped by a roadblock. Then you know somebody or could pay somebody, or you might be in trouble. It was the only place where I was stopped by police and I was really worried, and they wanted a payoff. And these guys are armed, and all I've got is my diplomatic ID, and they want money. There's not much you can do about it, except either pay them or put a 10 peso note with your drivers license. Once you were outside of Manila, say, in the warlord provinces, the Philippine government didn't rule there, the warlords did. They didn't usually bother Americans because we would cause them too much trouble if something happened to us.

But while I was there, we were giving up our base, we had a naval airbase which was in the province of Cavite. We'd pulled most of our soldiers and sailors out of there, moving up to Subic, just closing down for budget reasons, not policy. The bank got robbed, there was a Marine-guarded bank on base there. The Marine reaction squad showed up and they all got shot down by a gang of thugs who were much better armed than they were. Some pictures of the thugs revealed that they were members of a private army that the local governor ran. Whether they were renegades or not, who knows, but it was ultra violent. The general feeling around the Embassy was that everybody was corrupt. Choosing Marcos or choosing the other people made no difference. I heard a Catholic missionary tell me, "Ken, everybody's corrupt. The Communists are corrupt, everybody is on the take. Honesty is not a value in this country."

*Q: I was talking to somebody just the other day in an interview who said he was there just after Marcos had declared martial law and the main difference was... before, everybody had guns, now the Marcos bully boys had guns and the others didn't. But he said one of the questions was why was it that in southeast Asian where we were even beginning to see a real change in say Singapore, Malaysia, even Vietnam, up until all hell broke loose, as far as economic pursuits and getting on with it, was that in the Philippines it really hadn't taken on. There seemed to be something that inhibited the Philippines. Did you ever discuss this or look at it?*

STAMMERMAN: We would kick it around, as to what this all about. The Chinese ethnic families were not quite as strong as the Philippines, but the rest of southeast Asia, they were strong. The Chinese were discriminated against in the Philippines, that was a problem right there, so you didn't have that angle. You had the American connection, Lauren Langley sort of tied them to us. There was easy money to be made around the bases. Very easy money.

*Q: Were we concerned at that time, American business paying off, you know, bribes...?*

STAMMERMAN: The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act... I don't think it was enforced at that time.

*Q: I don't think it was either, but I was wondering whether, was this...*

STAMMERMAN: We couldn't obviously not say anything about that, but in general, because of our preferred access and the Lauren Langley, the competition from others wasn't that strong. The British, French. They got in, but our people really... our people had been there since independence and before independence. So they had established market already. The big companies did.

*Q: Instead of preferred access, we were valiantly trying to open up markets in what had been the French and British colonial empires and all. But I take it this was sort of a post-colonial sort of thing?*

STAMMERMAN: The relationship, in economic terms, very much. Not even post-colonial. Neo-colonial. And the Filipinos played the neo-colonial role. The relationship between the old families and the Americans were very, very strong. The major families, who some of them who were dual citizens, American and Filipino, it was very strong. We were playing the neo-colonialism game on our side, and sort of the attitude... we lived very well in the Philippines. We lived in these gated cities, like Magallanes. You'd go into a gated city, our residences behind armed guards, you'd ride to the embassy in a bus that had wire mesh and all. We had Seafront, which was our sort of commissary, swimming pool, everybody had a couple of maids, no problem, everything was cheap.

*Q: What were the relations between the officers and the upper-class Filipinos?*

STAMMERMAN: Well, you sort of made your own. I knew a lot of businessmen and we'd get invited to their place, sort of social occasions when you'd meet them. The really old families, I don't know if we really had that much contact with them. The entrepreneurial classes were what we'd see. They all lived well, we'd get invited to their places, mansions. I was active in the Catholic church there, which was a reforming church. Remember, the Catholic Church was trying to reform... and the cardinal archbishop's name was Sin, Cardinal Sin...it was the funniest joke. But they would preach these sermons that were revolutionary in a way, about economic justice and the rights of the poor. I was a lector and I would read at mass, and there was a letter from the bishop, this one down in Forbes Park, which is the richest suburb, and they had a letter to the Catholics from the bishop. I saw it before mass and I said to the priest, "I can't read this. You read this. I work for the American Embassy." [laughter]

*Q: [laughter]*

STAMMERMAN: It said things about Marcos, about the government, about the rich, stuff like that.

*Q: Was it felt that Marcos at this time at all playing the populist, or doing things for the poor classes, or was this not even in the cards?*

STAMMERMAN: Not really. He would say things, but I don't know if any body believed him. Again, there were no good guys. A lot of the Filipinos who cooperated with him knew him to be a crook. He had a lot of goons from around from his home province. I don't really think he had a popular following as much as he had the guns. The opposition was just as corrupt.

*Q: What about Imelda, his wife, what was her role at that time?*

STAMMERMAN: One never knows. It was hard to tell just what... we didn't see ordinary Filipinos because it was rich or very low middle class or poor; as for the middle class, there aren't any. So we didn't know what people think of her. Some people said she was a great lady,

she dresses well, oh Imelda this, oh Imelda that. But our general feeling was that she and her family were corrupt, landowners, and the reliance between her and Ferdinand was an unholy alliance of families, just looting the state.

*Q: Did you see any... now here the Catholic Church is making an effort to extend assistance do something for the poor people of whom there was a multitude...*

STAMMERMAN: Camped outside our door, these walled villages, which had barbed wire on the top, and inside the villages you had a wall around your house with broken glass along the top of the wall, and against the outside of these villages were hovels, just vast camps of utterly and completely poor people. Awful.

*Q: Was there any effort to reach out and do something about the wealthy class?*

STAMMERMAN: No. Not from the Embassy. The Catholics yes, but from the Embassy, nothing at all. Nothing. Our concern was military, that Marcos or someone similar would stay in power and the bases stay open. The Church was reaching out. It was trying to. They had organizations of the Young Catholics, Catholic Action. I knew one priest who was very active in this whole thing and one Sunday he wasn't there at mass. I said, Where is he? The pastor said, I don't know. I asked someone else and he said, he left for the hills. Joined the People's Army.

*Q: Oh. Was there a feeling that this situation was so bad that there is going to be a revolution, or was the corruption so bad that what would you be revolting against?*

STAMMERMAN: We didn't know. That was the choice that the junior officers and middle grade officers talked among ourselves... what comes next? Will it be a revolution that will throw us out completely? Or maybe the other bad guys will eventually take over. It depends how pessimistic you wanted to be. With the pervasiveness of corruption was that there would never be any good guys, to even Huks, but the Huks were known to be corrupt and living off the rackets. There was no one for any Filipino who was really disgusted with the situation to turn to.

*Q: How did you handle visa requests? Did you get them?*

STAMMERMAN: All day. You did... they had a system... essentially, you could recommend to the visa office. I tried to say, If you've got business... I'm a commercial officer, I know you have business in the States, I'll try to hook you up, but I won't sign it. I backed off. The people we dealt with mainly had money. They always got visas.

*Q: Was it sort of a clan system, so that they would have a poor relative who wanted to be a nurse and she was from upcountry and they'd say... did you get caught in those things?*

STAMMERMAN: Sometimes. Not very much. That sort of thing happened though. As commercial officer I could maybe help you with things with business. But if you were a student, I'll tell you about a friend of mine in the visa section to talk to and good luck. Everybody had an angle, so you were always suspicious of people who tried to make friends.

*Q: Was there a problem... At a later date, I was consular general in Seoul and we were always concerned about too many gifts and things like this. You had to kind of watch yourself.*

STAMMERMAN: Absolutely. We all had to watch ourselves. All we could ever take was things like they might pass you a bottle of something or those flowered leis they put around you. But we had to be very careful.

*Q: Well, I think we had two if not more of our consular generals were under suspicion because of sex mainly. Sexual favors and all that.*

STAMMERMAN: When I was there, there weren't any particular scandals, it's just that the junior officers were very unhappy at work.

*Q: How were you feeling about the Foreign Service at this time? Vietnam was still going... we were getting ready to pull out... just starting.*

STAMMERMAN: I always told people the Foreign Service has never asked me to lie for them. I can do my duty in the Philippines doing commercial work, just don't ask me any questions about Vietnam and I won't lie to you. Everything else we are cool on. I was figuring that we'd do this tour, and I'd seen a really good tour, some really top people. Looking back by then, I really thought Tel Aviv, that Israel is a great country. Because the difference in Israel, customs are honest in Israel, nobody is taking bribes, it's a new country, pioneer spirit. And Manila, corrupt, ultra violent; when nobody has guns there's no violence. In the Philippines, everybody has guns, there were shootouts in the street. So I thought, "Let's see what comes next and give it [the Foreign Service] another chance."

**FRANK D. CORREL**  
**Philippine Desk Officer, USAID**  
**Washington DC (1971-1972)**

*Frank D. Correl was born in Germany in 1929. He received his BS from Rider College in 1950, and his MA from Columbia University in 1955. He served in the US Army from 1953 to 1955. His postings include South Korea, Vietnam, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Lesotho, and Zambia. W. Haven North interviewed him on September 29, 1990.*

CORREL: Not long before leaving Morocco, I found out that I had been drafted for Cambodia. My own views on the war in Southeast Asia were such that I felt no need to serve in Cambodia. I was rather unhappy that there had been no effort made by the Africa Bureau - by people in positions of responsibility, whom I had helped avoid service in Southeast Asia - to say that there was some priority in keeping me, and I found myself without a job unless I returned to Morocco. The Bureau didn't have a job for me otherwise, they said. Fortunately, through a contact that I had developed while I was at SAIS before going to Morocco, I was able to get assigned as Philippine Desk Officer. All of a sudden, I found myself in a completely different situation. I'd

served in Asia before, but now I was in a development situation. I had a somewhat less than energetic Assistant Desk Officer, who had his limited range of interests and performed those reasonably well. I also had the benefit of one of the people who had served in Vietnam as a Provincial Officer and who had been retained in AID as a so-called PAT, I believe it was called a Professional Advancement Trainee. This young man was very energetic and had a great sense of humor. He came to work on the Philippine Program. In Manila, they had a very redoubtable Mission Director, kind of a legend in AID, Tom Niblock, who really considered Desks as his messenger boys in Washington. Well, I got the Desk organized and then went to the Philippines for a month and had a chance to meet and work with Tom Niblock.

*Q: What was the situation in the Philippines at that time?*

CORREL: In the Philippines at the time, there was a feeling that you couldn't possibly do enough for them, that you had to have a lot of projects, a lot of activities. There was a great deal of emphasis on agriculture and health, but also a program that under the guise of health was essentially a large feeding and relief program. These were the early years of Ferdinand Marcos. I guess it was in 1969 while I was in Morocco that Marcos was first elected. Two years later, I was in Manila attending functions where Marcos was speaking and meeting his personal Chief of Staff. The program stressed very extensive training and commodity support.

I remember there was a big program for supply and distribution of fertilizer. There was a family planning program, which was having very indifferent success, partly because of the lack of enthusiasm and substantial opposition to it on the part of certain members of the Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines. Such opposition was anything but universal. I remember Tom Niblock and his "Nutri-Bun" program, whereby flour was being imported under Public Law 480 and baked into these sort of mini-cannon balls, which were supposed to be very nutritious and which were distributed to recipients throughout the country.

As Desk Officer, I was able to travel quite extensively through the Philippines. I visited not only Luzon Island, but also the Visayas and Mindanao where the first steps were being taken on the idea of an Area Development Project in the north, in Cagayan de Oro. There, I had a very good meeting and established a nice relationship with the Mayor. Then, I was very interested to see what family planning possibly could accomplish in the non-Catholic areas of the Philippines, namely the Muslim areas. I found myself at 3:30 a.m. one morning boarding a plane in Manila to fly to the Island of Jolo in the extreme southern part of the Philippines, the area where a great deal of violence was taking place, and where you definitely did not have a Catholic presence. Things started quite well when I arrived in Jolo and this tall Filipino stepped forward and said, "Dr. Correl, I presume." This was about seven o'clock on a Sunday morning. And, with this man, who was the provincial family planning chief and a medical doctor, I covered a good bit of the island, visiting clinics and talking to health workers. I was quite surprised that even though in Morocco we'd had religion thrown at us quite often as an alibi for not taking action, that didn't appear to be a problem with family planning in the Muslim Southern Philippines. Not only that, but my own experience in Morocco had been that mosques were out of bounds for any non-Muslims, and that one had to be a little careful with regard to some of the religious sensibilities in the towns and villages. While in Jolo, the doctor suggested that we take a trip across the island to a little town called Maibung, which consisted of a large, recently built mosque and a whole

bunch of houses built on stilts over the water. We arrived there and had just gotten out of the car when we saw coming across the square in this town, a line of men, some in uniform and some not, carrying all kinds of different weapons - rifles, carbines, and machetes. They turned out to be the Mayor and his bodyguards. Apparently, the Mayor's brother had been his predecessor, and had been gunned down shortly before. They were very suspicious. But my friend, the doctor, stepped forward and explained to the Mayor who we were, the guns were lowered, and after that we had the freedom of the city. We were shown around, we met all the family planning people. I was even invited to go inside the mosque and look around. Then we were invited to lunch at the Mayor's office in his house. We sat around, had a nice meal, and talked about different matters, such as the government down there, various problems, what we were supposed to be doing, and a little bit about the AID Mission. The gunmen sat at a picnic table off in another room. This was on the 7th of December, 1969. In the background, the radio was playing a version of The Twelve Days of Christmas. It was certainly a vivid experience.

*Q: I'm sure it was. What was the development situation in that community that you were observing?*

CORREL: The people were mostly fishermen. Other than the Family Planning Clinic, there was no American-supported activity. In fact, I doubted that anyone from the AID Mission had ever been down there.

*Q: Was the Family Planning Program working?*

CORREL: It seemed to be working reasonably well. I mean, one has to make some allowances.

*Q: Were they combined with health care activities in an integrated program?*

CORREL: Yes. I should say regarding the development situation on the island of Jolo, that Jolo was actually a free port and there was a very large international market there. You wouldn't think it until you saw it. The town of Jolo itself wasn't very big or prepossessing. Actually, over the years, Jolo has been a very important trading point. Jolo was also one of the great centers of resistance to American occupation during the Philippine Insurrection, the period after the Spanish-American War. Things down there have developed considerably differently than in the rest of the island.

*Q: Anything else on the Philippines? Do you think our program was having a significant impact?*

CORREL: One thing about the Philippines was that you were dealing with some very capable people who "spoke the language." I don't just mean that they spoke English, they certainly did, but knew how to talk the American development language. In most cases you were dealing with college graduates, you were talking with people who were very interested in what was going on. I had the feeling that our programs, particularly in agricultural development, were getting somewhere. The family planning on an overall basis was very much touch and go.

*Q: What was the focus of the agricultural program?*

CORREL: As I mentioned before, it had to do with the planning and provision and financing of agricultural inputs to farmers, including credit. Then, there were some specialized activities like fish production. And, of course, very extensive agricultural research. The IRRI facilities there, the International Rice Research Institute, were doing some very good work with our assistance.

*Q: You mentioned earlier about the relation between the Desk and the Mission.*

CORREL: Well, Tom Niblock was a demanding person and not the easiest person to get along with, but he and I seemed to hit it off reasonably well. We use to make jokes in Washington on the Desk because Tom Niblock always was trying to go above the level of the Desk in order to get support from the Assistant Administrator. The Asia Development Bureau was actually a small office because the vast preponderance of the program in Asia had to do with Vietnam and the war in Indochina. That would have been AID supporting assistance. The Asia Development Office was run by Will Meinecke, whom I knew from Africa Bureau days, but whom I'd really gotten to know well during my time in SAIS. Will would get in touch with me when some of this stuff from Niblock came in and after a while, I think Tom, partly as a result of my visit and partly what happened afterwards, got the idea that maybe dealing with me was going to be the best way to get the most effective support out of Washington. People heard that Tom Niblock was actually saying that nobody in Washington really understood the Philippines, except Frank Correl. I thought that was quite a tribute to my tactfulness. I must say Tom and I had an effective relationship. It certainly wasn't warm. We weren't particularly compatible characters, but it was a good, professional relationship. Indeed, several years after I'd left the Philippine Desk and found myself in the reorganized Near East/South Asia Bureau when it also covered East Asia, he specifically asked me to come through Manila on the way to a conference in Bangkok, because there were some things that he wanted to discuss with me that he believed and the Bureau didn't seem to be understanding well enough.

*Q: But, the relation with the Bureau was less cordial, is that right?*

CORREL: It could get a little warm at time.

*Q: What scale of program are we talking about at that time?*

CORREL: I wish I could remember. It was quite substantial when you start adding PL480, especially Title II and the Nutri-Buns. I suspect it was well over 50 million dollars a year, which in those days was money.

*Q: Right. You left the Desk in what year?*

CORREL: I left the following year, was 1972 and I went to the Technical Assistance Bureau, having been invited to do so by the Assistant Administrator, Joel Bernstein.

**JOSEPH P. O'NEILL**



**Consular/Political Officer  
Manila/Cebu (1971-1973)**

*Joseph P. O'Neill was born in New York in 1935. From 1953-1956 he served in the US Army. After joining the Foreign service in 1961 he served positions in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Portugal, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, and Eritrea. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in May 1998.*

*Q: Unless you have time for me to something further to add about that tour in Thailand, let's move on to 1971 when you moved to the Philippines.*

O'NEILL: What happened was, I got sick toward the end of my tour in Thailand. I had a mild case of something exotic. I also had trouble with my eyes, all for the first time. So, I had a rather long time at home. I really never wanted to go to the Philippines. I thought the Philippines was a sideshow. Also, I was being sent out as a consular officer. Again, one of those hybrids, as a consular officer first and not yet an officer. So, when I went out to Manila for a short period of time. When the position in Cebu could not be filled immediately, I was asked if I would go down to do the consular work. Again, my reputation of having had done political reporting, etc. was still fairly well known. So, I was sent down to work for Dan Sullivan. Dan really was more an inside man. His wife, Margaret, was there and the children. He knew a lot of people in Leyte, which was further north. My predecessor had done some reporting, but was not overly industrious or interested. So, I put together the consular section, which was in some sort of disarray. It wasn't a terribly difficult thing to do. I had to learn the situation very quickly. Then Dan asked me to go out and see some American citizens who were in jail in the south on criminal charges. When I went down there, as a matter of course, I went-

*Q: In the south, you mean down in Mindanao?*

O'NEILL: Mindanao and down into Davao and the other areas. When I went visiting, I normally, as in any other post, went and did my business: I saw the Governor, I saw this man and that official. I came back and I wrote up my consular work and separately I wrote my political [observations]. Cebu was so outside the mainstream of the regular Foreign Service that we had no classified communications. We had a one time pad. So, we would have a once a week courier. All our reporting was done by memcons or airgrams. I preferred the memcon because it gave me a lot more ability to say what I wanted to and it got [to] people who made policy. After about four or five months, we start getting notes back from Washington saying, "Hey, these are good things, but why does it take so long?" Bill Hamilton was DCM in Manila, the same Bill Hamilton from Laos. He said, "I want to see everything that comes out of there because I want to make sure it goes with what we say." We then, with the acquiescence of Washington, sent Washington a copy of our reporting direct to the desk. Then the desk started to complain to Manila about the delay in receiving Cebu's reports. So, Manila was caught in the middle. After that, they just simply ignored us and let us do our work.

Hank Byroade was the ambassador in Manila. He and Imelda Marcos had a platonic love affair. It was platonic and it was a love affair. It was very difficult for anyone to get anything through to

him about how bad Marcos was running the country. Dan Sullivan was an FSO-2 and was close to being selected out. I think I was an FSS-6. We were really in bad position with the people in Manila.

While this was all going on, I had started to build up a tremendous number of contacts.

*Q: Did the people in Manila come to visit you?*

O'NEILL: Seldom if ever. [When they did], they would come down on the Air attaché plane. They would spend a couple of hours and go right back. I don't think they ever spent more than two days in the whole south.

[Nevertheless, we were getting a good picture] of what's going on. Our sources start telling us all sorts of things. We start finding out details of what was going on. Who is doing what to whom, where the money is, what sort of corruption there was. We were in really, really deep trouble [with the embassy until] the Foreign Service inspectors come through. This was especially true when we started to secure really excellent information on the Marcos family. [Our reporting saved Sullivan]. The inspectors said everything we were doing was wonderful. Dan finally made [FSO grade] one.

Let me add just one other thing that I sort of forgot. I think one of the reasons that I was such a viable candidate for Cebu was that I had met a lovely Filipina. The embassy and the Department at that time, for a variety of reasons, were not all in favor of (Mind you, this was 25 years ago) interracial or even international marriages. The fact, I think, that I was 36 or 37 at that time made no difference. I was still staff. They gave us a very bad time. I guess they thought that if I was down south, that would be fine. At that point, I did apply and asked for permission to marry. Remember the old deal where you had to send them your resignation and then you had to wait for 120 days? Well, we arranged to be married on about the 125th day. It gets close to, I think, about the 100th day. Dan Sullivan signed off on a cable which said, "The vice consul would like to know whether he is going to be allowed to marry because if he's not, he has to tell the cardinal who is going to marry him that he will not be marrying the vice consul of the United States, but just a United States citizen if he does not have permission to marry." Seventy-two hours later, the permission arrives.

*Q: Congratulations.*

O'NEILL: You saw one of the results of that marriage. (Tiffany Hope, age 12, was introduced upon the arrival of Mr. Dunnigan.)

*Q: Yes, I did. Tell us a little bit about the fighting in the south between the Muslims and Christians. That was going on at this time, as I recall.*

O'NEILL: Oh, yes. I got down to Zamboanga and the Basilian Islands. I was [reporting on] everything. It is well to recall that the south had always been Muslim, had been even in Spanish times. In recent times, after the Americans came and especially after WWII when the land in the north, especially in the Ilocos area, had become so poor there was a general migration of

Filipinos into the Mindanao area and further south. That caused all sorts of problems. The immigrants were Catholic. They began to take away land that belonged to Muslims, which brings me to another story.

I had gone down to see the [province] of Illano del Sul, which had a Muslim lady governor. She was governor only because her husband could not run for reelection; his wife ran in his place. He told me the same story that others had reported that the Catholics were bad. He explained how little money he and the other Muslims had had. But, he had recently received money from his friend Muammar Qadhafi in Libya and also some arms. If the Christians (and he knew I was a Catholic) were going to steal, rape, and murder, he wanted the Americans to know that they weren't going to lay down and die. This is 1972 and Muammar was already supporting all sorts of Muslim factions in the south, not terribly generously, but when you have nothing and someone sends \$20,000 and 200 rifles... When I heard this, I knew that this would raise alarm signals in Manila with Ambassador Byroade and Bill Hamilton. I spoke with some very knowledgeable sources in the area to confirm the information. I also spoke with the governor of Bukidnan, who I knew very well and [who] was to be my best man at my wedding. [He] provided further information. The embassy and the Agency [Central Intelligence Agency] were unaware of these events. When I returned, I wrote the report and showed it to Dan Sullivan. We sent it along with some fear since it demonstrated Marcos' lack of control in the south and the way things were more quickly going out of control.

*Q: Did you have an Agency representative in Cebu?*

O'NEILL: No. I wrote it all up and sent it up on the next pouch with a copy to Washington. They were really pissed in Manila.

*Q: It hit the fan, in other words.*

O'NEILL: It hit the fan. They wanted to know how I was so involved. The inspector saved us. If the inspectors had not come down and seen how careful we were about this, we would have been in deep trouble.

[We had another reporting coup] when Marcos took over, pulled his internal coup, and destroyed democracy for years. At that time, we fortunately had an American naval vessel sitting in the harbor which was there on R&R [rest and relaxation]. The communicator, boy, did he work for the next three or four days. We asked CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief, Pacific] if they could [let] the ships stay in port for additional hours so we could report reaction in the consular district [to Marcos' coup]. Manila would not allow the ship to remain because it would appear that we were involved in [Philippine] internal affairs, or whatever. Dan Sullivan did some tremendous cables because he knew all the military in Cebu. They just opened up to him. Dan Sullivan had the best information about what was going on in the coup and how the military in Cebu were reacting, as well as in Manila, notwithstanding at the time the close relation between Byroade and the Marcos family. The embassy was caught with their pants down there, absolutely caught.

*Q: What was the feeling in your area about the Marcoses? He declared martial law during this period.*

O'NEILL: That's right. First of all, everybody in that area knew Imelda. They knew she was poor. The first pair of shoes she ever got she got from the Redemptorist Fathers. She didn't wear underclothes because she didn't have them until she was close to her teens. They knew she was the mistress of the former Speaker of the House before she was Marcos' mistress and then married him. In character, she was not much different than Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu or Lady Thatcher, except both come from a better class family. But Imelda's people were living on the generosity of others. She never forgot that. She didn't forget it in her clothes or shoes, in the way she acted. She never forgot anybody who ever brought it up.

*Q: I see. It was something you didn't bring up.*

O'NEILL: You didn't bring it up. They knew Marcos. Marcos was always a lightweight. The medals he got were political medals. Imelda, like Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, ran that country. She had no guidance on the way up, nobody who said, "You don't have to dress like a whore for everybody to look at you; a little bit of restraint is best." I'll give you one great story about her. She called in some very wealthy businessmen and said that she wanted to build a cultural center. She said, "Let me have some money." So, they gave her a blank check and said, "Do what you want with it." So, she had her people call up to find out what was in their account and wrote it to the penny. They were very, very upset. She would take scheduled Philippine Airlines planes and take the plane someplace else. Again, in a way, she reminds me of Alexandra of Nicholas and Alexandra, narrow minded, kept her husband in power because when the husband goes, she's gone. The children weren't terribly good, as one can imagine. The people in the south did not like her. They despised her. They looked down their nose at her, but they couldn't do anything. The Muslims were on the outskirts. They were just protecting themselves. The Muslims, regardless of all the propaganda, never were that serious a threat to the government in Manila because, even though they were Muslims, they were still Filipinos.

They have the same vices and the same internal family flaws. There is a Tagalog phrase called "Utang na lob." It means "A debt of obligation." If somebody is your godfather, he is as responsible for you as if he was your father and maybe more. The corruption was endemic. It is regrettable, but the major export of the Philippines has always been human beings.

*Q: How well I remember from my days there.*

O'NEILL: I went through all the Middle East as an inspector and the Filipinos are the nurses, maidservants, and the mistresses; the men are chauffeurs.

*Q: Was there any anti-American feeling in Cebu at the time? Was the consulate ever demonstrated against, attacked, or not?*

O'NEILL: No. Cebu belonged to the Toledo family. When I came down from Manila, they didn't know what to make of me. They thought, one, I was a CIA agent; two, I had been sent down "special." But I wasn't sent down special, but rather to replace somebody who was leaving, who was not well liked or well respected. I was older. That made a difference. I guess I acted a bit

more conservatively. I didn't go around without a coat and tie. I had calling cards. The small things that make the difference.

*Q: And the Filipinos notice immediately.*

O'NEILL: Notice immediately, yes. The Filipinos are culturally and religiously influenced by the Spanish with a superficial American facade. If you recall, the Miranda Plaza bombing, when a number of politicians were killed, was reportedly done (and this was probably true) by the Marcos family. The Osmanias opponents felt that they had no one that they could speak with at the embassy, so they came south to Cebu, their home base. They spoke with Dan Sullivan, the consul, but more to me because they thought I was CIA. Sullivan knew all this and we reported it to Manila. Manila was unhappy with the reports because of the close Marcos-embassy relations. They sent down the consul general, Larry Lawrence, to speak with us and tell us the view from Embassy Manila. He carried back a diplomatic pouch with our reports, which told the embassy exactly what was going on. Lawrence was outraged because he was supposed to see that our reports mirrored the embassy's reports. Lawrence as the consul general also had close political/personal relations with the Marcos family as only the consul general in Manila can. The people in the south were initially in favor of the coup, but the continuation of the draft, but on a grander scale, [was something] they didn't want.

**FRANK E. MAESTRONE**  
**Political Officer**  
**Manila (1971-1974)**

*Ambassador Frank Maestrone was a military government officer in Wurzburg, Germany at the end of World War II. He entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His career included positions in Vienna, Austria; Hamburg, Germany; Khorramshahr, Iran; Cairo, Egypt; and an ambassadorship to Kuwait. Ambassador Maestrone was interviewed by Ambassador Horace G. Torbert on June 6, 1989.*

*Q: Let's move back a little bit to 1971 when you were consular of embassy for political affairs in Manila. Was Ferdinand Marcos in charge at that time in Manila?*

MAESTRONE: Oh, absolutely, he was president and, in actual fact, at that time his presidency, particularly his first term--he had been elected for a second term--was considered to have been a rather good era in Philippine relations and development, since Marcos had had a pretty good administration. Obviously there was corruption, but corruption is pretty much endemic throughout that area, not to mention other areas as well, including, maybe, the United States. But his terms in office were considered to be rather exemplary.

However, the political situation in the Philippines had begun to deteriorate considerably because of the antics of the various political powers throughout the Philippines. Each one in his particular area had his stronghold. Although they were supporters of Marcos, he was not really able to

control them as much as he would have liked. They did support his policies when they were in the Senate or in the House of Representatives. But when they were operating in their own areas, they carried on somewhat independently. Their actions, particularly during various elections, were especially reprehensible. When candidates looked like they might have a chance of upsetting some of their favorite people, they were eliminated by ambushes, shooting, what have you, and this solved the political problem for them.

Also there was a great deal of shooting going on in the cities; everybody carried guns. So it was really getting quite dangerous if you were caught in a cross-fire. There were a number of incidents that happened in Manila while I was there. In view of this deteriorating situation it was expected that Marcos would declare martial law to reestablish control in the Philippines. In fact, I had lunch--I think it was on a Wednesday--with Benigno Aquino, in which we discussed this situation, during which he said that if the president declares martial law, he would support him. However, he was one of his major opposition leaders. What actually happened was that martial law was declared at midnight on Friday. The first man that was arrested under martial law was Benigno Aquino, so he never got a chance to support Ferdinand Marcos in this respect.

*Q: Are you suggesting that the martial law was used to squelch the opposition, rather than to clean up the abuses?*

MAESTRONE: No, I am not suggesting that, although it was also used for that reason. But the primary reason for martial law was to try to bring order back into the country. The military took control of various areas. In fact, an order was issued that all Filipinos had to turn in their weapons, not just assault weapons, but all kinds of weapons. Indeed, they turned in hundreds of thousands of weapons, because they were required to do so. At least, it was estimated that, maybe, half the weapons were turned in. There was still half outstanding, but these went from pistols all the way up to, I think, a governor in some remote province had a small tank that he had someone build for his forces down in that area. The situation improved, absolutely immediately. I mean, no longer did you see people carrying guns around or anything like that. The shooting stopped. Indeed, Marcos' action was certainly approved by the majority of the people. There was no doubt about it. Even some of the politicians I knew who were in opposition to Marcos approved of his action.

What happened later, of course, was a different story. Initially, it started all right. The Filipinos did not expect it to continue. They thought it was a temporary measure.

*Q: Now are you saying that martial law was continued even after some kind of stability was restored?*

MAESTRONE: Oh, yes, it was years, yes.

*Q: Yes, and perverted in that period, too.*

MAESTRONE: Oh, yes.

*Q: Did you have a chance to meet Marcos and Imelda in that period?*

MAESTRONE: Oh, yes.

*Q: What was your impression of these people?*

MAESTRONE: Marcos was one of the most articulate men I've ever met, particularly, in English. I recall, as a matter of fact, when martial law was instituted--as I say, it was at midnight Friday--Saturday afternoon he gave a speech which was televised, in which he spoke for three hours detailing all the reasons why this had taken place and what he planned to do, etc., without notes, and never repeated himself once in completely fluent English, with a few peculiar pronunciations, which are peculiar to the Filipinos, anyway. He was a rather impressive fellow, quite intelligent, sharp. Imelda I never, really got to know very well. I met her on numerous occasions, but she was a very cold person, in personality terms, and one of the things that put me off immediately was that sort of limp handshake, something like grabbing onto a cold fish. I just never cared for her very much.

*Q: What was the official American position toward Marcos in that period?*

MAESTRONE: We had a very close relationship with Marcos, although we did not approve of martial law, in fact. Although I personally considered that had it been continued only for a short period until order was gotten back to the Philippines, it was probably a good thing. But we never approved of the continuation of martial law. We had an Ambassador Hank Byroade, who had an especially good relationship with Marcos, which he developed over the years prior to martial law. Marcos would consult with Byroade on a variety of matters, although he did not consult him on the martial law, for instance.

*Q: There was an insurrection in the Philippines at that time. Was this strictly a religious or Muslim insurrection, or was there a communist element involved there?*

MAESTRONE: There were two insurrections going on. One was the continuation of the original Huk insurrection, which became the New People's Army and was led by the--continued to be led by the communists, which continues today--which, indeed, under the extended period of Marcos' rule gained strength throughout the country.

The other occurred at the time I was there and was a Muslim insurrection, which was designed to obtain more autonomy for the governing of certain of the southern areas, particularly, in the Sulu Islands and the province of Cotabato. Where the Muslims were, in the case of the Sulus a majority, and in Cotabato, I think, they probably had at least fifty percent of the population. This started up. It was a very difficult matter for the Philippine army to deal with because a lot of it took place in these tropical forests and what have you, where there was plenty of opportunity for concealment. Also, the Sulu Islands stretched out toward the island of Borneo, where there was the state of Sabah, where many of the Sulu islanders had relatives and they received support and military supplies and so on from them. So it was a difficult thing for the Philippine armed forces to deal with.

*Q: Well, when you were there, did the United States supply arms to the Philippine military in order to put down these rebellions?*

MAESTRONE: No, we didn't supply arms for them to put down the rebellions. Well, perhaps we did with respect to the communists, the New People's Army rebellion, but not with respect to the Muslim rebellion. But then how could you distinguish between them? We had a regular military assistance program going. We had a large one in connection with all of our arrangements with respect to the major bases we have there, Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base.

*Q: Was there agitation, at that time, for Americans to get out of the bases in the Philippines?*

MAESTRONE: Only from a very small radical fringe. Otherwise, the Americans had a great deal of support. In fact, during my time there, there was a movement by one politician to have the Philippines become the 51st American state. It was surprising the amount of support, indeed, embarrassing to Marcos, the amount of support he was able to generate. He, of course, tried to tamp this down as much as we could.

**TERRELL E. ARNOLD**  
**Economic/Commercial Counselor**  
**Manila (1971-1976)**

*A native of West Virginia, Mr. Arnold served in the US Navy in World War II and in the Korean War. He was educated at Champlain College, Stanford University and San Jose College. Entering the Foreign Service in 1959 he served in Egypt, India, Ceylon (Deputy Chief of Mission), Philippines, Brazil (Sao Paulo as Consul General) and at the State Department in Washington. From 1983 to 1985 Mr. Arnold served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Counterterrorism. Mr. Arnold was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

*Q: You were in the Philippines from '70 to...?*

ARNOLD: '71 to '76.

*Q: First, why don't we talk about Henry Byroade as Ambassador. He had been ambassador to a number of places, Burma, South Africa, Cairo before that.*

ARNOLD: Afghanistan.

*Q: Afghanistan. He was the youngest general in the Army at one point.*

ARNOLD: As a Brigadier, closely associated with Clare Chenault, then flying the hump. He was a striking character, interesting character, I found.

*Q: How did he operate in the Philippines?*



ARNOLD: Hank was of the old-boy network system for managing any problem, and that's just the way he had grown up. He plugged himself very successfully into the old boy net in the Philippines. That means he got very closely acquainted with Juan Ponce Enrile, Ninoy Aquino, President Marcos, Marcos' Executive Secretary Alex Melchor, and name the cluster that was in power at that time. He knew them all. He worked, I think, quite successfully with all of them in the sense of a personal, easy-access kind of set of relationships. He encouraged his staff to do that too, and he turned the whole set of economic ministries over to me, the Central Bank, Finance, Industry, Planning, Mining, all of that was my stuff.

*Q: During this time, when you arrived in '71, what was the situation politically and economically in the Philippines?*

ARNOLD: Well, economically we were coming up on termination of the Laurel-Langley Agreement. This was 1971. American business was still very strong. It was still viewed legally under the terms of the Laurel-Langley Agreement as equal to and treated like the Filipino business community. There were lots of American businesses there that found the situation advantageous and indeed did enjoy a considerable parity in their relationships. The big issue on the table and one of the things that Hank invited me out there to do was get us through the Laurel-Langley transition from that period in which we had this equal status for American business into whatever would be the future. I worked on that right up through the transition, and we can talk about that as an issue. The economy was growing in some important respects. There were interests in mining - for example, nickel on a little island down to the north of Mindanao called Nonoc, petroleum in the offshore areas along the side of the western, that is the China Sea side of the island of Palawan. There was continuing interest in gold mining, especially in the upper regions of Luzon around the city of Baguio, and a lot of growing interest in commercial import markets for motor vehicles and so on. There were also interests in co-ventures to produce these things in the Philippines. The Philippine labor force was very good and still is.

*Q: Politically?*

ARNOLD: Politically convoluted. Philippine democracy was about to come a cropper in fairly short order. You have to start with a thought about the way the Filipinos have always viewed politics, and it took me a while to catch up with this. The political party system was kind of a mirror image of the American party system, kind of, except that the opposition around Ninoy Aquino were a bit farther left than our Democratic Party here, quite a bit farther left, and the ins were much more traditional old guards than our Republicans are, although some of ours are getting back to that. Cronyism was rampant on both sides of the house, however. The leadership of both parties tended to be an older generation including some who were even second-generation Basque out of Spain or third-generation Basque, the Elizalde Clan for example. The political climate was moving toward two different events. One of these events had precipitated the other. Ferdinand Marcos was coming to the end of his term as President, and under the rules he could not run again. He had contrived a device called a constitutional convention to steal the march on his opponents, and that constitutional convention convened very early after my arrival out there. We were very interested in that constitutional convention. It had both political and

economic interest for us. One of the subjects on the agenda was, of course, what would happen after the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

*Q: The Laurel-Langley Agreement goes back to when?*

ARNOLD: To the '30s. And there, of course, were interests in what would happen to Clark, Cebu, Subic Naval Base, etc.

*Q: These were our bases?*

ARNOLD: These were military bases, and Subic, of course, is that other great natural harbor in the region—Manila Bay is one and Subic Bay is the other. All of that was on the table, and we were watching that convention with a good deal of interest. However, many followers of Aquino did not have any faith in the outcome of that process. They saw it for what it was: an attempt to steal a march on the democratic process from the Marcos side. With some fomenting by Aquino supporters, university students were getting very restive. There was an enormous amount of student unrest in that period; some of the demonstrations were quite large.

*Q: You were standing on the...*

ARNOLD: On several occasions we stood on top of the Embassy watching a major demonstration in the main square, Plaza Miranda. Thousands of students were involved, and the Embassy was surrounded several times. There was no way we could go anywhere except by water. I don't know whether you know that Embassy, but it backs right up on Manila Bay. So we could have gone out by water had there been a big requirement. We were not in any jeopardy. We were just trapped. That kind of thing went on to the point where in a political rally in Plaza Miranda there were hand grenades thrown. A number of liberal party people were killed and wounded, and Marcos used the occasion to declare martial law, shutting down the democratic process. It stayed shut down for quite a few years after that until Corazon Aquino, Ninoy Aquino's widow, actually became the next president.

*Q: What was our attitude about this? Obviously the United States was a major player there.*

ARNOLD: The United States was a major player. We had the most elaborate diplomatic, military, and foreign assistance structure that we probably had anywhere else in the world at that time. We had a very large AID mission, and I do mean large. We had an Asian Development Bank contingent there. We had a joint U.S./Philippine military group. We had the military commands of the 13th Air Force and CINCPAC Phil. We were all over that map. I think if you had taken a vote in the middle of that era, the Philippines would have voted to be the 51st U.S. state, no question about it.

*Q: With martial law, were there debates within the country team or other places about how we should respond to this and to the Marcos rule, or even prior to declaring it?*

ARNOLD: I think we were looking for do-able ways to walk him back from that if that were possible and get him to recognize that there was a requirement to legitimate the regime. That did

not happen on our watch out there at all. Hank came back home. Bill Sullivan came out and came home, and Marcos was still in power. After all, we had enormous interests in that country at that time. We were fighting an active military engagement in Vietnam. We had critical military needs for the support functions of Clark and Subic and for the supply utility of being able to operate with reasonable freedom through Manila. It was, therefore, important that whatever we did respecting the status of democracy in the Philippines, we did not unduly rock the boat on those interests. That was the attitude.

*Q: Well, in a way it seems to parallel a bit the way we were looking at the Diem and later the True regimes in South Vietnam.*

ARNOLD: I think there's some merit in that.

*Q: Were the American media, Congress or anything else focusing on this, or did you feel much pressure about the time of martial law?*

ARNOLD: How do you mean focusing on it: focusing on it from the point of view of trying to get it changed?

*Q: Trying to get it changed. In other words, pointing out that the United States is not supporting democracy and that sort of thing. I'm talking about the media and Congress.*

ARNOLD: I think for a significant period of time after the declaration of martial law, both the Philippine people in general and most observers felt that martial law was a good thing, because the country was under control. The abuses of power that later emerged had not yet emerged, the especially predatory nature of Imelda Marcos, and the people, the cronies, around both of them had not become quite so blatant. There was peace in the realm, you know, and peace in the realm looked like a pretty good thing altogether. We did not have to deal with confrontational politics in the Philippines in a period in which we had an ongoing war off to the west, so it was not a bad situation from our point of view to have a reasonably successful and moderately benevolent autocrat in charge. It didn't seem a bad thing altogether at that time, but it began to change before I left.

*Q: More at a later point, but were you seeing the hand of the Marcoses in trying to envelop the upper reaches of the Embassy, getting them involved in the society and all that? Was this a concern?*

ARNOLD: Well, I don't know so much that it was a concern. Our people there were very savvy about what was going on and they were also very savvy about the interests and the motivations of the Marcoses. We knew that the easy access we had to all those people had a purpose from the other side, and we were not taking in by it. I learned that one of my best ways to communicate with the upper leadership was to talk too much on a telephone. In fact, I used that two or three times to put a message across and just let the security people give it to the President. Why not if you know it works?

*Q: I'm speaking as a consular officer. Laurie Lawrence was a good friend of mine.*

ARNOLD: Dave Betz was there later too.

*Q: Actually Dave Betz and I took the Foreign Service exam together in Frankfort in 1954. I was an enlisted man, and he was a West Point 1st lieutenant, I think.*

ARNOLD: I enjoyed working with both these guys. Of course, they were very different personalities, but both very good with the consular work they did.

*Q: I would imagine as economic counselor you would have had to have a system in order to deal with immigration visa requests.*

ARNOLD: Oh, Laurie and I had a working relationship, and so did Dave, because we did need to stay together on these problems, and more on the economic side than on the political side. The officers of the mission do have to stay together around the people movement issues, but we knew how to handle it. I never made any promises at all.

*Q: How did you work this?*

ARNOLD: Laurie and I and David and I had the same agreement. "I will not give anybody anything except I will refer them to you, but I won't make any concessions of a consular nature to my clients." And I observed those rules as Consul General in Sao Paulo. I would not hinder my consular officer. My consular officer was a very good one, by the way, by the name of Marilyn Povenmeyer, who became Consul General in London. That's just the way it has to be worked, and we have a lot of trouble when people don't see that.

*Q: How about the issue of corruption?*

ARNOLD: Oh my. That was a growing problem for us, especially from the moment the constitutional convention process began and after martial law was declared. First of all, the corrupt practices became more and more evident. One of the things that happens to you if you're standing out there in the public light all by yourself, as the Marcoses were, is there are no secrets, and we could see what Kokoy Romualdes and Imelda were doing. We could see what the old buddies, Bobby Benedicto and Johnny Ponce Enrile and others, were doing around Ferdinand, and we had the picture pretty clear. We had to describe it with some clarity to American businessmen who came through, among other things looking at the possibility to build nuclear power plants and other infrastructures projects. The leadership was on the take around any project of that sort. Bobby Benedicto particularly ran the sugar business for Marcos; and by running the sugar business, I mean run the sugar export business, which is a big item in the whole international accounts of that country.

*Q: Did that get you involved with political interests in Louisiana and all that?*

ARNOLD: Well, it got us involved in action/interaction patterns with American interests in all of these subject areas, and we spent a lot of interview time in my economic commercial team - I

had a large one and some very good specialists and very good young people in that team, and they all had to work it. They had to work constantly at informing the community.

*Q: Was there a problem of saying to American business people who came there. The ones that had been there for a long time knew how to get along in the atmosphere.*

ARNOLD: They never asked you.

*Q: They never asked, and probably just as well. But I'm talking about the new players that came in and talked about it, where I assume, in order to make things run, there had to be payoffs.*

ARNOLD: There were fees, payoffs, finders' fees, whatever you chose to call them, *baksheesh* in the Indian parlance, yes. And one of those got me into court even after I left there, quite a few years later, after Corey Aquino came into power. Several interesting things happened around that subject, and we can defer that a little bit, because I would like to talk a bit more about Laurel-Langley. We had sporadic negotiations with the Philippine leadership on that subject right up through July 1974, which was the expiration of the Laurel-Langley Agreement. In June, having struggled with this all the way through trying to figure out how we were going to get a handle on the status of American business in the Philippines, I concluded that we were not going to go out of the Laurel-Langley Agreement with any new agreement in place. Among other things we probably would have to fall to the more traditional rules, the most favored nation and like relationships, but we were not going to have a special relationship for American business.

I reported that conclusion in a speech to the American Chamber of Commerce: "Therefore, what I'm going to say to you all right now" - and our Ambassador, Bill Sullivan, was in the room - "what I'm going to say to you right now is that I can picture a world after July 1974 that is not noticeably different from the way it is right now, except that the Laurel-Langley Agreement will no longer be in effect. Businessmen will be hard-pressed to make their own working arrangements with their counterparts in this country." And Bill Sullivan came up to me afterward and said, "I finally saw where you were trying to go." I was putting them fully on the alert that the rules of the game were their problem more than ours in any specific business transaction that they had to get into.

In that very last year or so in Manila, an example of the corruption visited itself on me pretty firmly. The Philippine leadership, Alejandro Melchor, who was the Executive Secretary to Marcos, was looking to get a nuclear power plant out on the Bataan Peninsula, and he asked for my help in getting U.S. companies to come in and bid on the project. I got the invitation out. One major company, Westinghouse, came in and submitted a bid. I didn't like the idea of just one American company coming in and doing that. I invited GE, and GE took me up on it and came in and put in a bid. The bid went to Westinghouse, and GE's complaint to me was it was bought and paid for. Well, there was not much I could say on that subject knowing the environment. I had to assume that something had transpired. A few years later I was contacted by a Washington law firm and asked if I would be prepared to appear in a hearing on the subject of Westinghouse payment of a bribe to Ferdinand Marcos to get that power plant. I said I don't know what I can contribute, but I can certainly appear. This was part of Corey Aquino's effort to look around the world and get back some of the country's money. There's another story on that.

They sent me to Switzerland, to Geneva, and I appeared in a tribunal there and answered questions on the subject of how business was done in the Philippines. And then I was invited, subpoenaed as a matter of fact, to appear in court in New Jersey and address the same sort of issues in front of a jury. The jury listened to me very carefully, I must say attentively, when I told them how business was done in Manila, and ultimately, although I was not present for the way that verdict came out precisely, Westinghouse gave the Philippine government \$20,000,000 in, shall I call it, a refund.

*Q: While you were giving this testimony, was the State Department all atwitter?*

ARNOLD: No, I asked the State Department whether they had any problem with my testifying, and they said not on the evidence that I knew, not at all, and they did not send anybody to observe.

*Q: Did you ever get involved in sort of trade disputes of American firms at a much lower level saying, you know, "Company A paid a bribe and therefore I'm being deprived. Do something to help me," and that sort of thing?*

ARNOLD: I think there was no way in that setting - and in other settings, I'm sure, where I didn't serve but I was aware of - no way you could avoid getting those complaints. If you were doing your job on any significant bid that was let by a government or business in that country, you tried to get American companies interested in that. From time to time you would get the kind of response that I got out of GE after that contract was let, that it was all rigged and they didn't have a chance.

*Q: What about in a place like that where at least the United States - we didn't have a corrupt practices law, did we, at that time?*

ARNOLD: How do you mean by that?

*Q: Well, I mean a law that you can't buy.*

ARNOLD: Well, yes, we did. We had legislation on the books, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. We were aware of it, and so were businesses aware of it.

*Q: I would think that you'd run across - the problem certainly was prevalent until quite recently anyway, if not still going, where particularly French, German, maybe even British firms were out there competing with American firms and they didn't have the same constraints.*

ARNOLD: That's quite right, and we got complaints about that too. "You send us to jail or withdraw our whatever, and these other guys go in there and just pay and walk away with the business." It's unfair competition, indeed it is.

*Q: Things are changing now, aren't they? We were the initiator of something which is now much more accepted on an international basis.*

ARNOLD: My last chapter in the Philippines came when Ferdinand and Imelda left the country on their way to Hawaii.

*Q: This was much later, wasn't it?*

ARNOLD: Yes, it was. And I received a call very late at night.

*Q: This would be when, the mid-'80s?*

ARNOLD: Yes, we hadn't left Washington yet. It was '84 I guess. I received a call from a major Washington law firm asking if I would come down and join them in a discussion of how to find a safe haven for Ferdinand. I went down - and I must say they were paying me very well for my time in the middle of the night, as indeed they should have, because it was 11 to three AM or something like that - and we talked through the problem, and they asked me, "What do you think we should do here in order to get him a place to go?" I said, "Why don't you convince him to let the government find most of the money?" They said, "Oh, we can't do that," and I said, "Well, if you don't do that, they're going to harass him from here to the end of time. Take it as a given, they're going to follow anywhere he goes, as they should, because he and his family have stolen an enormous amount of money. If the Marcoses want peace, let the government find the money." "No, no, we're not going to recommend that. We've got it all set up so that he's going to go into Panama and arrive at a safe haven down there." I asked, "How was that arranged?" They said, "Well, we contacted the President down there and we worked a deal." And I said, "Do the people of Panama know anything about this?" "No, the attorney said." I said, "Well, when they find out, you're dead in the water. You watch." They found out the next day, and the deal fell through. So I got well paid for my advice, but they didn't care for it.

*Q: One last thing on the Philippines. Maybe there is something else, but you were there during the fall of Saigon and all that. Can we talk about that?*

ARNOLD: We were, and that was an interesting period.

*Q: This is April 1975, I guess.*

ARNOLD: That's correct. This was leave time for our Ambassador and DCM. Bill Sullivan was there, but Skip Purnell was on home leave and I was acting DCM at that stage. We were watching, of course, the unraveling on the Vietnam side with great attention. I was sitting at my desk late one evening in the Embassy when a message came in to me from the back room. The North Vietnamese had started shelling Ton Son Nhut. I picked up the phone and called Bill and said, "Bill the North Vietnamese are shelling Ton Son Nhut." He said, "That's the end of it all. We've got to get ready for people coming in here." And that's what we did, of course. The Embassy was being evacuated at that time. Were you there?

*Q: No, I wasn't. We're talking about the Saigon Embassy?*

ARNOLD: Yes. Among the ways that people got out of there: Ambassador Graham Martin and his wife and the poor leadership that was left of the regime came out on a U.S. cruiser, the Blue Ridge.

*Q: Command ship.*

ARNOLD: Command ship. They came to Subic, and Bill Sullivan decided that I was the official Embassy welcoming party, so my wife and I went and took Graham Martin and his wife off the vessel, took them to Baguio to a nice quiet safe house we had up there and spent a long weekend with them to let them unwind before they ever had to face the public - a great courtesy to them really.

*Q: Yes. Graham Martin now is dead, and they really kept very quiet about it. What was your impression of how he was taking this?*

ARNOLD: Well, if I were to describe it across the spectrum, first of all, he was very contained about all of this. There were no complaints in his soul, I don't think. He was very disappointed that the whole process had turned out the way it had, but he was aware that there was very little he or anyone in that mission could have done to make it turn out differently. I think mainly what he wanted to do was to get out of there and get home and get into a quiet place somewhere.

*Q: North Carolina, I think.*

ARNOLD: We sympathized with him and his wife. And that's why we were so happy we had that nice, quiet place on top of the mountain where we could just take them to ground and spend some time with them.

*Q: You just locked out the press and all?*

ARNOLD: We locked everybody out. Nobody even knew where he was.

*Q: Prior to this, had the Embassy and the military been prepared for this?*

ARNOLD: Oh, I think so. I think we'd been prepared for it in a variety of ways, and we had looked kind of over the shoulder of the military, notably the 13th Air Force, at such things as the effort to release POWs. Do you remember that? Our 13th Air Force and others mounted a rescue attempt that went into North Vietnam, to a camp at Sontay. They got in there and there was nobody in the prison camp. Something had gone awry. I had a talk with General Roy Manor about that after the event. He was persuaded, as were we, that something had leaked somehow, but it had been a perfectly executed mission, not like Desert One. It had gone off without a hitch except that we had nothing to show for it.

*Q: As Da Nang was going through its time of agony, did you at the Embassy say, "Okay, let's get ready?" Did you have plans for reception, and were you dealing with the military and the Philippine government on this?*



ARNOLD: We were doing that. I didn't like the way we came out on it. We used our facility at Subic to receive the civilians and the Embassy people and Americans who came out of there at that stage, and we processed them through Subic and got them out of the country quickly enough. That was all informally but nonetheless very professionally done, I thought. We didn't treat the ordinary Vietnamese evacuees with equal civility - let me put it that way. You may or may not be aware that there's a small island in Subic Bay, right in the middle of the bay, in the entrance to the bay, and the Vietnamese evacuees ended up on that island, isolated from the Philippine people and isolated from us. And I've never liked that as an outcome.

*Q: Was it sort of force majeure, or were we working with the Philippines? I can understand them not having much problem with Americans coming, because you could say, "Look, they're coming in. We're getting them right out." But when you start talking about Vietnamese, they seem to get very nervous.*

ARNOLD: They had a problem politically, and the only answer that we could contrive apparently was that island, put them out in Subic. Phil Habib came out there on a visit at that time. He was Assistant Secretary, you know, for East Asian Affairs. And I toured him around as his escort through that whole visit. The only thing I disliked about that entire tour, because I liked Phil very much, was our helicopter hovering above that island and looking down on those people, and Phil being unwilling to go down and greet them on the ground.

*Q: He had served in Vietnam too.*

ARNOLD: I have no idea what was going through his mind about that situation, and I think he could have constructed it just with the clarity that I did as to what was wrong with that picture. But he did not go to ground, and I've always regretted that.

*Q: Was the Philippine government or the Marcos regime sort of saying get these people out of here and all that?*

ARNOLD: They were not shouting that, and the media were not really pressing that there. No, I think it was understood that this was a kind of *de minimis* problem.

*Q: Eventually we used Guam as a central point.*

ARNOLD: But for me very unsatisfactory, that series of episodes.

*Q: What about internally within the Philippines at that time? Were we concerned about a Communist or a Muslim insurgency? What was happening?*

ARNOLD: Concerned about it. You know, the Moro National Liberation Front, which is down on the Sulu Strait, was a long way from Manila, an active, small movement at that time, and we were following very similar patterns for keeping our distance from it, to the patterns that I had witnessed in Sri Lanka respecting the Tamils. We wanted no contact with those people, and we gave assistance to outlying regions all over that country, to poor farmers and urban dwellers and so on and so forth, but we never gave any to the people in that Muslim community down there

around Zamboanga and the Sulu Strait. I knew at the time it was a mistake and tried to fix it when I was in charge for a brief period. What happened was the AID mission asked me if we should do some food assistance down there, and I said I don't know why not. Those people are Filipinos as I defined Filipino. And sooner or later, if we don't provide some help to them, some regime's going to pay for it, so I went ahead and agreed. But the moment Sullivan and Purnell came back, Marcos complained, and they overturned it and backed us off.

*Q: What was the thought process?*

ARNOLD: The thought process was we don't get involved in a Philippine insurgency in that fashion, and of course this is a no-win strategy in the long run. Those people identify you with the enemy, and you become the enemy, and you end up paying for it along with the people who perhaps are more deserving of having to pay for it, like the Filipino regimes which consistently ignored any need for efforts to bring those people into the system. And they're not paying attention still, as we've seen very recently. They haven't made an inch of headway with those people. Quite the contrary, they've lost ground.

*Q: You know, our people were fighting the Moros during the turn of the century.*

ARNOLD: Exactly so. They're a tough crowd. They are highly independent, and they're not the only independent little cluster in that country. But, you know, this is a tough assignment, but they cannot effectively be excluded unless you're prepared to cut the land off, turn it into another country, ignore them, and let them do their own thing.

*Q: Was it hard for the Embassy to get beyond the great land-owning families who kind of ran the country?*

ARNOLD: We had a big enough embassy so that we probably penetrated most layers of Philippine society pretty well, and I mean academic and political, economic, cultural. But when you really look closely at it, these are all faces of the same fairly broad cluster of people, and the crowd that gets left out is that crowd that typically is on the ground out in the countryside.

*Q: You were there during the Watergate period. How did that play in the Philippines?*

ARNOLD: Sometimes, not as a big deal. They had a bigger deal on the ground in the Philippines, you know. There were far more heinous crimes committed by political leadership in Manila than anything that Nixon ever contrived. They didn't understand what we were all stirred up about.

*Q: What the hell's this, a little political spying on your opponents - big deal.*

ARNOLD: Hey, we do that all the time, the Filipinos would say - and a lot more successfully, by the way.

**JOHN HUMMON**  
**Deputy Mission Director, USAID**  
**Manila (1973-1976)**

*John Hummon was born in 1930 in Ohio. He graduated from Albion College in 1953 and later earned an MA and PhD from the University of Michigan. Mr. Hummon began work at the Agency for International Development in 1960 and worked in Tanzania, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and as the Mission Director in Botswana. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.*

HUMMON: I went to the Philippines.

*Q: In what year?*

HUMMON: Fall of '73, I guess. I was there about three years.

*Q: What was your position?*

HUMMON: Dr. Hannah and Dan Parker were able to get clearance for me from the White House as Deputy Mission Director there to Tom Niblock.

*Q: What was the situation at that time?*

HUMMON: This was during the Vietnam War. Let me backtrack a little bit. The Philippines had generally fallen off the radar screen in AID in the 1960s. At one time AID predecessor agencies had provided a tremendous amount of assistance to the Philippines. For a variety of reasons, and I can't even recollect all of them, our assistance there had become somewhat minimal until Tom Niblock went out there in the late 60s. And coincidentally with his going there, there was a terribly devastating typhoon that hit the Philippines at that period of time. And Congress developed an emergency assistance package to them which was very substantial in those days (Senator Inouye had pushed it through). I think it was \$50 million dollars, plus some complementary assistance. Also, at this time the Vietnam War had intensified and the Administration, the Johnson Administration of course and later the Nixon Administration, was looking for allies. The Philippines, in the form of Ferdinand Marcos, became a very strong ally in terms of our position in Vietnam. By the time I got there, this program had expanded and there were large numbers of Americans present. We had a fairly sizeable portfolio and a growing number of initiatives and a very strong and dedicated leader at the Mission, Tom Niblock. He was a very special person and driving sort of Director.

This was an interesting situation too, because Marcos had instituted martial law, and so they had gone from a period in which they had a democratic situation to no elections. There was the promise that there would be elections at some point. And a facade of democracy, his "New Society," had been promulgated, but basically we thought of it at that time as a benevolent type of dictatorship. Our policy was dualistic in a political sense. We wanted to have a friendship with Marcos, because of the desire to maintain close ties in terms of what was happening in Vietnam, but also we wanted to be hands-off as well. We did not want to get too close; there was much

opposition to him because of the lack of real democracy in the Philippines. This opposition was particularly vocal in Congress. It was also believed that there was some serious deprivation of human rights, quite apart from the absence of a democratic political structure. Marcos clamped down on any opposition. However, in all honesty, I have to tell you that at that time, as pro-democracy as we were and should have been, I think that many felt that what was happening was not a totally inappropriate interval from the chaos that had existed before Marcos came into power. There had been virtual anarchy. Many believed that despite the imperfections on the political side, what basically would emerge would be a more democratic Philippines with much greater improvement of conditions for the millions of poverty-stricken Filipinos. We did not envision, especially on the AID side, but also on the Embassy side as well, the eventual corruption and venality which would lead to Marcos' downfall.

The Filipinos had a very special relationship with the U.S. I have never been treated any better by any group of people than we were by the Filipinos. We really liked the people we dealt with in the ministries and in the countryside. It was a wonderful experience in so many respects. I dealt mainly with Jerry Sicat, the Minister of Development Planning, an extraordinary individual. As a matter of fact, we played tennis together nearly every week day at lunch time.

*Q: What were we trying to do in the program?*

HUMMON: I think our goal was very consistent - to help the little people. This was at the time, too, when the Basic Human Needs legislation was going through Congress. As a matter of fact, at one point when I was there I took a group of Philippine governors from the various provinces to Washington to meet with the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Elizabeth Keon Marcos, sister of Ferdinand Marcos and the Governor of Ilocos Norte, was co-chair with me of the group. We went to Washington and spent a few days with the Administration and with Congress. We met with Chairman Zablocki of the Foreign Affairs Committee and others.

Zablocki emphasized Basic Human Needs and the Filipinos basically replied that that was essentially what they were trying to do in the development activities. To a certain extent, I think this was very much true, particularly at the governors' level, at the provincial level. And that is what we were focusing on. We were trying to carry out activities that would reach the poorest of the poor. We had a program called PDAP, the Provincial Development Assistance Program, which was carried out in several of the provinces throughout the country. Some of this was local currency generated by the assistance grant that Senator Inouye and others had pushed through Congress. We were helping in small scale enterprise, in road and bridge building in provinces, in rural electrification, and agriculture

Nutrition was a serious problem in the Philippines. I was very active in the institution of a national nutrition program. We had a period when I was Acting Director. Mrs. Marcos was always looking for new things to do. Partly just for her image, but also I think there was a desire to help in the economic development situation. We had been pushing the idea of better nutrition. We had people come in from Virginia Tech University who were experts in this to take a look at it.

*Q: What did you do in the nutrition program?*

HUMMON: Well, first of all we had to start it. We had to get something going. We actually were in a very unusual type of situation. Mrs. Marcos called me in to meet with the Cabinet to make a presentation on why it was important to have better nutrition. I had statistics on the state of malnutrition in various provinces. Also that they needed much better research, and they needed to develop a center where they could focus on this. We later helped them to develop this center. The team from Virginia Tech provided guidelines for schools, for extension programs for mothers and for MCH and population centers.

*Q: We'll come back to that later. Any particular characteristics of the nutrition program that you want to share?*

HUMMON: No. I recently (January 2000) checked with the Philippines desk on the present status of the nutrition program. They had no information and USAID is no longer involved in that area, and they were not sure what the GOP is doing.

*Q: Was it country-wide?*

HUMMON: It was intended to be eventually. We had a pilot province, I think initially in Cebu. A lot of it was just education through the school system and through any other vehicles that were available. It was also a beginning research tool in various areas.

*Q: Were we providing any food or supplements of any kind?*

HUMMON: We did provide food, but that's a different story. It seemed as though there was a constant repetition of typhoons and floods. We were providing nutri-buns, a nutritional supplement that was baked by local bakeries which we had helped to devise with them. Yes, there was food provided for this, but that was not the major focus of the long-term program. It was an education and training program. I just don't recall the details.

*Q: That's okay. Generally was there a wide acceptance of this program?*

HUMMON: Yes, and that's another interesting story. Mrs. Marcos, at the Cabinet meeting turned to me and said, "Well, who should head this?" I said that I had met a man in Cebu, a Dr. Solon. She didn't know him, but they later brought him up for an interview, and they chose him as the head. When I went back a few years later to the Philippines, he was still the director.

*Q: Was he a Philippine doctor?*

HUMMON: A Philippine doctor, yes. He had a nutrition program that he was working on in Cebu, which I had visited and had been very impressed with what he was doing. The program received major publicity for a period of time. You asked about it being well accepted.

*Q: Where was it put in the government, in the structure of the government?*

HUMMON: It was in the Ministry of the Health. He reported to the Minister of Health, as I recall. For a period of time, this was a key priority of Mrs. Marcos, but, then, as was her proclivity, she moved onto something else. So then it was on its own. One day it was visible in all the newspapers and the next day it had virtually disappeared. But at the same time there was a basic structure. The basic infrastructure for the project had been developed and it was expanding. When I left the Philippines it seemed to be in pretty good hands. I heard a few years later (but as I said I'm not familiar today with its status) that it had become quite a successful activity.

*Q: You mentioned family planning and that was a major initiative in our program. How did that get underway?*

HUMMON: That really ante-dated my going there. It was started in the late 60s, although we provided substantial funding for it when I was there.

*Q: How was it being accepted?*

HUMMON: Not terribly well in certain quarters. Again, my recollection is somewhat hazy on this but the Philippines, as you know, is a Catholic country so there was a lot of opposition. I think when I first went there it an Archbishop Sin led some of the opposition. Later he became Cardinal Sin during my tenure. I don't know if there's any correlation or not. But he and others were very much opposed to this. On the other hand, there was also political support for it. I can't remember how strongly, but I know that Mrs. Marcos was generally in support of it and that was worth its weight in gold in those days. I recall a widespread public education program.

*Q: Was this also in the Ministry of Health or was it separate?*

HUMMON: There was a population center or commission. It was separate, but it also had ties to the Ministry of Health. A Dr. Lorenzo was head of the commission and, I believe, reported to the First Lady. (Again my recollection of the organizational details is sketchy.) Actually in the U.S. the program was considered successful at the time. I believe that Ray Ravenholt, who was considered the father of population planning in AID, would point to the Philippines program as one that, in the face of tremendous obstacles, was achieving a great deal.

*Q: Were there other initiatives which you were associated with?*

HUMMON: We were involved in agricultural activities, e.g., research, such as the development of miracle varieties of rice to the Philippines. I think we were generally quite successful there. Land reform was also a very important initiative, but we had less success in that area. We tried hard and Marcos talked a good game about the necessity of land reform to bring about change for the people, but the GOP follow-through was often problematical. The situation was intolerable, historically. There was a small number of elite Filipinos who owned endless tracts of land and poor peasants who were tenant farmers with virtually nothing. This was a critical issue and had been an issue in Philippine politics for decades. We really tried hard, and we had some success on a small scale, but it just never really got going.

*Q: What kind of approach were you taking?*

HUMMON: I do not recall the details precisely, but my best recollection is that we would select a certain province, or area, and funds would be available to pay off the land owners a fair amount and to have a distribution to tenants who were already on the land so that they would get an acre or a hectare or two hectares. It was sort of a standard type of approach, but also supplemented by the PDAP program or later on with regional development programs that emerged. We provided farmers with a package of funding for fertilizer, seed, and implements - you know, a package of assistance. In a spotty sense it had successes, but we could never really establish a national commitment to it, despite the fact that there was a good deal of talk about it from the Marcos Administration. Basically, it was not necessarily a failure, but it fell short of hoped-for goals.

*Q: If the political opposition was supposed to be strong among the ...*

HUMMON: Political opposition. And that's basic in development. You can't force things down on political leadership in these countries. Sometimes advocacy can help to move people from one position slightly and so forth. But if they are dead set against it or even ambivalent, which was the case here, there's little that you can do in a development sense.

*Q: Were there any factions or groups that were pressing for land reform that were threatening the leadership ?*

HUMMON: The Americans were pressing (although of course not threatening.)

*Q: But I mean in -country.*

HUMMON: Yes, there were certain academics, liberals within the country. Not very many, but a few, and some political types.

*Q: Any rural groups or rebel type groups?*

HUMMON: Yes, but at this point, they were the fringe. These were the communist guerrillas in the North, the few that had not been rounded up or killed and Muslim rebels in the South in Mindanao, but they were basically under control. The Huk rebellion had been defeated years before, so these were the remnants. These groups had no real power, and were only minimally a terrorist threat at the time.

*Q: So there wasn't much of a threat.*

HUMMON: No, no threat. And frankly, much of the populace actually at the time seemed very pro-Marcos, although it is difficult to judge that in the absence of democratic freedoms. I do know that many people talked to us about their desire not to return to the anarchy of the past.

*Q: What were some of the other programs that you were associated with?*

HUMMON: Those I have mentioned were pretty demanding.

*Q: What about the rural electrification program?*

HUMMON: Yes, there was a program and I think, quite successful.

*Q: Did that start before you were there?*

HUMMON: Yes, it started before I arrived.

*Q: Why did that go reasonably well?*

HUMMON: Why did it go well? It goes well when you start from zero and you develop any sort of electricity. Most of the communities in the rural Philippines had no electricity. We brought in the NRECA [National Rural Electrification Cooperative Association] and they were there for years. And they were there before I got there. It was Tom Niblock's leadership in this.

*Q: Was it well accepted?*

HUMMON: Yes. You mean in terms of community involvement? During this period it was received very enthusiastically. I don't what the situation today, but clearly we considered it a great success. I didn't have that much involvement. Tom and I kind of divided the projects and that was sort of his creation. There was a lot of traveling around the country as new projects took place with the inauguration and the obligatory switching on of lights for communities.

*Q: What were some of the other projects that you were concerned with or have we covered those?*

HUMMON: Those were the main ones that we were involved in plus a sizeable training effort. We also had a very strong humanitarian involvement in the Philippines. Since there were typhoons that took place frequently, we spent considerable time helping in disaster relief. Those were the days when there was no strong centralized disaster relief program within the Agency, so we sort of did our own thing. Part of my job as the Deputy Director was to be the disaster coordinator for the Mission or the Country Team. When a typhoon struck and people were isolated in an area, we would go to Clark Air Force Base and work with the Air Force and fly out in these huge helicopters that they had. We'd go out over an area with the bags of nutri-buns and blankets and throw them down to the people below. These were people who were isolated by severe floods and couldn't be reached by land for days.

*Q: Was there a lot of follow-up on reconstruction?*

HUMMON: Yes, through the Provincial Development Assistance Program. But now I'm talking about the humanitarian and disaster effort. This also included the refugee portfolio.

The refugees that we had during this time were after the fall of Vietnam in 1975. We had set up a refugee receiving center at Grande Island near Subic Bay. All Vietnamese refugees and U.S. personnel departing Saigon came through Grande. I'll never forget the night when I went out with Admiral Donahue, the commander at Subic Navel Base, to the naval vessel, the Blue Star,



to greet Ambassador Graham Martin, who had arrived after their exodus from Saigon. As you might expect, it was not an easy situation for him or for any of us. Also, seeing some of my USAID colleagues was difficult. Some of them came to me saying that we've got to do something about the locals that were left behind. I have vivid impressions of their distressed countenances and the remarks of AID officers, and of their deeply felt concern for the tragedy likely to affect those left in Saigon.

*Q: Was there anything that you could do?*

HUMMON: Nothing. Nothing. Nothing that we could do.

*Q: Were there some locals that did come?*

HUMMON: There were some. I don't recall how many, but I don't recall that it was a large number. There were, however, many Vietnamese who arrived at the camp. I remember so many of them coming with their clothes laden with gold and jewelry, items of value that they could carry. My wife, Jean, helped also in this operation which lasted for some time.

*Q: Did you set up a camp and all that?*

HUMMON: The military set up the camp. They were obviously the key actors in this, but there were many of us from USAID, and probably from the Embassy as well, helping in the processing of the refugees. It was a very sad time, one of the low points of my career in terms of what it symbolized, and the effect on so many people's lives.

*Q: Well, in all of that work on the humanitarian side and disaster relief and so on, did anything stand out that you learned from that in how you operate or not operate?*

HUMMON: Not particularly from that unique experience. I just think that in our Agency we do a very good job in these areas. I think that AID has strong humanitarian roots along with its emphasis on overall development. Part of that is just because we want to help people. I think that many of us who came into this Agency came into it because of that motivation. I found over the years that the people I have worked with, by and large, in AID Missions have shared that sentiment. I think we were particularly good at it in the Philippines. There was an additional reason there. We had a huge military presence in the Philippines with Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base that you could draw upon and work very closely with them. This made it much easier.

*Q: They were helpful?*

HUMMON: Very helpful. We had no problems at all.

*Q: What was your sense of what the Philippine government had to say about the whole operation?*

HUMMON: That's a good question. Initially, I think, certainly during the period that I was there, there generally was a total acceptance of the role of AID and the U.S. military in disasters. When a disaster struck, we'd immediately call on the U.S. Air Force to bring in choppers to help dispense the basic necessities, the food and supplies to people and help to rescue people those who were marooned. The Filipinos cooperated fully with us.

Shortly after I left the Philippines and had gone to Saudi Arabia, the man who had come in to replace Tom Niblock as Mission Director, Garnett Zimmerly and some of his colleagues, the Economic Counselor, a Deputy at the Asian Development Bank and the British Economic Counselor - 7 or 8 of them - were coming back to Manila from the Bicol region, about 150 miles from Manilla, I would guess. Their plane went astray in a typhoon-type situation and disappeared. Immediately the U.S. military was going to start looking for them with its high-tech infrared capability that could detect metal in the mountains, hoping that they could quickly find the plane.

The Philippine government refused to let the U.S. military undertake this search. There had apparently been momentum building that the Americans were too much involved in handling every disaster situation. And there had been several of them when I was there. It was just a particularly difficult time with the weather situation at the time of my service and then the refugees who came in from Vietnam. Within the government, opposition emerged; and it came to a head in this search and rescue mission. My recollection is that they finally relented and let the Americans search after about twelve days. The Air Force immediately found the wreckage with no survivors.

*Q: Did the government have any disaster units that you could work with or were you fairly independent?*

HUMMON: They had someone. We dealt with someone, but whoever it was did not make a terribly indelible impression I guess.

*Q: In effect, it was the U.S. that was operating alone in these disaster situations?*

HUMMON: It seemed to me that we were coordinating more with Colonel Vigilar who was the head of PDAP, the Provincial Development Assistance Program. He was a very able person. I don't recall, I just hazily recall an office for disasters and that type of situation.

*Q: The PDAP was a national program wasn't it?*

HUMMON: A national program. They reported to the President.

*Q: And they had a separate office?*

HUMMON: A separate office and a separate operation. Many solid projects were undertaken. It was a very interesting period.

*Q: How did you find working with the Filipinos?*

HUMMON: They were extraordinarily nice people to deal with and you could have a very open relationship in a lot of areas. I really enjoyed it. There was sometimes not as much follow through as was promised - you can, of course, say that about all people, including Americans in some cases. But the Filipinos will always be special to my family and me.

*Q: Did you meet with Ferdinand Marcos?*

HUMMON: You know, I saw him many times, but it was generally only in signing ceremonies. We signed everything. He was extremely interested in showing that the United States was closely aligned with his regime, and so it was no problem in getting publicity for the AID program. We had ceremonies that would announce we were going to undertake a program. We would have a ceremony or signing when we funded the first grant. We had another ceremony when the first contract was let, or something like that. We had a signing on use of local currency generated. So we were over at Malacanang Palace often, and I met him in that connection. I really had no official contact with him apart from the fact that he knew who I was from these signing ceremonies and from some negotiations.

*Q: What about Imelda Marcos?*

HUMMON: With the nutrition initiative, I had considerable contact with her, and in family planning to some extent. I traveled with her in her private jet at least once around the country to visit projects.

*Q: What was her personality ?*

HUMMON: She was effervescent and very likeable. Just charming, a handsome lady. She was a rather good singer. She loved to sing "Dahil Saiyo," a favorite Filipino pop song, and I played it for her a few times on the piano at social occasions. She would ask me if I would play it for her.

*Q: What about your AID association with the Embassy ? Did the Embassy have a dominant role in what you were doing or should be doing?*

HUMMON: They were not terribly involved. They were, as I said earlier, very sensitive about getting too close with Marcos. They also wanted to maintain Marcos as a friend, so I know they had some split feelings about him. As we did to a certain extent too, but I think that we were more up-beat about the possibilities for development change.

*Q: Any other issues that stand out in your mind?*

HUMMON: Not really. I left the Philippines and went to Saudi Arabia.

**MAURICE E. LEE**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Manila (1973-1977)**

*Maurice E. Lee was born in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1925. He served with the European Theater during World War II. He received a master's degree from George Washington University and went to Paris, France to learn French. Mr. Lee's career with USIS included positions in Germany, Japan, Vietnam, South Asia, Washington, DC, the Philippines, Korea, and Israel. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on February 9, 1989.*

LEE: In 1973 I was sent out as PAO to the Philippines, the Embassy in Manila. It was a very, very interesting assignment from a job point of view. I might mention that right off the bat I became involved in a turf battle. It seems that my Ambassador, William Sullivan who arrived at post at the same time, insisted that I be overall responsible for the VOA relay stations and the "RSO," our regional printing plant in Manila, as well as the USIS operations. If you're familiar with VOA, or anyone that is, or with the RSO bureaucracy, you will know that this order raised holy hell. VOA and RSC were very unhappy that they would not be able to report directly to the Ambassador. So this matter had to be taken up with our Director, Jim Keogh in Washington and eventually he capitulated to the Ambassador. So this added a lot to what is a PAO's normal duties. So I often found myself dealing in VOA station problems, printing problems that, I must admit, were beyond my technical capabilities. But they were well staffed with very capable people and usually things went along quite well.

That period, which lasted four years, in the Philippines, was a very interesting time. We're all familiar now, the American public that is, with the excesses of the Marcoses. And I think one of the greatest tragedies of the Marcoses is the fact that they had the charisma, the brains and the following to make that country a major economic and political power in the Far East. As it turned out, they went the other direction and looted much of the country and the public treasury.

However, we had to live with Marcos even though we were very unhappy with the way he did things. And the main reason was our bases at Clark and Subic. These are very important bases to our security and the security of the Far East. Our embassy was the only American one that I know of in the world that had a full-time lawyer whose job was just to handle these negotiations, which seemed to go on from year to year. And of course the Marcoses were always holding us up for more money each time negotiations came up. It was a very tricky business. Also, there were a large number of younger people and certain people to the left, who were very much against these bases and used every opportunity they could to hold demonstrations and create problems from a public relations point of view.

But we did carry on quite a successful USIS program while I was there. We had good libraries and three branch centers down through the islands. I traveled extensively over the country while I was there. The Philippine people are basically very friendly and I would say, at least while I was there, mainly pro-American. Although our history with the Philippines ever since the Spanish-American war is spotty, to say the least, there's a ground swell of good will in the Philippines for Americans and for the United States.. So in many ways it was pleasant dealing with the Philippine people.

The excesses of the Marcoses were sad. But their goings-on had a certain circus-like atmosphere. I could talk all night about some of the funny things that happened, particularly with Mrs. Marcos and her driven desire to be known as a great cultural person. I might mention several anecdotes because I think they're rather amusing and point out to what extent this woman would go to impress people and to compensate for what seemed a deep down inside feeling of inferiority. One of the American news magazines--I can't remember whether it was Time or Newsweek--did a feature article on Mrs. Marcos called "The Iron Butterfly." And while it was basically objective it wasn't terribly flattering to Mrs. Marcos. In one part of the article a well-known Western diplomat was quoted as saying that Mrs. Marcos had an inferiority complex because she lacked the cultural background and other necessities of being a First Lady. Well, she took umbrage to this, needless to say. At a reception several weeks after the article came out she came up to our Ambassador, William Sullivan, at a party and said, "Mr. Sullivan, are you the Western diplomat who was quoted in that story?" And he said, "Madame Marcos, this happens to be George Washington's birthday and I cannot tell a lie. Yes, I was the man who was quoted." At which point Mrs. Marcos, in one of her usual grand scenes, ran out of the room crying. I might inject here that many Filipinos, including the Marcoses, believed that Sullivan had been sent out to bring down the Marcoses and their cronies. I personally never saw such an effort.

The next morning the Ambassador got a telephone call from Mrs. Marcos' secretary saying that Mrs. Marcos would like the Ambassador to join her for dinner that evening--alone. The Ambassador replied, "is this a command performance?"

And the secretary said, "from the tone of her voice, I would suggest it is."

They were to meet at a well known restaurant out in a suburb of Manila. The Ambassador thought it strange if it was going to be a dinner alone that they'd be meeting in a public restaurant. But when he got to the restaurant he found it was closed for the evening. It was not unusual for Mrs. Marcos to close down establishments when she needed an orchestra or floor show at the Palace or needed a venue, as was this occasion.

He was led into the restaurant and was waiting for Mrs. Marcos to come when several busloads of people drew up and parked in front of the restaurant. Out stepped the leading cultural types, writers, singers, ballet dancers, you name it, whom Mrs. Marcos had rounded up to come to this dinner. When she finally arrived (she was always late and was referred to by many as the "Late Mrs. Marcos"), she had everybody seated and she had one long table where she sat across from Ambassador Sullivan and at each course of the dinner she would bring up a different group of diners and would converse about literature and music and opera and so on and so forth, trying to point out to the Ambassador that after all she was not culturally void.

I always knew when Van Cliburn, the American pianist, a favorite of Mrs. Marcos, was in town because I would always get a call from her office asking if I could get some Dr. Pepper out of the Commissary because they didn't sell it in the Philippine market and that happened to be Mr. Van Cliburn's favorite drink. Also, Mr. Van Cliburn never came with a passport so we always had to get him one.

She was famous for last-minute things, too. She was always expected to attend big events at the Cultural Center of the Philippines but she was always late. And so it got to the point that people would start stomping their feet and chanting, "Imelda, Imelda, Imelda," wanting her to get there so the performance could get started, they would never start without her. I recall one time when we had Martha Graham and her dance group under our USIS sponsorship, were playing at the Cultural Center. Mrs. Marcos used to always love to throw big bashes after a cultural event of some significance. As the day of the performance drew near, we had no word from the palace that she was interested in giving anything. And lo and behold, the afternoon of the performance I got a call from Ambassador Sullivan, who happened to be down at the palace seeing the President, and he said, "I just want to alert you, Mauri, I think you're going to be called very shortly and be told that there will be a big bash after the ballet tonight that Mrs. Marcos is throwing, on very short notice. She's just commandeered the orchestra at the Hyatt Hotel for the evening (which means they had to close down their nightclub), and you're going to get a call in a few minutes from her secretary to give them 200 names of people to invite on the diplomatic and American side."

This was the way Mrs. Marcos liked to work.

One of the highlights of my stay there was the visit of President Ford, after his trip to China. He had with him Henry Kissinger and a large entourage and a press contingent of almost 300 people, two planeloads, which we had to take care of. Mrs. Marcos again took the occasion to turn out one of the biggest shows I've ever seen. Even Barbara Walters told me she had never seen anything quite like it in her life. Mrs. Marcos decided that as the presidential procession proceeded from the airport to the palace, the President and Mrs. Ford should get a taste of Philippine history. So she took over the whole length of Rojos Boulevard, which I would say is several miles long, and had a history of Philippine culture, brought in dancers, tribes, even palm trees were brought from the South and planted along the route.

*Q: You mean they stopped at each point?*

LEE: No, you just drove along slowly.

*Q: I see, so that the--you didn't stop to watch a performance for a few minutes, you just kept driving.*

LEE: Except when they got down to the park, the main park, Rizal Park, she had a chorus of 1,000 and three symphony orchestras merged into one to play and sing the two national anthems complete with fireworks. Needless to say, the entourage was an hour and a half late getting to the palace. But people in that procession saw one of the greatest shows I think that's ever been put on, despite the fact that there was a war in the south and troops were brought in to help with things.

The following day, the American entourage was taken out on the Presidential yacht for some more show biz. Also the two presidents were to have their official talks in Marcos' cabin. When it came time for the meeting Marcos escorted Ford into the cabin and closed the door in the face

of Kissinger and the Ambassador. Since there was no one to take notes, I'm not sure a record of the meeting exists to this day.

I am not surprised that the Marcoses had their demise eventually. It came a little sooner than I thought it would, but it was inevitable. I think that it's for the best that they left the Philippines. What the future will bring remains to be seen. There are still many, many serious problems and I guess the new government will just have to whittle away at them.

*Q: I know, at least I've been told, that Mrs. Marcos was sort of the mother of that big Cultural Center that was built out there and that she was very fond of it. This wasn't our cultural center was it?*

LEE: No, our cultural center at that time was located over in Quezon City, but I can tell you an interesting anecdote about the cultural center. She did build the cultural center. It was there before I got there. But one day I got an anxious call from Ambassador Sullivan to come to his office, that an advance party was there from the Miss Universe pageant. And since I guess beauty contests come under public affairs, like everything else, I got summoned to the meeting. These people came to ask us if Mrs. Marcos could be believed. We said, "What's the problem?" And they said, "Well, she very much wants the Miss Universe contest here but there's no theater, including the cultural center, which is of sufficient size with the type of stage we need to put on this event." At the time they had been draining part of Manila Harbor so Mrs. Marcos could put up a huge convention center near the cultural center. When Mrs. Marcos heard this, she took the Miss Universe group out on these muddy flats and dropped a coin and said, "I will build you a theater for Miss Universe right here."

*Q: How long was it before the Miss Universe--*

LEE: This was going to be two years later, the Miss Universe contest.

*Q: I see.*

LEE: So they asked the Ambassador and me if we really believed this could happen. And we said, if Mrs. Marcos said it's going to happen, it will happen, we can assure you. So we think you can go ahead and plan a Miss Universe. So they went ahead and planned to have it in Manila in two years. That theater was finished about a week before they arrived back in town for the contest. But it was finished and we had a Miss Universe contest.

*Q: I was just wondering what--did you run pretty much of a standard program in the Philippines other than that? Or did you have some particular objectives or unusual activities that--*

LEE: No, I think that as I mentioned earlier, a major public affairs problem was the bases. Otherwise we ran a routine type of USIS program. I remember when Director Keogh visited the post he saw a little sign in the USIS library that said "No one under high school age admitted," because we couldn't handle the crowds of students that used the library. He was pretty upset about this. He said, "do you realize that you may have turned away Ferdinand Marcos when he was a young person if you'd followed this policy back in the old days?" And I said, well, that's

the chance we take, Mr. Director. Later on the Agency acquired a bigger building for the library after I had left. I also told Mr. Keogh when he asked me why we weren't doing more to promote travel to the United States, "Mr. Keogh, if you want to give every Filipino a one-way ticket, I can predict 90 percent of them will come to the States and they'll stay." So there was no trouble selling the United States to the Filipinos.

**MORTON I. ABRAMOWITZ**  
**Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief of**  
**Pacific Command (1973-1974)**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Inter-American Affairs,**  
**Department of Defense (1974-1978)**

*Ambassador Abramowitz was born in New Jersey and educated at Stanford and Harvard Universities. He entered the Foreign Service in 1960 after service in the US Army. A specialist in East Asian and Political/Military Affairs, the Ambassador held a number of senior positions in the Department of State and Department of Defense. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research and as US Ambassador to Thailand (1978-1981) and Turkey (1989-1991). He also served in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vienna. Ambassador Abramowitz was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 2007.*

ABRAMOWITZ: We spent a lot of time on the Philippines because of our bases there. That is when I first met Ferdinand Marcos. We also visited Thailand frequently because our bases there were instrumental in fighting the war in Indochina. I remember vividly in 1974 when we visited Thailand at the same time as the student uprising. Ambassador Len Unger was hosting a large party for the CINCPAC delegation, to which all of the Thai "brass" and civilian leadership had been invited. We arrived, but none of the Thai guests did. The student uprising had in fact started that evening and led to the overthrow of the military leaders. They fled to Singapore that evening. It was particularly fascinating to me because I wandered around looking at the demonstrations more or less unhindered. The students were by and large proceeding freely and were not harassed. The police were mostly gone. They overthrew the military leadership with great enthusiasm. That was my second experience in Thailand, and the vitality and joy of the students was impressive.

*Q: Let me now turn to the Philippines. What were the major issues you had to deal with as deputy assistant secretary (ISA) in DoD?*

ABRAMOWITZ: Early in the Carter administration, Secretary Vance called me over and said he wanted me to come back to the Department to become Dick Holbrooke's deputy in EA. I said no. During that meeting he suggested that perhaps the time had come for us to withdraw from the Philippines – or at least to get out of Clark Air Base. At about this time, the national security process had produced – or was about to produce – a couple of National Security Memoranda (NSIM), which were instructions to the bureaucracy to come with some answers to specific



policy questions. One dealt with Korea; the second related to the possible elimination of our military bases at Clark and Subic in the Philippines.

The first one State had the lead, the second DoD. I was appointed as chairman of the inter-agency working group to draft the response to the Philippine NSIM. The principal issue was a strategic one, whether we should withdraw from our bases, long a basic part of our defense structure in the area. Unlike Korea, our posture in the Philippines was a decision the president had not made. We produced a paper which discussed the pros and cons; it was not, to the best of my recollection, a source for serious inter-agency dispute, unlike the Korean paper. It was a unanimous view that we should not withdraw from Subic naval base. Clark was a more debatable proposition with people holding differing views about the importance of that air base. My recollection is that the final draft suggested that the decision on Clark be postponed and then be reviewed again in a year or so. There was general agreement among the agencies that there were already enough action already underway that would reduce our presence in Asia, after our defeat in Vietnam, that this was not the right time to consider major reductions in our presence in the Philippines. I think that all agencies shared the concerns over Asian perceptions if we continued to reduce and reduce our presence in the area.

All of the administration's efforts also have to be viewed within the context of its desire to normalize relations with China. This was a difficult issue in light of all its wide impact. I personally favored the direction the administration was taking toward finally carrying out normalization. But I was also quite cognizant of the number of difficulties that such a policy would create. The administration's considerations culminated in Brzezinski's trip to Beijing in the summer of 1978 during which he told the Chinese that the U.S. had made the decision to normalize by the end of the year.

While China policy was moving ahead the USG was also focused on specific issues such as troop withdrawal and base closings. China policy of course raised the question of our relations with Taiwan which in fact had been under review since the Ford administration. We received a presidential directive to develop a withdrawal plan for our military presence on Taiwan, which ISA did. To further complicate our Asian situation, the State Department was negotiating with Vietnam to re-establish relations and they had gone very far. Given growing China-Vietnam animosity the White House did not want to rock the China boat. Holbrooke's negotiations with Vietnam ran into White House "buzz saw". The two efforts – normalization of our relations with China and the establishment of relations with Vietnam – became conflicting objectives as there was a bureaucratic battle. Vietnam lost out. The normalization of relations had to wait a long time with Vietnam.

This dilemma was not a problem for us in the Pentagon, but I closely followed developments. I supported the draw-down of our troops in Taiwan. I also supported the normalization of relations with Vietnam. DoD as an institution took no position on these policy issues.

I mention these various policy development strands to illustrate the dilemmas Carter – and Ford before him – faced in Asia before and after our withdrawal from Vietnam. I was in the Pentagon for the first couple of years of the Ford administration and watched the strains close up. There was no question that Asia and our future there was very much on Carter's agenda. In the final

analysis, it was our efforts to improve relations with China that was certain and will be most remembered by history.

As I suggested before, there was an informal network in Washington among people dealing with Asia. It consisted of a variety of offices in State, the NSC, and ISA. Holbrooke, Armacost, and I were in frequent contact. We had a high degree of intellectual camaraderie; we didn't necessarily always agree on every issue (e.g. troop withdrawal from Korea), but we had intense and valuable discussions on each issue. We worked together closely and were close personal friends. These colleagues understood my position and even if not agreeing with me, at least respected my views – unlike people like Stillwell who never took the time to try to understand or even be factually correct.

Before I end my recollections of my tour as DAS in ISA I should make a few comments about Philippine base negotiations. The Filipinos were always uncertain about whether to open fresh negotiations on bases; they felt a critical need to do so, but they were concerned about American reactions. I am now talking about the period after our withdrawal from Vietnam. Finally, negotiations did begin; at one stage the U.S. delegation was chaired by deputy secretary of Defense Bill Clements. These initial discussions were primarily designed to see what Manila wanted from negotiations. Much of their agenda, not all of it, not surprisingly dealt with increases of assistance as well as greater symbolic manifestations of Philippine control over the leases. Money was the coin of the realm.

For much of the time, the negotiations were very informal. The meetings were mostly held at embassy counselor levels in Manila. They had many ups and downs with various items periodically becoming the foci. There was an important meeting on base negotiations in 1976, just before the end of the Ford administration, in New York. Bill Clements and I attended to meet with the defense minister; our principal purpose was to agree on what needed to be decided. There were a lot of rumors about the negotiations and the Philippine positions, and we felt we needed clarification in order to proceed with our internal work. I think this was probably the first meeting after a number of years and we got a full expression of Philippine needs and wants.

I think a State representative was with us as well, but I don't remember who it was. I kept State fully informed about these base negotiations and Defense's position on various issues. Being an FSO made the coordination easier and I think that Defense and State worked on these base negotiations as an effective team, even though we might have had disagreements on some of the issues. In light of what I viewed as a very effective process, I proposed to Holbrooke, and he himself may have before, concluded to have an informal weekly meeting attended by the senior officials around Washington who were working on EA matters. Dick was an excellent chairman and I think the meeting made all of our efforts much more effective and made coordination among agencies easier. It was a mechanism that I think still exists.

Later, during 1977-78 period, after I had chaired the interagency working group that I mentioned earlier, the success of base negotiations began to be tied to the Philippine human rights behavior. Patt Derian, the assistant secretary of State for human rights, became involved thereby generating a major disagreement between her and Holbrooke, on how to deal with Marcos. We had some heated discussions in Washington about the importance of the bases. As the

interagency group had recommended, we pursued negotiations with the objective of continuing our base arrangements despite Marcos' sorry human rights record. This decision was made at Cabinet level. In the summer 1978, higher level negotiations were resumed. Holbrooke and I met with Marcos during this period to discuss the issues. We didn't reach any agreement at that time, but it was the beginning of a new high level negotiations process over the bases; the first in many years.

The Philippine and Japan base negotiations illustrate two common problems that have held true for almost, if not all, base issues, at least two decades ago. First of all were problems associated with the American presence – drunken behavior, inadvertent accidents, noise generated by our planes, etc. Such problems are not solely connected with bases; naval port calls often generate the same kind of negative behavioral actions. We in ISA, usually in connection with the Joint Staff of the Chiefs of Staffs, spent a lot of time negotiating such issues. The second problem was the status of forces agreements and all the negotiations which had to be undertaken in order to preserve the judicial position of U.S. military on foreign soil. This was always a major issue, and was always on our desks.

The “status-of-forces” agreements were generally a challenge. We had to protect our men and women from arbitrary actions by the host country while it had a responsibility to its citizens to protect them from a wayward American soldier or sailor. The signing of an agreement was only the beginning; the daily workload was frequently generated by activity on the ground which required an interpretation of the agreement. Some of the incidents had the potential of developing into serious political friction and we obviously did our best to try to avoid such escalations. But the process to handle these incidents was time consuming as were the inter-and intra-agency deliberations leading up to and including these instances and the broader international negotiations. An office in ISA/DoD was charged with conducting status-of-forces agreements. Phil Barringer headed that office where he had worked on these issues for at least 25 years. U.S. policy on both sets of issues was set by an inter-agency group with this ISA office being the chief implementer.

Personally, my involvement with base negotiations was limited to the Philippines and Japan and later Turkey, where we also held a number of discussions about our base structure in that country.

I should not end the discussion of base negotiations and status-of-forces agreements without tipping my hat to our embassies in the countries with which we were negotiating. They were of vast help.

**HELEN WEINLAND**  
**Philippine Desk Officer**  
**Washington, DC (1974)**

*Ms. Weinland was born and raised in New York and educated at Mount Holyoke College and Ohio State University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1974, she*

*served in Zurich, Berlin and Prague and at a number of African posts, including Lagos, Nigeria; Kigali, Rwanda as Deputy Chief of Mission and Kaduna, Nigeria, where she served as Consul General. She also served in Washington as Desk Officer for the Philippines, Nigeria and Zimbabwe as well as Officer for United Nations Affairs. Ms. Weinland was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.*

*Q: Did the world intrude on you very much or were you pretty much in Victorian England or actually, Elizabethan England?*

WEINLAND: I would say that's the place where -- two or three of the editors I worked with at Victorian Studies, the professors who editing the journal, were themselves very active politically and quite left wing -- so I would say it was the time in my life when I really became convinced that there was a responsibility on the part of the citizen to be part of a community. I would say I shifted quite noticeably to the left in my political thinking. Probably during my Foreign Service experience, I moved back somewhat towards the center.

*Q: Well, not Leninism but Marxism per se was really alive and well in the American academic world at the time. Did that attract you?*

WEINLAND: No. I don't think the people I was hearing all this from and talking about all this with were particularly Marxist but more democratic socialist, not as ideological as Marxism.

*Q: Well, what happened? OK, so you are here slogging away and something happened.*

WEINLAND: To do what?

*Q: Yes, to do what?*

WEINLAND: Well, after I had finished all my courses and was close to having finished a dissertation, I got a job at Ohio State University where I went. I was there for three years teaching history. They had still at that time a program of teaching the introductory courses of history with instructors in small classes, so I would have usually three classes a quarter of about 35 students each, so I got to know their names and there was a lot of class discussion and so on. The university obviously couldn't afford to keep on doing that.

But then I was getting to the end of the three-year contract and it was becoming clear that I was not going to finish the dissertation. Somebody said to me, "You should take the Foreign Service exam" and I could see I was not going to be able to stay in academia; even community colleges were requiring the PhD. British history as a sub-subject was drying up and with all those factors I just thought, better join the Foreign Service or at least take the exam, which I did. I don't know what it is like now but it was a very tortuous process. It took about 15 months from start to finish.

*Q: I assume you passed the written?*

WEINLAND: I passed the written, not well on the math side but quite well on the other parts and then I came for the oral.

*Q: Do you recall any of the questions at all or how the oral went for you?*

WEINLAND: It was right during the Watergate hearings, in the spring of 1973. They had just opened that investigation, the Ervin committee was just getting geared up.

*Q: So when was this?*

WEINLAND: It was the spring of '73. I had driven from Columbus, Ohio, where I was living. I moved out of my apartment, got in the car and started driving east. I threw a rod in the car and destroyed the engine so I sat in a motel for three or four days while it was being repaired. It was ghastly. I got to the oral interview in a mood of "well, whatever." I just hadn't focused at all on this. The first question the man asked me as we walked down the hall was if I had had any trouble getting there, at which point I shrieked with laughter.

They asked me and I am trying to think how it came up. I know they asked me certain things about American interests, vis-a-vis, Europe and whether it was in our interests that the European Union be strong or not, and that kind of thing. I said yes, and then it was a little difficult for me to think why I said yes, but anyway. Then somehow something came up that had to do with the Watergate break-in and the political climate. I said something to the effect of, "Well, clearly a number of the people who are behind this are absolutely crazy. You know, they are nuts." One of the examiners looked at me and said, "Well, do you know any of them?" And I said, "No, I don't know any of them but of course, you can tell. They are nuts." And then I paused and I looked at him and I said, "Do you know any of them?" He said, "Well, I have met G. Gordon Liddy." I think he had been in the embassy in Mexico when Liddy was doing something down there. So I said, "Is he nuts?" He said, "Well, he's a little unusual." So that is another question I remember.

I can't remember any more of the interview.

*Q: Well, then there was a security clearance and all that. So when did you come into the Foreign Service?*

WEINLAND: Between that oral exam and getting in, I still was looking for a job and it was a very tough time. It was during that '73 economic downturn and there were hiring freezes all over Washington, but I did finally find a job. About January, the next year, '74, I had a phone call from somebody putting together an entering class and he said, "We would like you to enter in March, '74." I had houseguests at the time of the call, and they had a cranky little kid. We were putting dinner on the table and I got this call after six months. I said, "Oh. How much time do I have before I have to give you an answer?" which was not what he was accustomed to hearing from people, and he answered, "Well, I guess you could take about a week." So I said, "OK, I'll be back to you within a week." I took down his name and number and I spent some days calling around to people I knew who had been in the Foreign Service or who knew people who had been in the Foreign Service, asking is this a good way to go, and they said, "Yeah." Then I went into

my boss of that time and I said, "Is this any kind of career track job I am in now?" and he said, "No." I said, "I have worked for you for about six months, but I am going to have to take the State Department job because this offers me a career which you can't." He was agreeable and I found a replacement for me and they were very happy with each other.

In March of '74 is when I joined.

*Q: You took the A-100 course, didn't you? What was it like, sort of in terms of composition? How did the people strike you and all?*

WEINLAND: I was surprised to find that a lot of them had been just passionately wanting to get into the Foreign Service, from college on. I was by this time 32 so a number of them were younger than I was and most of us were State. There were at least one or two people in the foreign agriculture service and maybe one or two in the commercial service. At least one woman was a spouse of a Foreign Service officer so she had come in from Tehran, where he was posted. It was a good group. I mean, I enjoyed getting to know them. I have always felt that one of the wonderful things about working for the Foreign Service is that your colleagues are almost always universally bright, interesting, hard working, dedicated public servants. I think that almost everybody I met in that class fell into that category.

*Q: I have been doing these oral histories for over 20 years and I certainly wouldn't be doing it with successful insurance agents or brokers or what have you. Interesting people but also interesting places.*

*Did you have any idea what you wanted to do or were they telling you what kind of job you would be taking at that time?*

WEINLAND: At that time when you took the exam you declared a "cone" and I had declared consular. I had read through the various descriptions and thought that that one fit me the best, so I figured I was headed for a consular job. I think our class was probably more consular and political with fewer economic and admin officers. There must have been a couple of people from USIA (United States Information Agency) at the time. I knew that consular service meant visas, passports, citizenship and all those kinds of things.

While we were in the A-100 class we were then also talking with our CDOs (career development officers) about where we wanted to go. When I entered the Foreign Service I just figured I'd spend my career in Europe. I knew German, I knew French, had studied British history, so I went in and he said, "List three parts of the world in the order you would like to serve in." I think I put down first Europe, second Asia and third I can't remember if it was Latin America, maybe. That was sort of how I envisioned my career. It did not work out that way.

*Q: So we are talking about '74 and you had taken a two month, three month course?*

WEINLAND: Five weeks.

*Q: And whither?*

WEINLAND: And then I took two weeks of consular training. Then my first assignment, I had a kind of funny, well, had an interesting experience. I went in for the second meeting with the CDO and he said, "Well, nothing is open in Europe. You have the choice of three constituent post consulates in East Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia: Udorn, Thailand," where of course at that point during the Vietnam War, we still had an enormous air base; "Medan, Indonesia, and Cebu in the Philippines." I knew a couple of people who had been in Indonesia out in the Far East and so I asked them, "Which one of these would be the best bet?" and they said, "Oh, no question. Medan." So I told my CDO, "OK, what I want is Medan."

I went to panel and was refused. I was told later by somebody who had been on the panel, or he actually told somebody who told me, that the reason was that I was female and it was a predominately Moslem area and they did not want a woman, even as a vice consul in Medan. Of course this was highly ironic because about ten years later, Harriet Isom was the consul general. So there I was, and then they said, "You can't go to any of those three," (you know. I didn't even have the choice of going to Cebu). "You are going to go to Manila and be a consular officer in Manila. That job won't open up for a year so in the meantime, you are going to go to the Philippines desk."

I said, "I do not want to go as a consular officer to Manila. I am happy to go to the desk, but I will spend the next year trying to change my assignment." So I went to the Philippines desk, which was a fabulous experience for a new officer. We were in the middle of three big negotiations. I was working mostly for the man who was the economic officer on the desk. We had a big trade negotiation, "Laurel Langley" it was called, that was coming up for renegotiation. We had an air agreement that was coming up for renegotiation. The Political/Military people on the desk were preparing for a big negotiation over our military bases in the Philippines – Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay for the Navy. Both bases were important in our military presence in the Pacific Command. So it was a very interesting time. I trotted around all these different high level meetings between all the different agencies. It gave me a wonderful view of how State worked with Commerce, Agriculture, Civil Aviation Board and all these different agencies and how they got into terrible turf fights in the middle of these things, where Agriculture and Commerce would be going at each other.

Then one night when I was going home from work, maybe three months down the road, I got into the bus and there was my CDO sitting next to me and I said, "Oh, hey. Have you placed the next class?" and he said, "We even had some places left over." I said, "Like where?" One of them was Zurich and I said, "I'll take that one, that would be nice." So I changed my assignment from Manila to Zurich, and so my first overseas post was at the Consulate General in Zurich, Switzerland.

**ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT**  
**Political/Military Officer, Philippine Desk**  
**Washington, DC (1974-1976)**

*Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, DC. Her father worked for the International Red Cross, but died when she was very young. Her grandparents and uncle were all Navy world travelers. Her desire to enter foreign service was sparked by their tales of traveling abroad. She attended Stanford, but graduated from Radcliffe in 1962. She has served in the Philippines, Indonesia, Iran and Jamaica, as well as several other positions within the State Department. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 1992.*

Q: *You then moved over to Congressional Relations.*

SWIFT: No, no. I moved from being a purveyor of wonderful idealistic trips around the United States, to selling war planes on the Philippine desk.

Q: *You were the political-military person.*

SWIFT: Political-Military officer on the Philippine desk.

Q: *From '74 to '76.*

SWIFT: That's right.

Q: *What did that job consist of?*

SWIFT: Selling planes to the Philippines. Exactly what it said. This was at a time Marcos was elected...that was one thing that did happen while I was in the Philippines, and I stayed in the Philippines a little bit longer to go through that election. Marcos was elected at the end of '65, and at the point that Marcos was elected we all figured that he would either be the best president the Philippines had ever had, or the worst. And when I got onto the desk I was fairly convinced that he was the worst, and the State Department was trying to think that he was one of the best. My job was to make sure that our relations with the Philippines on the military side went smoothly. This included base negotiations, sales of military equipment to the Philippines, and various types of training. The whole spectrum of anything that had to do with military relations. One of my chief things that I can remember doing was attempting to block sales of war planes to the Philippines. I was there at a time when Marcos, with our encouragement, was building his armed forces from a very small group of about 30,000 soldiers in the military, to what ended up 120,000 armed forces. It was absurd. It was stupid. It came right out of the Vietnamese war. It came right out of our paranoia about communism. We were selling them all the wrong kinds of equipment, and telling them to go bomb the hell out of their own villages to get at those nasty communists. It really was not a good period.

Q: *This is at the time of our pull out from Vietnam, and the fall of Vietnam. Did you have the feeling that we were going to take our hard earned military technology and transfer it to the Philippines?*

SWIFT: Well, we gave them a lot of it. It was just a mindset. It was a very military mindset during those years. You didn't see it in terms of mass movements. We were trying to keep the



world safe for democracy in the Philippines and the way that they figured they were going to do it was, rather than supporting democratic institutions, that they would simply support Marcos. One of the ways you supported Marcos was to give him everything he wanted as he built up the armed forces which he plainly saw as the way to maintain his power.

*Q: What sort of reflections were you getting? Military sales and things like this?*

SWIFT: Oh, I was right in the middle of everything, yes.

*Q: ...a part of all the flow in. Were you getting a feeling we were going through this positive thing about Marcos, but getting reports in from the embassy, that gee, he really isn't that great.*

SWIFT: No. Bill Sullivan was doing everything he could to...Bill Sullivan did not particularly like the Marcoses, but he was a very strong supporter of military assistance to the Marcoses, and he was a very effective supporter of military and any other kind of assistance. He was your typical gung-ho ambassador of that period, and one of our best. He went from there to Iran. Very strong willed. A lot of ambassadors go in and don't have complete control over their embassy, and over the various agencies that work for them. Bill Sullivan did his absolute damndest everywhere. He failed in Iran, but mainly Brzezinski was running around behind his back. But he was a very strong ambassador who used everything he could think of, including the cables. I used to have the Bill Sullivan cables...the funniest things you've ever seen. Just wonderful. When he'd get mad at us back in Washington he called Congress cowardly lions, and he called those of us on the desk that were working against him on a couple of things, including mattress mice. Get those mattress mice off my back, they're chewing my policy to pieces." He was, of course, right

*Q: When you say you were trying to block some sales to Marcos, where did this come from, how did you work on this, and what was the feeling? Obviously this was part of our policy business and one just doesn't go off and try to stop sales.*

SWIFT: I can't remember but one of the ways you do is you try to convince people that giving...we had two kinds of war planes at this time that we could sell. One was a F-5 which was a small jet fighter.

*Q: The kind you could load a lot of stuff on it.*

SWIFT: You really couldn't load a lot of stuff on the F-5. It really was not very good for much of anything. As someone told me, "it parked pretty." It was a very sleek pretty looking thing, and when you're going out to sell arms to all of these governments that don't need it...I mean, what the heck did the Philippines need jet planes for? We had Clark Air Force base there. Any threat that took air to air fighting planes was not going to be countered by the Philippine government. But we were selling them merrily. But the F-5s I had no objection to whatsoever because they were a fighter plane to fighter plane type of plane, and if you tried to use them to try to bomb...you could hang stuff on it, but if you tried to use them to bomb villages in Mindanao, they just weren't very efficient at it. They didn't have the range, and they didn't have the ability to put stuff on the wings and drop it in any precise fashion. The planes we had, because we had surplus out of Vietnam, we had A-4s, I think, which is a Navy version of some kind of a plane,

and it was a really good air to ground plane. You could hang everything on it. You could stand back and just destroy any little old village that you wanted. My feeling was very strongly that one of the reasons that we were losing the war in Vietnam was that we did a lot by air power, and air power does very little other than earn you the enmity of whoever you indiscriminately plunk with your air power. It seemed to me they had a rebellion going in Mindanao, but the way you got the Philippine government to deal with the rebellion in Mindanao was either going in there with enough troops on the ground and slugging it out, or compromise. But you didn't give them all this fancy sophisticated air equipment that you could go in and stand off and plunk villages with. It was just stupid.

But how do you do it? You redirect it. You point out what these things are going to be used for, and you try to redirect people into other directions, and you try to sell them lots of F-5s which are cheaper, and easier to support. I mean, there are all sorts of ways you can do it.

*Q: I'd like to get a feel for how a desk officer who is opposed to forces outside that are trying to push this. Our military was trying to push this, weren't they?*

SWIFT: Not particularly. Our military is pretty smart. They're divided, and there were divisions on how to do stuff. I didn't have much effect but every now and then you could push something in a different direction.

*Q: How about the office director, I mean whoever is head of Philippine affairs?*

SWIFT: They were dealing at the same time, and you'd talk to them and try to argue them around to your point of view.

*Q: How did it work out while you were there, '74-'76 period?*

SWIFT: It was plainly going absolutely the wrong direction. When you're young, each little victory seems like a major victory. When you get older, you stand back and you say you didn't have one bit of effect on it. Understand again, I'm coming right straight out of Harvard doing Asian Studies and Cornell doing Southeast Asian Studies. I had done a lot of work on indigenous rebellions and all that sort of stuff, and I just thought what we were doing in Vietnam was not only wrong-headed, but we're going about it in the wrong way. I mean, we weren't going to win. If we were going to do it the way we were doing it, we weren't going to win anyway. And by '74 it was quite obvious that we were going down in flames, and most of our attention at that period was on Vietnam. All of us in East Asian bureau were watching Vietnam. There was general rebellion in the ranks. That was the time that Win Lord left, and a lot of people were just rebelling. It was all very exciting and sort of interesting, and fun.

*Q: Then you moved over to Congressional Relations.*

SWIFT: Then I went up to Congressional Relations.

**ROBERT S. ZIGLER**  
**Refugee Officer, USAID**  
**Subic Bay (1975)**

*Robert S. Zigler was born in Illinois in 1920. He received his bachelor's degree from Manchester College in 1942. During his career with US AID he served in Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Washington D.C., Ghana, and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). Mr. Zigler was interviewed by W. Haven North in November 1998.*

ZIGLER: That was in 1975. It is part of AID history too, and that was in Subic Bay, Grande Island, which was a holding area, staging area for Vietnamese people who were refugees. I had gone to the Philippines before the fall of Saigon for a TDY assignment which was tacked on to the end of my tour. I thought that was a great way to finish up in Southeast Asia. I was down there working on a rural development public administration course. One Friday, we got word that people were needed to go up to Subic Bay to process Americans coming through from Vietnam, and I volunteered. I remember John Hummon, he was the Deputy Director in the USAID/Philippines at the time. These Americans coming through at that time, all some had on was a tee shirt and a pair of shorts and some clogs, for example, no passport.

*Q: These were American refugees?*

ZIGLER: Yes, who evacuated in a hurry. Anyway, we were waiting to take the plane up to Subic Bay. I asked Hummon, "Why are we going up there as civilians because Subic Bay is run by the Navy?" He said to me somewhat disdainfully, "If you don't know why we are going there, you shouldn't go." Anyway, I went. The first day or two were spent with American personnel coming in by ship or by plane. Most of them by ship at that time. There they were processed on to the United States.

Then I stayed on for another month maybe two, I don't remember for sure right now, on Grande Island as the American civilian representative to work with the Vietnamese refugees. There were 300 Cambodians who showed up in a naval ship. We had about 10,000 people there. The Navy did all the operations. In other words, they cooked the food and hauled it across in a helicopter and unloaded it in the dining hall. It was cooked on the mainland and eaten on the island.

The island was a great idea because, you see, there was no need for any type of walls, fences, gates or anything like that. The water did the job. It had originally been used by the Spanish in the old days as a defense against the invasion of the port, and then the Americans had it. There were a number of buildings there. One was used for a hospital, another for an eating facility and things like that. We organized English classes. We had a village council. There were different kinds of athletic activities, one was a volleyball tournament. These refugees would come and then they would go on to Guam.

*Q: What kind of screening were they going through? Any?*

ZIGLER: Yes. The only screening at the time was these people would come in off the boats and they had to go through a customs check which was kind of uncertain. The Americans did it; the

Filipinos didn't do it. I can remember people coming in there with two or three elephant tusks four or five feet long, beautiful ones that were confiscated. Medicines were confiscated and so the users had to go to the medical place for replacements. Anything unusual was examined and taken.

*Q: What about their political orientation?*

ZIGLER: Ah! Nothing, no clue on that. They just walked through and got a piece of paper with their name recorded on it. In fact on that score, and this again is history. The original agreement with the Philippine government and this was going to be at Clark Field, there would be something like 300 refugees would go through and no military personnel. That agreement was violated within about the first half day. There was one group of young men that came in at one time. They all went into a building and all of a sudden they came out and they all had on blue denims and white tee shirts. The other clothes they had were no longer around anymore. Where did this bunch of young guys come from, 18-19 year old young men? Well, you know as well as I do, it was some kind of a military unit.

*Q: How did these people happen to be the ones to escape?*

ZIGLER: I don't know. The methods of escape were several. First, there was official American assistance. You remember there were some ships off the shore of South Vietnam. I'll talk about that in a minute. Then there were people who got on their own boats, or they hired boats and got to the Philippines. Other people, as you may remember, went over to Thailand.

*Q: What about the Vietnamese that worked for the Americans?*

ZIGLER: They were all in the group. I can remember some of the people who worked for me at the Staff Development Center came through. You talk about poignancy, I remember this one woman, once free, now defeated. I can remember her sitting over there looking into the black of the night all by herself. I had a notion to go over and put my arm around her. I still wish I had now, but I didn't.

*Q: Where did these people go? How did they get settled?*

ZIGLER: That particular woman, believe it or not, ended up at the American Red Cross here in Washington, DC, and working on refugee problems. Others, of course went into business. Some went down to Australia, but most came to the States. Some of them, as you know have been incredibly successful. I know one woman who worked with CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support), and you know about CORDS. That was a military involvement. She was a trainer. She is now essentially the CEO of an office cleaning establishment in Washington, DC. They have over 300 people working for them. That is a consequential outfit. That is a big business. She has all kinds of people and she is the big shot. She had married an American man and then for some reason they were divorced. Anyway, she started working for a nonprofit organization and then she switched to office cleaning and maintenance and there she is. Another one got a CPA. For two years all she did was study, didn't do anything else. You couldn't get her to go to a movie; she went home and studied. Then she got

her CPA and now she works for the Washington Post. Those are three examples. So, anyway, from a success point of view, they did pretty well.

There is another interesting event that might be mentioned here on this Grande Island time. The champions of the volleyball tournament wanted to play a game against an American volleyball team. That was reasonable, so I called the navy base and he said, "We are going to send out a team. We are going to send out our Seals." You know about the Navy Seals. Those guys are tough guys. I said, "Okay with me," so we made a date and a time. We were on the island and you could see the mainland. The game was to be played at 2:00. It gets to be 1:30 and they haven't shown up. Then all of a sudden I see this little speck; it is a boat. Believe it or not, at 2:00 the boat tied up at the pier right on time! These Seals were a sight to behold. They were really impressive. To be a Seal you had to be a physical person and they had real bodies and their tee shirts were tight and they had blue pants on and white sports shoes on and white sox with stripes around them. They really looked terrific, no question about it. So, I led them over to the Vietnamese team. We had just put up some sticks and strung a net across and put down some lines. You know how you make the old lime lines. Here is one Vietnamese player with old shoes on and no strings, old military boots or no shoes at all. Tee shirt sagging down or no shirts. No similarity at all, they were just lucky to have their bodies clothed. So the teams began to warm up. This Navy team had different kinds of drills. They had one Seal tap it up to the net, and another guy set it up and then a spike, bang! They would go through these routines, and they were impressive!

Well, then came time to play, and the Vietnamese served. The Navy guy gets it and sets it up to the net for the spiker and bang he misses it by about two inches. One point for Vietnam. Next time Navy hits into the net and the ball flies back 50 feet, two points for Vietnam. Then the next one goes out of bounds a little bit. The score was soon six to zero. Everybody was embarrassed. The Vietnamese were embarrassed that they were beating these Americans so bad. The Seal's were ashamed of themselves, too. Fortunately, they made a point and broke the ice. The Vietnamese won the first game; the Seals won the second; who do you think won the third? The Vietnamese again. Wow! Of course, the Vietnamese would have been satisfied to have been defeated by this American team.

Then there was something else about the performance of the American military which sometimes can really be impressive. There was on Grande Island a little house that had been used for a recreation facility. It was the headquarters for the refugee team. So, it was a house with a little kitchen and some bunk beds. The commander of the whole base was one of these super men. He wouldn't sleep on the bunk bed at all. His men would sleep in the bunk bed. He slept on the floor. I remember he got on the phone one night and said "I want 300 men out here by 5:00 am." By golly, I'll tell you, you could hear the boats coming in from 4:00 on, and by 5:00 there were 300 men ready to put up tents and prepare for the arrival of a large group of refugees. They were coming in by ships, a flotilla type situation.

*Q: Did they close the camp?*

ZIGLER: Yes, but the camp continued on for some time. One thing, my tour of duty was over and I was supposed to come back as far as Washington was concerned. Eventually they moved

them on out. I got back to Washington in '75. There I began to work with the training section. You may remember Dan Creedon, who was head of AID training then.

**CHARLES C. CHRISTIAN**  
**Deputy Director, USAID**  
**Manila (1975-1978)**

*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.*

CHRISTIAN: I had one year in training and four years in the controller's office before going back overseas. After the five years in Washington, I was looking around for an overseas assignment. I was talking to "Zim", Garnett Zimmerly, who I had first met in Laos as the Program Officer. He was then acting assistant administrator for Vietnam, or it may have been called the Supporting Assistance Bureau then. He said he was going out as Mission Director to the Philippines, and offered me a position first as controller, and then as deputy director when the incumbent departed the post. I went to Philippines as a controller in July 1975. John Hummon was deputy director at the time. I enjoyed working with the controller Filipino staff there. They were quite capable and the mission worked smoothly. The working conditions were nice. The Filipinos were good advocates of their own programs. They were extemporaneous speakers of the first order, and they could put on a "dog and pony" show that would do credit for any program.

*Q: How big was the program?*

CHRISTIAN: It was one of the larger programs at that time. I don't remember dollar amounts, but we had programs in all of the sectors. We had a large family planning program, a nutrition program, a large disaster program for all the typhoons and natural calamities that hit the Philippines annually. We had a large agricultural program with a lot of support for their Ministry of Agriculture; Kansas State University had an agricultural team on-board, we were supporting the International Rice Research Institute program (IRRI) big time, which was outstandingly successful leading to the Green Revolution in Asia. Rice became a more productive crop. They returned to self-sufficiency in rice. They had been historically self-sufficient, but in the 1960s and early '70s they had imported rice, but they were coming back strong by the mid-70's.

*Q: Did we have anything to do with their coming back?*

CHRISTIAN: Well, we provided active support for their agricultural programs and as mentioned we financed a team working with the IRRI project. We believed we shared the glory, but that is always problematic. Lane Holdcroft came in as head of USAID's agriculture division about the end of my first year there. There was a clean water and sanitation program in the boroughs. One

of our largest programs involved provincial development, where we took several provinces and tried to make model local governments work with everything from budget planning, training for officials, down to motor pool operations for heavy equipment and trucks, and other vehicles. The whole government operations in selected provinces were improved with the idea that it would be replicated throughout the country. There were about 70 provinces in the Philippines and we were involved with about twelve of them. USAID had some activities in most every place except the Zamboanga peninsula on the island of Mindanao, where the Muslim insurrection was going on and this area was out of bounds during my tour in the Philippines.

*Q: So we weren't addressing that issue while you were there?*

CHRISTIAN: The Muslims? There was no way to reach them, and we were not even allowed to visit the area. The area was out of bounds. The PVO's were doing some work there that we were supporting, but they were closed down because of open hostilities so we couldn't get in for audit review.

*Q: The access for audit was a condition for whether we could carry an activity in a certain area?*

CHRISTIAN: That is the way it played out there. Another area that we steered clear of involved the first lady, Imelda Marcos. One of the things that occurred early on that strongly indicated that we should keep a distance from the first lady is that the IMF had one of their annual meetings in Manila, and the first lady wanted to boost hers and perhaps her country's image and proceeded to do so in her grandiose way by building six luxury hotels on the waterfront in Manila. She was a tremendous promoter, and the city was spic and span for the IMF folks. I partly blame the IMF for these kinds of extravagances, by provoking this action in third world countries. The third world doesn't want to look like a poor country cousin, and so they spend all this money getting ready for the IMF meetings. Especially the countries with dictatorial leaders who are prone to such excesses.

*Q: Did you ever meet Mrs. Marcos?*

CHRISTIAN: I usually sat below the salt, but I remember attending a function there that was held for the new AID Administrator Gilligan when he came to the Philippines. Imelda was there. You could almost see from one end of the table to the other, it was like a football field. It was in Malacanang Palace, and it was very impressive. I met the Marcos a few other times. They were big on awards and ceremonies at the palace. In the first couple of weeks that I was there I attended ceremonies to award people, Americans and Filipinos, in the program. There was a huge rural electrification program that was led by a Filipino gentleman. So many of them were western educated. Their technocrats were as educated as our technocrats. They were very effective in carrying out programs. Development seemed to be moving forward until about 1976 or '77. Then Marcos and cronies began to get too greedy, or it became more and more obvious, and they just seemed to want more and more of it; and Imelda's family and friends were said to be "heavy hitters" too. Then, of course, lesser lights got more into the run on the treasury.

*Q: Did that have any effect on the AID program?*

CHRISTIAN: Well things don't break precipitously. You can look at things in retrospect and they look much clearer than they did at the time. We tried to keep our distance, as did the Ambassador from the Marcos at that time. We tried to work with the true developers. In about August or September of 1976 the Mission Director, Zimmerly, had gathered together a group of his cohorts, from the Japanese Embassy, the German Embassy, the Asian Development Bank, and our Embassy, and the group went down to the Becol region in the southern part of Luzon province, which is an area that shows more patriotism to America than a lot of places here in the US. For many years there were a lot of Filipinos who had worked as cooks in the US Navy and were now retired on US military pensions. We had programs in that region, because of their friendly, cooperative attitude as well as generally, it was a very poor area. It was Zim's purpose to build up that area, and form joint ventures with the other donor governments to do it. The other nations' officials seemed very enthusiastic about it. USAID chartered a small plane and flew to the Becol, and they had a very successful day. Upon returning that evening, they got within radio communication of the Manila airport, and were waved off, and that was the last anyone heard of the plane, other than when a Marine helicopter off the USS Enterprise heard the beeping of the plane's recorder when the helicopter pilot was pursuing the search. The search for the missing plane went on for 11 days, and they couldn't be found. The jungles were so thick within 25 miles of Manila that the only people who could get in were the guerilla fighters from the Philippine army who crawled along wild boar trails. These guerrillas had fought with us against the Viet Cong in Vietnam. Finally, after 11 days the chopper located the plane. The peculiarity of that search was that everyday at about 2 p.m. there would be reports of the plane being found, when it had not. This was an aspect of the Philippine culture, especially among the less educated: they would see things and hear things that a lot of us aren't aware of. That was a trying time. Things were off to such a good start. I had just moved up to the deputy director position, things were working smoothly and I was beginning to feel comfortable.

*Q: How long had Garnett been in that position?*

CHRISTIAN: A little over a year.

*Q: He was killed. And all the other representatives?*

CHRISTIAN: All seven were killed on impact. The small aircraft was about 400 ft below the top of the mountain. It may have been wind shear, because the winds were really bad at that time of year.

*Q: It was the Philippines Airlines?*

CHRISTIAN: No, it was a USAID chartered aircraft. We used chartered small aircraft a lot up until then. We flew them to projects throughout the islands, especially when CODELS were there and other visiting dignitaries from Washington, all wanting to see project activities. The project leaders would put on a show of a woman in a bamboo hut ironing clothes for the first time with electricity or a sewing machine with a light-bulb hanging down from the ceiling. It was very impressive, especially for Congressmen who remembered our TVA days and the beginning of rural electrification in rural America. Tom Niblock (he was the prior Mission Director in the Philippines), while in disfavor with some of the folks back at AID/W, had achieved a lot in



pushing programs ahead in the Philippines. Tom had impressed Sen. Inouye and his hard nose staffer Jordan, when they were out there, with among other things, the FAR concept. This refers to Fixed Amount Reimbursement, a technique for limiting our funds to a fixed amount for an element of a project, which was based on previous engineering studies on what something would cost. Consequently, Tom had a direct line to Sen. Inouye that supposedly he used from time to time, which probably didn't stand him in too well with the AID Administrator and the chain of command in Washington.

*Q: What was the response to this tragedy by the Philippine people?*

CHRISTIAN: My first reaction to that question is that they waited for the next director, but there was more to it than that. There was sincere sympathy. They offered all the assistance that was in their power at the time. That left me as acting director for a few months with very little experience in that capacity, and not having a background in the program side of the business. But I got a lot of support. I had an excellent staff. That is one thing about AID in a mission like the one in the Philippines and the excellent living standards, you got a lot of good people. The staff did a good job during that time. I had a good, supportive Ambassador, Bill Sullivan, who I knew from Laos. He was supporting Joe Wheeler to come and replace Zimmerly, but it wasn't quite the right time for Joe. I suspect Joe shied away from the appointment due to the fact the Marcos's were in power then.

*Q: Who ended up replacing Zimmerly?*

CHRISTIAN: Peter Cody who had a long background in AID and who had experience in Latin America as well as Asia.

*Q: Didn't the program have a substantial economic assistance, balance of payment support like PL 480 (Food for Peace)?*

CHRISTIAN: We had a large PL 480 program, we had a two person staff handling Food for Peace, which is a large US staff for PL 480 programs. We always had a large shelf of other projects that were ready. If there was extra AID program funds, the money frequently went to the Philippines, because the Filipinos were working closely with us in planning ahead for programs. One of the political ironies that occurred that first year was the University of Kansas or Kansas State, I can't remember which, had done quite a bit of work with the Philippine Department of Agriculture. We were developing a large agriculture program. Kansas won the contract to implement this program. It just so happened that Bob Dole was running in the primary about that time. Somehow that was associated with Kansas having gotten the contract, that the mission had tilted it that way and by extension I had something to do with it, which is the farthest thing from the truth. When Carter beat Ford a new administration came in with Gilligan. Gilligan sent his lieutenant, George Wing to selected Missions to look at all activities and he questioned every person at our Mission. He too somehow got the impression that we had engineered the agriculture contract towards Kansas, and it did not bode well for the Mission leadership for a while. Domestic politics do get into our business.

*Q: Who was challenging the contract arrangement?*

CHRISTIAN: It was already too far down the pike. It had already been signed sealed and delivered, with all of the required documentation in place and no apparent irregularities, so there was nothing they could do about it, but I felt that it was hard to get friendly responses from a few people like Wing and the Assistant Administrator for Asia, for awhile. But they got over it and good relations evolved.

*Q: Was this contract audited?*

CHRISTIAN: Not during my tour. As far as I know the Kansas team did a good job. When a mission changes directorship, especially with two strong leaders, there inevitably is a period of transition. The people on-board had been placed by Tom Niblock, and so when Zim took over he began to bring in the people he knew as good performers. There was a bit of a shake-down period with the holdovers and the new arrivals, which was in the final stages. It wasn't bloody. I guess I can say that because I was on the incoming side.

*Q: Were there any major financial management issues?*

CHRISTIAN: The fixed amount reimbursement procedure was an effective way to do business for the type of activities that require engineering studies or cost estimating studies that are valid. Like for example, we did a lot of school-building replacement because of annual monstrous typhoons.

*Q: How did the FAR system work for the school building projects?*

CHRISTIAN: The engineers would come in and estimate the cost of building the school, which was the basis for our commitment to the activity. All overruns the host government would have to bear. We would have to get an engineering survey afterwards to say that it was built satisfactorily, and we would reimburse according to the results.

*Q: There were no advances?*

CHRISTIAN: There were advances, but the final payment was not until after the project had final engineering approval.

*Q: I remember one of the criticisms of the FAR program was that it was difficult for governments that didn't have large budgets so they couldn't hold out until the end for the payments.*

CHRISTIAN: That would be a problem in many countries in Africa. The Philippines had enough flexibility that they could borrow.

*Q: Is that technique used anywhere now?*

CHRISTIAN: I haven't heard about it recently. It could be because we are not into infrastructure to a great extent, like road building. In those days we were doing farm to market roads, and we could get an approximation of what things would cost.

*Q: Did you find that the estimates by the engineers were reasonably accurate?*

CHRISTIAN: I don't know if it was tested extensively. The mark usually seemed pretty reasonable and it was a superior method to assure a greater degree of accountability to any other procedure in place at the time.

*Q: Were there other financial or accounting issues with the Philippine government?*

CHRISTIAN: Their planning and coordinating group was a rather sophisticated group. The person who was heading that was quite well educated. He has worked at the World Bank since the Marcos government folded. He was not a Marcos lackey, he was a very competent technocrat. He and his group were easy to work with. They were not push-overs; you had to report back to them about the uses of the local currency they had made available to you. They were more sophisticated than any other country that I have dealt with. You did not have to do their work for them. There was the impression, however, that under Marcos there was a great deal of corruption. The excesses hadn't really surfaced so much when I left there in 1978. It did really go sour in early 1980s or late '70s. They didn't have those problems with the confiscation or theft of local currencies that occurred supposedly later. We were not aware of it happening to the extent publicized later on. I believe it came out later, after the US and the Philippines entered into formal lease agreements that reflected we were renting the military bases, with Marcos and company interpreting that it was their money to use at their discretion.

*Q: Was it effective and viable to do development in the Philippines? Did the political interests of America complicate the direction of the program?*

CHRISTIAN: At that time there was full support for family planning and population control in a Catholic country. This with Cardinal Sin, yes, SIN, right there in the middle of things. Cardinal Sin was a difficult, but pleasant, man to deal with. To Imelda's credit she, in her way, supported these programs. Later he and Imelda, the first lady, got at tremendous odds, but at that point we were able to push a population program that was sorely needed in the Philippines. Population growth rate was over 3% and it was pushed down to 2 or 2.5%. I suspect that during the 1980s that got turned around, in part perhaps, due to our own political interference in AID family planning programs. Imelda's interests in the program were in the areas of population control, family planning and nutrition. She had some of her consorts running those programs. They ran quite well with the only caveat being that they had to have a rather grandiose work environment; new buildings, because she wanted to show them off to her international friends. But there were some good people working there. It is always tough to get help down to the barrios, but to the extent that we could dig down and see it, it seemed to be doing reasonably well. Audit was not too difficult there in 1975 to 1978. During the search for the missing plane, we found out that USAID had the best communication system in the Philippines. We had special equipment brought in for the terrible typhoons that would flood whole provinces annually.

*Q: You had a permanent disaster relief capacity?*

CHRISTIAN: Yes at that point. Tom Niblock had built that up into a first class operation. During my period there, it had begun to be phased down as we turned it over to the Filipinos.

*Q: I gather working with the Philippine people was attractive?*

CHRISTIAN: I would say that about all the Asians I worked with. What you had to be on guard for was that they were too agreeable. They wanted to please. They were generally soft spoken and agreeable and showed a lot of respect.

*Q: What were the consequences of that relationship?*

CHRISTIAN: You had to be careful that they wouldn't agree to something you wanted to do, that would be counter to their development needs.

*Q: Did they follow up, or did they agree to things and then let them drop?*

CHRISTIAN: That was more of a problem than you would like to think. The programs had to be continually watched or the managers prodded to get the projects to come out on time, if they had other priorities.

*Q: Would your impression be that most development ideas were largely USAID initiatives or largely from the Filipinos or some mix?*

CHRISTIAN: I would say that in the Philippines there was a greater coordination and team spirit than in the other missions I have been in. Because there was greater ability on their side, and a greater understanding of American standards. The education system was better than in many other country.

*Q: They could be quite aggressive and put forward a lot of ideas, and take the initiative in developing programs?*

CHRISTIAN: And they were, while soft spoken, outspoken and prideful. It was sort of a love, hate relationship with the US, of course. They resented us being there in such large numbers, but they loved our ways and economic support. They were a product of 300 years of Spanish-Catholic influence and 100 years of US-Hollywood influence. It's quite a rugged combination. However, there was a good side to our colonial period. That was the elementary educational system which was very successfully established. While very delightful people, their elections usually involved severe violence, including such excesses as murder and kidnapping.

*Q: Did you have any connection with the large military operation in the Philippines?*

CHRISTIAN: Our Military Attachés were always at the country team meeting. The closest interaction I had with the military, was with the US Air Force Colonel that was the attaché responsible for the military efforts in the rescue at the time of the downing of our chartered plane. He was at the airport when I called because the plane had not come in and was an hour

late. He said later that he knew then that the plane was gone. He had enough experience flying in that area, that he knew no one would come out alive with the severe thunderstorm prevailing.

*Q: Did we have access to the Military PX?*

CHRISTIAN: We had all that kind of support. That was one of the negatives of going to the Philippines; it was too close to state-side living in many respects. I would not have gone there earlier in my career, because it would not have been enough of a change from the American life, which I greatly appreciate, but you wouldn't have had the experience of living in the third world and all the benefits of exposure to other cultures. We had a seafront family activity facility with swimming pool, tennis courts, softball field, commissary, and other amenities.

*Q: Did the Americans live in an enclave or were they spread out through town?*

CHRISTIAN: They were in an enclave in a way. They were in several developments, but there were Filipinos living there too. The Americans shared these development areas with other nationalities. It was nice housing. It was equivalent to USAID housing in Latin America. We had the large PX facilities at Clark air base; we had the Baguio retreat (the John Hay military recreation camp) where the Japanese and American leaders met at the end of WWII. The Ambassadors' quarters up there were available to us to stay on a first come, first serve basis. You felt like it was a miniature Camp David. Camp John Hay was set aside for American R and R after working in the hot seaport climate of Manila. I am reminded of the bay of Manila. In the last year of my tour of duty, the Marcos were leasing out casinos on ships in the Manila bay, and other grandiose projects; some got off the ground and others didn't. The end was coming fast. I am not sure we read it quickly enough, though. The Ambassador was very tough on the Marcos. He reported solid stuff back to State. Later in the 1980s, thank goodness we had one Republican senator in the senate during the Reagan Administration with moxie enough to keep us away from Marcos when he was about to be brought down. I believe that Senator Lugar was the only person that kept the Reagan administration from backing Marcos. In my opinion, the rest seemed to be listening to Jerry Falwell; in addition to being a preacher with a fundamentalist persuasion with praise for Marcos as an anti-communist, apparently, he was considered by some elements to be a renowned foreign affairs expert!

*Q: Did you deal with any other Congressmen at that point?*

CHRISTIAN: Solarz came out, and as always he was a tough man to please. It was soon after the air accident, and so he was sympathetic. I felt like I got somewhat of a free ride from him.

*Q: He was very critical of the program?*

CHRISTIAN: He was not as critical as I thought he would be. He would, of course, have found fault with the Marcos on human rights as he should have. We had briefings with him, and he went over the program, but we fared pretty well. We could relate most of our programs to the people as opposed to supporting the Marcos. He seemed to like what he saw in family planning, nutrition and local government development.

*Q: So he didn't try to cut the program?*

CHRISTIAN: I don't remember him doing that at all. I can't recall what went on in Washington at the time, but I don't remember the program being cut during the years I was there.

*Q: So during that period you had a pretty open development situation.*

CHRISTIAN: It was towards the end of the good development years in the Philippines. What I was impressed with was the competence of the technocrats who were running these programs, like the rural electrification program. The Filipino leader of that project came back and testified on the Hill for our program. He was so talented. At that time Marcos had a special assistant, who would make the President of the United States proud if he had one just like him. His specialty was non-nuclear energy. And they had more geothermal power than any place in those days. I don't know what happened to that. They were in the front of tapping geothermal power. Our investment in economic development seemed to be paying off in the provinces and down to the barrios. On the cultural side there were many activities with the Spanish influence, involving big festivals in all the major cities during Catholic holidays. My wife attended as many as she could throughout the islands, and took our daughter along to see it all. Of course, one of the big pluses of the assignment there was the ready access to cultural things at reasonable prices and low airfares throughout the many islands, so my family was able to see a lot. The roads were fairly good, even though they were still third world in many places. We could drive up to Baguio, which was a five hour trip up into the mountains. We could drive to Clark Air Force base, and to the Subic Navy base. And so those were nice outings, and there were great golf courses in all of those places. Manila had golf courses that were accessible and affordable to Americans, which made living rather nice there as an added bonus to the sense of job satisfaction.

*Q: And yet it was an underdeveloped country needing a large aid program?*

CHRISTIAN: Certain aspects were very underdeveloped. The poor were very poor. At the same time there was a lot of affluence there too.

*Q: A large part of our reason for being there was our large military presence.*

CHRISTIAN: No one could do any wrong as long as they were against the Communists as far as our country was concerned. Marcos was a strong anti-communist and played this card to the hilt, finding much favor, particularly with the excess paranoia of some in the US

*Q: Did this affect the program at all?*

CHRISTIAN: The AID development types were trying to do their job the best they could under those circumstances. They were trying to do something to help the country. The Becol was a poor region that we were trying to help. Like in a lot of places, we were trying to serve more than one master as best we could.

*Q: Were there tradeoffs that made it difficult to achieve the development interests?*

CHRISTIAN: When you got down to the fish-or-cut bait, sometimes trade-offs were necessary. I can't remember any instances, but I'm sure we couldn't press as far as we wanted to sometimes, because we had a leadership in Marcos that was tremendously anti-communist and we didn't want to go too far in demanding performance or else and jeopardize our excellent military bases. I didn't get into the higher councils on that to know how much that came into play. We weren't yet getting into the AID policy issues that came about in the 1980s that Administrator McPherson was pushing. This was before his time; this was still Gilligan's time. Our theme was the poor of the poorest in those days. This is the Cold War era although human rights were an issue during the Carter years, and the Embassy was dancing on some "hot coals" with that issue. That didn't end up significantly affecting our programs though. They may have if Carter had won a second term.

In March 1978, we packed our bags and came back to the States for home leave. I was looking for an onward assignment. They had something in Portugal that sounded interesting from the standpoint of being based in Europe, but that didn't materialize. I believe I was sent to see Haven North to see about a job in Africa. The deputy post in the Ivory Coast was opening up with Gordon Evans. The Bureau wanted to send someone with my background to make sure that Evans didn't go too far off the reservation, because he was a rather dynamic individual with zillions of ideas. That was quite an experience. Gordon is really a nice guy, and I liked him, but he kept so many balls bouncing that you could only try to catch a few.

**THERESA A. TULL**  
**INR, Analyst-Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands**  
**Washington, DC (1975-1977)**

**Principal Officer**  
**Cebu (1977-1979)**

*Theresa A. Tull was born in New Jersey in 1936. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in 1972. Her career included positions in Brussels, Vietnam, Washington D.C., Philippines, Laos, and ambassadorships to Guyana and Brunei. Ambassador Tull was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November 2004.*

*Q: What was the situation in the Philippines when you were doing this?*

TULL: Well, I'd have to say it was almost the same as it is today because one of the issues that I worked with and studied was the Muslim rebellion led by Nur Misuari. He is still leading a Muslim rebellion in the Southern Philippines with others. Of course at that time, '77 I think Marcos had already declared martial law and he was perpetuating himself in power and that was not well received as you can imagine in Washington. We were paying close attention to the Philippines, I remember doing analyses and studies of the insurgency as well as the political situation. Analyses in INR differed from the work normally done in a political section overseas. You're doing quick work, generally. You're dealing with today. You're trying to plan ahead for

tomorrow and look into the future, too, but the idea of sitting back quietly as one does in INR and absorbing pulling in all the information from all the intelligence agencies as well as from the library, sitting back almost at your own pace thinking and reflecting and chewing it over and putting it all together coherently into a longer-term analytical study was useful. I was pleased to discover that I could do it, and also to know that you had some readers and that maybe your analyses had a minor impact. When I hear about the Muslim insurgencies in the Philippines I think my God, what is it, 30 years later and still going strong? Misuari was getting help from Libya then, too. Maybe he's not getting it from Libya any more, but he was then. Now the leader one hears most about is Abu Sayaff, clearly a terrorist. My recollection from my time in Cebu and INR is that the Muslim insurgents principally targeted the Philippine military and government officials. I believe the Abu Sayaff leadership has included more broad-based terrorism.

*Q: You were in Cebu from '77 to when?*

TULL: '79.

*Q: Cebu is in the Visayas is it?*

TULL: Yes, it's in the Central Visayas, the Visayan Islands.

*Q: What was the situation there?*

TULL: It was very interesting. Marcos of course was still in power and the country was under martial law. Cebu was the only post State had outside of Manila, although there was a USIS officer in Davao, in Mindanao. The consular district took in everything from the Central Visayas, where Cebu was the key island, south all the way down through Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. I had a fair amount of traveling to do. One of the major things happening then was this Muslim insurgency in Mindanao which was nasty. I had a consular officer who thank God did the consular work because I concluded when I was in Belgium, my first post, that if I ever ended up being assigned as a consular officer I would quit because I could not stand it. God bless you for doing it all these years. There's no way in the world I could. My personality didn't mesh with that. I would quit maybe before they threw me out! When my vice consul was away, because I would have to give him a break, too, he would go travel with one of our consular specialists through the islands checking on citizenship claims, social security claims, estate matters and other issues. About every five or six weeks he would go off for a week and travel around the consular districts looking up individuals and taking care of cases on the scene. Then I would have to do the consular work. I'll have to tell you why I know that my personality wouldn't be best for it. There was a category of visa that you're very familiar with, I guess treaty trader or something?

*Q: Yes.*

TULL: Treaty trader. I think if you had a major business, import/export, for example, you could go to the States and set up a business or something of this nature. This one Chinese woman that I had met at a big party, she came to the consular section with her son who was 21 years old and looked about 18. She said, "We're here for a treaty trader visa for my son." I looked at her and I



laughed. I broke out laughing. I said, "You've got to be kidding." I thought, this is not very diplomatic. She got a little hurt. So, then I put on a sober expression on my face and said, "Well, here's the application. My secretary will take the application and we'll review it, but I think there might be one or two problems with it." My first reaction was "you're kidding." It was a total joke. At any rate I hated consular work. I never grew to tolerate it, but I had to do it. I behaved a little bit better after that. The interesting thing for me was always the political aspects of the work.

*Q: Well, how did the way the writ of Marcos run? I mean how did you see the situation in your consular district?*

TULL: The officials – Mayor, Governor – in Cebu were Marcos people. He was not liked by the people at large, so far as I could judge. Cebu was the hotbed of opposition, non-communist, non-Muslim opposition to Marcos. It had a reputation for that. The Osmentas were a family that comes to mind to me as prominent in the opposition. In the past an Osmenta had been vice president. One of the sons had some claim to U.S. citizenship and it proved to be a valid claim. I was involved in adjudicating it and getting Washington's concurrence. He got U.S. citizenship, and thought it might save his life. You know, that's not an overstatement. Enemies of Marcos sometimes died violent deaths. The young Osmenta was not exactly popular with the powers that be in Manila. There was a lot of legitimate opposition to Marcos, politically. Particularly in Cebu and in the Visayas. The Cebuanos spoke a different language, Visayan.

*Q: Tagalog?*

TULL: Not Tagalog, no. Not Tagalog which was looked upon as kind of cultural imperialism, of domination from the north. The Cebuanos resisted speaking Tagalog which they viewed as the language of Luzon. They had a proud history. There are still some remnants of Spanish blood full-blooded Spanish people living there in Cebu in the Visayas.

I went to Cebu in August '77. The new ambassador was David Newsom who arrived shortly after I did. Early in the following year there was an election for some representative body. I remember this clearly because my sister had come to visit and I had gotten authorization for leave. My sister and I were going to go over to Hong Kong for a few days. We went to Manila. I always would touch base and brief the political counselor on what was going on in my district. The political counselor at that time was Bob Wenzel and he knew everything I was doing. I was always cautious in that sense. I was never a free wheeler. I would consult with him about plans on various things. I got into the embassy and I'm told that the ambassador wants to see me. Well, that's interesting.

I always liked Ambassador Newsom. I went to see him and here President Marcos had complained to Ambassador Newsom that Theresa Tull, the consul in Cebu, was harboring oppositionists and meeting with oppositionists and doing everything she could to undercut Marcos. Therefore he wanted me reined in, Marcos did. Newsom initially just reports this with a straight face. I did not know whether he was believing this or not. I said I have indeed met with the senior opposition leader after consulting with Bob Wenzel and he knew exactly what I was doing and in fact I think Bob might have even been there on a visit to Cebu and shared the

meeting. I said I view it as my job to meet with the opposition just as I had dinner with the mayor and the governor and other government officials. I'm not favoring them over anybody, but I'm encouraging the idea of free elections. I said that Marcos was absolutely wrong if he thinks I'm trying to undermine the elections or doing anything improper. The Ambassador said, okay. I said, I've never done anything in Cebu on this sensitive issue without consulting first with Bob and if you check with him you'll see that he agrees. So I made the big time with Marcos, having him complain about me by name to the ambassador, with the implicit hint that I might be asked to leave the country.

*Q: Oh, yes. Was this sort of a typical Marcos operation always you know so sensitive to any contact or anything like that?*

TULL: Well, I guess so. I don't know. I mean I never hid any contacts I had with the opposition. That was my point. I took that approach throughout my entire career as I got more senior. I never went off in the middle of the night to see anybody. I would have them come to my home and I would go to their home with my car visible. This is a free, normal exercise of what a diplomat does to keep contacts with all segments of society. No, I would say Marcos was pretty extreme on this issue. I remember this event, that election was interesting because Hazel and I did go over, we got our three or four days in Hong Kong and when I came back I was going to do other things and I was told, asked, but told with this election coming the ambassador wants you to make another run through your district and can you postpone your leave? I said, well, my sister has come from Philadelphia for this, and I don't want to leave her, I'll take my sister with me. I'll make the tour. Go over to the islands and check it out, but I'll have to bring her. She's discreet. Oh, wonderful, Terry, that's great.

I ended up paying my sister's expenses, because I couldn't stick her with all this. She had a very interesting time. We went back to Cebu and then we went over to Bacolod, Negros and then over to Antique and I'll never forget it, its one of the memories of how does Marcos deal with the opposition. The governor of Antique at that time was a young fellow. I had met him in Cebu. Mutual friends had brought him over to meet me. His name was Javier. He was almost like the best of an American politician. He went around his district in a Jeep and he had a loudspeaker on the top and he would play a happy song on that and that would announce he was there and then people could come and give him their complaints and he would try to resolve them. They were crazy about him. We had a great day with him and then he put us up in his guest quarters, a nipa hut structure right by the water. I've never seen brighter stars or more of them. It was just one of those times when you think, Foreign Service life is great isn't it? We had this nice experience, and then the next day we were with him again. A few years later, he was slaughtered. They murdered him.

*Q: Who was this?*

TULL: Javier was murdered by supporters of Marcos. It occurred in the period leading up to the "People Power" Revolution in 1986. He was slaughtered. He was probably no more than 35. I have this memory of this very nice guy who was really trying to do the right thing, but he didn't want Marcos to be in forever. He was at that point one of the remnants of a freely elected situation. But of course what ultimately brought Marcos down was the murder of Aquino.

*Q: Benigno Aquino, yes.*

TULL: Yes. When they murdered him, they also had murdered Javier, too. That was terrible. That was terrible. Anyway it was fascinating to cover this very interesting political situation. There was a book that came out, too, a few years later called Waltzing with a Dictator and I appeared in that somewhat favorably to my surprise.

*Q: Some of our people did not.*

TULL: I did.

*Q: Yes, well, some of our people in Manila, I can't think of his name offhand, but it is a well known name, our consul general who was almost coopted by the Marcoses I think.*

TULL: I think so. I remember reading some of that. When I was nearing the end of my tour in Cebu I wrote a very extensive piece and that's what I think ended up getting a reference in this book, the kind of "Wither the Philippines under Marcos" and "Can this continue?" How long can this go on? I did quite a lengthy analytical piece in which I concluded that no, the people would rise up. It was going to happen. There were just too many fissures out there that were going to split further and it wasn't going to be good. Now, I don't know whether the embassy even mailed that in because I took it up to Manila and I don't know whether they submitted it or not. They must have, because somehow the person who wrote this book knew that I had done this analysis and I never talked, I never talked to writers or journalists about my reporting. I did predict that the end of Marcos was going to happen.

*Q: Did you find that the politics of the area you were dealing with, I've heard that families are very, they're sort of, families of essentially wealthy families. It's almost tribal, but did you find this true?*

TULL: Yes. They were referred to sometimes as the "oligarchs," wealthy families that had controlled the economy and dominated politics. I previously mentioned that in Cebu the Osmenas were one such powerful, prominent family.

I had some wild experiences during this tour. This one I have to tell you, this one story, and it will go in my own memoirs. I got to know an American Lutheran minister and his wife who were working in Marawi City in Northern Mindanao. Marawi City was on a big lake, probably Lake Marawi. I had met them in Cebu and I had befriended them and had them over for a decent meal and a few drinks because they were living in the Muslim region where alcohol was hard to come by. They said "Anytime you want to come down to Marawi City you stay with us. We can work it out." I said, "Well, I would like to. I'll have to work it out with the embassy." Because that area was a hotbed of the Muslim insurgency, I got the ambassador's approval to go, but the Philippine military commander in the region agreed, yes, I could certainly stay with the minister and all, but it was a dangerous area so he said he would send a troop escort to the airport to meet us when we went down. I arranged to go down to Marawi with the minister and his wife on their next trip from Cebu. Now, the minister and his wife were upset about having a military escort.

They said that's just going to make us a target. If we're going along the highway and we're surrounded with Philippine army troops we're just going to get the Muslims to come after us with their troops. But they swallowed hard and agreed. We got to the airport in Marawi City and there's no troops. Nothing there. We wait and we wait a little bit longer and my hosts said, well, obviously there's been a change of plans so we've got our vehicle here, someone from their mission had come to meet us. So four or five of us pile into this little mini-bus type thing and head down the road. This road that is maybe 10-15 kilometers from the airport into Marawi City is narrow, winding and there are close-packed trees on both sides. That was dangerous. So, we're driving along and suddenly the road opens up a little and we hear shooting ahead. Everything grinds to a halt. Traffic is stopped. Shortly thereafter a soldier drives up and tells us we have to stay where we are, there's a battle ahead. So, we had to wait and we hear shooting and then it clears and then we went on to Marawi City.

I was supposed to go directly from the airport to a ceremony, some kind of memorial service or band concert, in an outdoor facility with the commanding general. I was late arriving. In the meantime we found out along the way that what had happened was some troops that were coming along the road towards the airport had been ambushed by Muslim guerrillas and one of the soldiers was killed. It's rolling around in my brain, there are troops coming along the road. Were they coming to protect me, I wonder? I was taken directly to sit with the general and I said the reason I was late was that there apparently had been an ambush on the road to the airport and that his troops had not gotten to me. He got on his radio right away, and learned it was the escort that he had sent to meet me that had been ambushed and a young boy about 19 years old had been killed. I just felt terrible about that. I had no control over it, but it really brought the whole insurgency into painful focus. It made it much more personal. It was really sad.

I made calls on various officials, and there wanted to go to the market with my friends. The general insisted that I go in an APC.

*Q: Armored personnel carrier.*

TULL: Yes. Put me in an armored personnel carrier, but I wanted to go to the market which if you're a political reporter you want to get out, to see a little something about local life, the every day economy. It was okay and we got out and wandered around the market and then once I got back to my friend's home that was it. I didn't get any more protection. I enjoyed some time with them in their nipa house. Another interesting aspect of this case on that particular visit is that there was an American Christian missionary whose name escapes me now, who had been working there for several years with the Muslims. They had a school for the Muslims and they did various other things. He seemed to be trusted by the Muslims. Mindanao is very heavily Muslim, almost exclusively Muslim except for some coastal cities, but, Marawi was thoroughly Muslim with mosques and those musseins calling for prayer from the towers five times a day.

This missionary had a reputation of knowing everything that was going on in that area, but he didn't like to talk to American officials. He wouldn't do it. He perhaps thought the Muslims would be concerned if he saw too much of American officials, concerned that they would not be as free with him. But he was very close friends with my hosts. So, they said we're going to try to get him to come over and meet with you. They explained that how we're doing that is, we

brought some gin back from Cebu because you can't buy it here in Marawi City. She said we're going to offer him martinis or gin and tonic. I'll tell him that you're here. I don't want to surprise him, but the lure of a martini just might get him over here. We'll see.

That evening I was sitting inside their charming house and this man who I'd heard a lot about (he'd written books on the Mindanao Muslims) came in and he looked a little suspicious, you know, who is this woman sitting here. They introduced him and he says, "Tull, that's not a very common name." I said, "No, not too common." He says, "Do you know anybody named Bob Tull?" I said, "Well, I have a brother Bob." He says, "Was he ever in the navy?" "Yes, he was a career naval officer. He retired a few years ago." He says, "Good grief, I was his bunk mate on the Greenwich Bay several years ago."

*Q: Yes, the Greenwich Bay ended up at COMIDEASTFOR off Bahrain that was in Dhahran in the '50s, yes.*

TULL: Yes, that's right. He says, "I was his bunk mate. I was in the navy. Good grief, you're Bob Tull's sister. Wow. Were we buddies." It was great. Talk about a small world. You're there sitting in a nipa hut near the banks of this lake with the musseins calling for prayer and this man whom you've heard a lot about and doesn't like foreigners, Americans in particular, he doesn't like officials and he comes in and he was my brother's bunk mate. He was very nice then. I was able to engage him in discussion and learned a lot of useful information.

When I got back to Cebu, I felt so bad about this young soldier who had been killed on his way to protect me that I got in touch with the general down there and I sent \$150 of my own money. I asked him to give it to the family. I had no means to get any reimbursement for it, but I thought this was just awful and it would be a little gesture, so he promised that he would indeed get it to the family. When I was up in Manila the next time, by this time our Ambassador was Dick Murphy. He had replaced David Newsom and so I was briefing him. He always wanted to know what was going on in Mindanao. It was very interesting to debrief him. He had a keen interest. I told him about this and I said I felt so bad that I had sent his family \$150. He says, "Oh, we'll find a way to get you reimbursed" and he did. I got reimbursed. I don't know quite how he did it, but I ended up getting a check for \$150 to replace my personal funds. But it just it was sad. It was so sad.

*Q: Well, what was the Arab or the Muslim revolt about? How would you describe it?*

TULL: Autonomy.

*Q: Is this the same as the Moros?*

TULL: The Moro National Liberation Front is the name of the player, when I was there. Miswari is still active, but in recent years a more terrorist-oriented group, Abu Sayyaf I think it is called, seems to have taken the lead..

*Q: Yes, I was thinking. We fought them.*

TULL: They never settled down since the Spanish American war.

*Q: Yes, the Spanish American War. I mean we had.*

TULL: Never got Mindanao completely conquered.

*Q: Was there any possibility of a compromise or anything like that?*

TULL: Efforts were made. Even Marcos tried to make some efforts to give them more say in their own affairs, but no way is there going to be autonomy. There's no question about that. They're not going to dismember the Philippines. Their basic goal was to dismember the Philippines and you can't have that.

*Q: Once you start that, I mean it's unending.*

TULL: Yes. I think in terms of coming up with more funding for schools and things of this nature there were gestures made through the years, but as you can see in recent years now they are more violent than they were in those days.

*Q: Was there much outside Islamic influence at that time?*

TULL: Yes. At that time we knew that Libya was actively funding them, definitely Libya was funding them. Arms shipments would apparently come in via the southern part of the Archipelago. Yes.

*Q: In that whole area you were dealing with I would think that sort of the central rule would rest rather lightly on all these island folks and all that.*

TULL: Well, except for the fact that the central government had a large military presence. The military is very obvious down there. They had a lot of troops. That presence was there and I don't know if that ever rested lightly.

*Q: Obviously you had both experience and been burnt by the Vietnamese experience. You had an eye for troops and how they acted. What was your impression of the Philippine army at that time?*

TULL: I'd have to say that all I knew personally were the generals and you didn't hear a lot of stories about atrocities or anything of that nature, no. They were not, I get the impression that they weren't very determined fighters, shall we say? The idea of fighting hard against the Muslims was not that strong because they wanted to protect their lives and yet here this group coming to defend me from the Muslims got shot up and one young boy was killed. Mindanao was wild. I mean part of it was unreal. I went down to Zamboanga a couple of times. Zamboanga was off limits to American officials, the ambassador would not allow just a casual visit for tourism. Anytime I went down, I guess that held for Mindanao, but definitely Zamboanga I would have to get authorization from the ambassador.

I remember there was this leading opposition figure there. He had been to the States and had a green card at one point and I wanted to meet with him. I forget his name, I regret to say. So I went down and was met at the airport with full pomp and ceremony with the ruling general and the whole nine yards. I've got an armed guard everywhere I go and I was staying at this hotel right on the water and it was something out of Somerset Maugham or something. You're looking at these interesting sails of different colors and shapes off of Zamboanga. I would walk down the street. This is during the day and I have two guards around me with their rifles and everybody looking. When my official program was over and they deposited me back at the hotel at 5:00, they went home. Then I had some supper and then I took a taxi with no protection whatsoever to visit this opposition figure with whom I had already arranged it. That was a sight to see because this guy, white haired, and he's only wearing a sarong around his waist, and he's got a half a dozen people checking me out and I'm thinking well this guy he's got a lot of influence in the area. He'd been kicked out of office illegally by Marcos and some Marcos crony had replaced him. He maybe had been governor or mayor. So, I'm thinking this is going to be really interesting, when the first question out of his mouth is "How can I update my green card?" I said, "Well, you want to give me the details and I can look into it." We got that out of the way and then we had a discussion about the opposition situation. Well, later in the final years of Marcos' regime around the same time that he arranged the slaughter of Governor Javier and shortly before Aquino was murdered, this gentleman was assassinated, too. He was slaughtered; two people on motorcycles shot him. It was a very frightening situation.

*Q: I think one of the things that people you know in America we focused on the assassination of Aquino, but that almost seems to stand as a unique act when actually there had been a rather substantial campaign of assassination.*

TULL: Toward the end of the regime, yes, and I think that really shattered the foundations because particularly someone as popular as Javier to wipe him off the face of the earth, that was just terrible.

*Q: As a young boy I grew up in Annapolis so I picked up a lot of navy stuff and I have to ask you did the monkeys have tails in Zamboanga? You know the song?*

TULL: Yes.

*Q: For anybody researching this, there's a famous, rather raunchy song.*

TULL: It's terrible.

*Q: Called The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga. It comes from the.*

TULL: It's a very racist song.

*Q: It comes from the Philippine war.*

TULL: I know. But you know it's a racist song because they ridiculed the Filipinos as monkeys, horrible.

*Q: I know, a horrible song. As I say, it was and I don't think anybody really realized how racist it was as a kid.*

TULL: No, we don't. I used to sing it as a kid.

*Q: In fact until you told me about this, I just now I hadn't realized what it really meant.*

TULL: Really? No, oh my gosh, yes. No, that was a slurring way of referring to the Filipino natives down there. Terrible. Zamboanga, I'll tell you that was an interesting piece of work. Really wild: pirates, kidnappings for ransom, ambushes. I had another interesting experience with regard to my visits to Mindanao. Technically, of course, the Consul in Cebu is the senior ranking official in their area of assignment. The ambassador in Manila tried very hard to enforce this. The embassy had rules that anybody from the mission who was going down into my consular district was supposed to notify me first so I would know and I wouldn't be caught short going out to dinner and here's the AID director or some colonel from the defense attaché's office at the next table, or worse, be told by the governor or mayor, oh, that was a nice visit I had with so and so. The ambassador tried to enforce that and I tried to underscore the importance of this. Now, this did not always go over well at all, particularly with our military. There was this one colonel, I guess the head of the defense attaché's office at the embassy. He resented deeply that he would have to consult with some civilian woman anytime he wanted to fly down to Mindanao and visit his buddies (contacts) down there, but at any rate. On this one occasion I heard he was going to be making a trip to Mindanao and there was going to be someone from the CIA station and a political officer from the embassy going with him. Well, I heard about this so I got in touch with Bob Wenzel and I said, Bob, I heard about this trip. I said, "This is my stamping ground, it's my area, I should be with them." He said, "Oh, yes, you should, Terry, I never thought of that. I'll see what I can do." Anyway he had to go to the ambassador and the ambassador had to shove it down the DAO's throat that he would pick up Consul Tull in Cebu and she'll be with you on this trip, and so they did. He had a small plane, the DAO plane, and it then took us down to Mindanao, to Zamboanga. The colonel met with some Filipino military and the DAO plane flew back to Manila. The four of us – DAO, CIA man, Political Officer, and I remained. We had useful meetings there in Zamboanga. We were supposed to be flown from there to I believe it was Cotabatu City via the Philippine Air Force. We're big people, all four of us. We've got our baggage. We get to the airport and here's this little single engine plane that the Philippine military has allocated for us and we look at it. Not too long before that, maybe the previous year, a small plane had crashed in I think in Luzon and it had wiped out three or four people from the embassy, AID people, ECON, the whole thing, flying in questionable weather, and it was a single engine plane. I'm looking at this and I'm thinking I'm the woman, they didn't want me along in the first place, we're getting along great. It's working out fine. I don't want to be a wimp, but I'm not going to kill myself, either. We put our luggage in the plane; I kid you not the nose tips down. We're looking at each other.

We're all looking at this plane, the nose of which has dipped forward with the weight of our luggage alone and I'm thinking, how do I deal with this? I tried to be diplomatic. I said, "Fellows before we get on, I think maybe we ought to talk about this first." Nothing to talk about, I'm not getting on that plane, it's not safe. Great, I agree. Everybody chimes in, in relieved agreement.



They're not saying a word first. They were waiting for me, I guess. The colonel said he'd take care of it. So, he went back and talked to the military and they were not too thrilled. We ended up spending the day at the hotel, swimming in the pool waiting for them to work out logistical arrangements and we spent the night and the next morning they had an old C47 and we felt a lot better in that.

*Q: C47s have gone on forever.*

TULL: They're workhorses.

*Q: Yes.*

TULL: The old workhorse.

*Q: A great plane.*

TULL: So, we had a very interesting fruitful series of meetings in the various towns that we visited and it resulted in some good reports on the status of the situation. I remember thinking, oh, my Lord, am I going to be the one to say I'm not getting on that plane? I think we ought to talk about it. It worked.

*Q: Well, while you were there did there seem to be any possible resolution to the Islamic rebellion or not?*

TULL: No. Thirty years later there still isn't. It's worse now than it was.

*Q: Did you get any feeling, you mentioned who was the head of it?*

TULL: Nur Misuari. He's still the head of it. As I noted above, the Abu Sayyaf group has dominated the situation in recent years. A real terrorist outfit now.

*Q: This is the guy who goes around and cuts peoples' heads off.*

TULL: Yes. Misuari wasn't quite that bad. Misuari is still perhaps more of the political head. I don't believe they're getting aid from Libya anymore.

*Q: I assume they wouldn't.*

TULL: Yes. Any more. Libya is trying to be better behaved.

*Q: The Saudis may have gotten into this at some point supporting schools and all that?*

TULL: I think you're right. I believe there is still outside funding perhaps recently via Al Qaeda groups.

*Q: Saudi Arabia, it didn't hit your radar at all?*

TULL: Not much that I recall. As you said, they probably were funding Muslim schools.

*Q: As far as aid to Muslims?*

TULL: Not much 30 years ago when I came into the picture there. Is it 30 years?

*Q: Yes.*

TULL: Close to it.

I do think really, as you indicated earlier, I think this is just a continuation of the fact that the Spanish never completely conquered Mindanao and we never completely conquered it. There is the northern part of the Philippines, heavily Catholic from the Spanish era, and the southern, the Mindanao area, is predominantly Muslim. Only the coastal areas of Mindanao, the fringe areas, were affected by the Spanish influence and Catholicism.

*Q: I mean there's a story that the Colt 45 was developed to stop the berserk amuck I guess is the term.*

TULL: Right, running amuck.

*Q: Of Moros coming at them and knock them over.*

TULL: Right.

*Q: It became our standard sidearm, which is around a bit.*

TULL: It is. It was developed for our fighting in Mindanao. I believe General Pershing led our efforts there.

*Q: It has a big bullet to really knock the office over. Did you get any contact, was there any contact with the Muslim leaders? I mean were they through intermediaries talking to, able or not?*

TULL: I'd have to say no. I don't think they were accessible. The best information I got was from this American missionary.

*Q: Did he have contacts?*

TULL: Yes, he did. When I was in Cebu, one of the reasons that the ambassador had restrictions on who could go down to Mindanao and why there was protection offered us, one of the ways that the Muslim insurgents made money was by kidnapping. They would kidnap people for ransom. I'm saying it was an insurgency tool, but I think it was a traditional thing, for people who weren't even associated with the insurgency to raise money. There was still active piracy in those days in that area. I think piracy is still taking place.

*Q: Yes, they're still. It's not a good place to go. I was just wondering how about with the missionary? Did he give you any insight into this group?*

TULL: Other than what I've said before, which is I don't see their demands being realizable because they really want autonomy and autonomy is not going to happen. There will not be an independent Muslim Mindanao. I suspect that the central government feels that even limited autonomy would be a danger because Muslims are not the only people living there, you know. On the coastal cities you've got Christian Filipinos who have come in from the north, particularly from Luzon. You just can't say, okay Muslims, this is going to be your little enclave and you can run it and you can have Sharia law and chop hands off and all that. I don't see how the central government could do it. I don't think the Muslims demands are answerable.

**HOWARD H. LANGE**  
**Financial Economist**  
**Manila (1975-1979)**

*Howard H. Lange was born November 4, 1937 and raised in Nebraska and attended the University of Nebraska. After college, he joined the Air Force and served in Taiwan. After a time at the University of Washington, Lange entered the Foreign Service in 1969. His posts included Vietnam, Taiwan, China, and Malta. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

*Q: You left this job in '75; where did you go then?*

LANGE: In 1975, I got the job in Manila. I extended the usual three-year tour for one year, so I was there 1975-79. It was a great tour. A friend and I built a sailboat, which we raced and took to islands not far from Luzon - Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon. I was in the combined commercial and economic section; it was 1979 or so that Commerce established its own foreign commercial service. But my position was more economic than commercial; I was the financial economist, so I did the macroeconomic reporting. I dealt with the international financial institutions and their projects. I was the embassy's liaison with the Agency for International Development (AID) mission, which was quite large in the Philippines at that time.

*Q: When you got there in '75, what was the situation as you saw it - political, economic - in the Philippines at that time?*

LANGE: This was well into the martial law period under Ferdinand Marcos. It was clear that the nature of the Marcos regime was crony capitalism. It was not clear the extent to which Marcos and the Marcos family were engaged in corruption and how much they had accumulated. That became clear later. In terms of attitudes of Filipinos, it was my feeling - and some in the embassy would not agree with this - my feeling was that most people still had a positive attitude toward Marcos and martial law because they remembered earlier years when there was a lot of unrest and lawlessness, and a sort of warlord rule in the countryside and the provinces. I think many

Filipinos welcomed collection of weapons and general lowering of temperature of life in the streets, and that Marcos still enjoyed a pretty high degree of popular support, although he was disliked by the political opposition and much of the intelligentsia.

*Q: You're economic-commercial, so how was it for Americans doing business in the Philippines in those days?*

LANGE: It was pretty positive. There was an active and influential American chamber of commerce, which was of long standing in the Philippines. American businessmen liked martial law, but were somewhat ambivalent toward Marcos. They liked stability, but corruption was beginning to be a problem. One of my responsibilities was to try to help American companies get in on the ground floor on major projects. And there were a lot of projects, in both basic infrastructure nature and as part of the buildup for the International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IMF/IBRD) meetings that took place in Manila in October 1976. There was a huge landfill project in Manila Bay, a major conference center that was being built on the landfill and several hotel projects, all of which had murky financial arrangements. Our knowledge of the Marcos regime's connections to these projects gradually accumulated, but when I was there, it was only suspected. There was one major project, a nuclear power project, that an American company was successful in landing, which eventually proved to be very controversial. Actually, it was controversial from the beginning, because the Philippines lies in a major earthquake zone, so there were some basic questions about the wisdom of a nuclear power reactor on Luzon. It was nevertheless heavily competed, and in that sort of atmosphere you knew political connections had to play a role. Company people came close to acknowledging that while I was there.

*Q: Which company? Was this GE?***Error! Bookmark not defined.**

LANGE: Westinghouse. They came close to acknowledging that they had a "special relationship" with Malacanang, the presidential palace. This later became the subject of official enquiry.

*Q: I can't remember when, but in '77 of course, the Carter administration came in and they had a rather firm policy about anti-corruption and paying bribes and all that. During the time you were there, had Congress passed the anti-bribery law, which basically said an American firm could not pay money under the table to get contracts?*

LANGE: I don't know when that was passed, but it was certainly part of the background of doing business there. American business hated the law, believed it put us at a competitive disadvantage. I saw the impact of the Carter administration more in the human rights area. This affected our posture toward projects supported by international financial institutions (IFIs) – a new emphasis on human rights and a general atmosphere of, how shall I put it, greater human rights context to our policy in the Philippines. It became a more explicit U.S. policy with the Carter administration. That was the time when the position of Assistant Secretary for Human Rights was established. Pat Derian, the A/S for Human Rights, had some extremely contentious visits to the Philippines.

When I arrived in Manila, William Sullivan was the ambassador. He had a decidedly arms length relationship with the Marcos family and particularly with Imelda. There was a real antagonism there. After Sullivan departed (for Iran), there was an interregnum, and the charge, Lee Stull, allowed the embassy to enter the warm embrace of Imelda. She had a government position, which was as minister for something with the wonderful acronym BLISS. This was derived from Bagong Lipunan Sites and Services, which dealt with local development, that sort of thing. The AID mission had always avoided this ministry like the plague. They didn't want to get involved with BLISS, and particularly with Imelda. But then Stull, who had come up through the USIS, thought we should engage. Imelda was all too happy to engage, and in a big way. She started sending her van around to pick up embassy officers to go visit her projects, which were typically long on sentiment and drama and short on coherence. It was a difficult time for the AID mission.

*Q: At that point, it was pretty well determined that Imelda was not somebody you wanted to get close to.*

LANGE: Well, the AID position was that her notion of development was far removed from the mandated basic human needs approach that they operated under. She talked the talk, but she didn't walk the walk. She had very high profile projects. She had a heart center that she supported and other medical programs that had nothing to do with AID priorities. They just felt that to get involved would distort their program and absorb their energies.

Anyway, the Stull interregnum was good for me in a selfish sense because I got to get out to see a lot of the Philippines. I was already traveling a fair amount because I was visiting World Bank and Asian Development Bank projects. But Stull traveled a great deal to the south, including to Muslim areas down there. I doubt that anyone from the embassy travels to those areas these days – Zamboanga, Lake Lanao in northern Mindanao, even Basilan and the Jolo Islands.

*Q: They've got 30 or 40 hostages by a Muslim group now as we speak. But this traveling around had not been done as much before.*

LANGE: I don't think so. There was a substantial military attaché presence there, and they had their own plane, which the ambassador could request. I don't think that Sullivan took advantage of it, but Stull certainly did.

A brief aside on travel by small plane in the Philippines. Early in 1976, not long after I arrived, the economic counselor, Ed Cheney, who was my boss, along with Garnett Zimmerly, the head of the AID mission, and Henry Lee, a Treasury officer who was on the U.S. delegation to the Asian Development Bank, visited a project somewhere outside of Manila. They were returning in poor weather conditions – wind, low ceiling and rain – when their plane disappeared. The search went on for several days, engaging all resources of the Philippine and U.S. militaries. The emergency transmitter eventually faded out, and the search was abandoned. Later that year, the crash site was located, and it was in a heavily wooded area not far from Manila. It was a real loss to the mission. The country is well known for its rugged and remote areas – recall the WWII Japanese soldier who only came out of hiding in 1975, and the “Lost Tribe of the Tasaday” on Mindanao – but one could drop out of sight a short distance from Manila.

*Q: Were you aware as you were traveling around and doing this, you couldn't help but compare and contrast with South Vietnam at all? Were you disturbed? Were you seeing similarities; were you seeing differences? What were your impressions at that time?*

LANGE: One of the big differences was the gap between the wealthy and the poor. In the Philippines, it was so much more obvious than it was in Vietnam. You had individuals and families that were incredibly wealthy in the Philippines, and they didn't mind showing it. At that the same time, you had this terrible poverty at the bottom. You probably saw last week the tragedy at the Manila city dump.

*Q: Yes, a garbage mountain collapsed just the other day and killed over 100 people. It's still obviously there.*

LANGE: This very area in Manila, Tondo, was the location of a groundbreaking World Bank project. They tried to attack this problem of the squatters coming in and settling near the dumps. Of course the development dilemma is serious: Do you want to improve living conditions for people there, thus possibly attracting more people to come in from the countryside? This was a serious project that got a lot of attention. Cong. Steve Solarz came out and visited it. I visited the area several times, and the conditions that people lived in were really poor, even in the project area, which had drainage, streets, and sanctioned access to electricity (as opposed to just tapping into the nearest power line). The difference, the huge gap between the poorest and the richest was so obvious. One of the development puzzles about the Philippines was that it has always shown great promise, with a reasonable good infrastructure and good human resources, and yet it was not one of the Asian economic tigers. There are some objective barriers to development. Communications and transportation was a problem. The topography is rugged and forbidding, and with the exception of some lowland paddy, the ground is not very fertile. On the island of Cebu, the crops were so poor that I hardly recognized corn plants as such. Atomization of the country into thousands of islands makes it difficult to move products around or deliver services. On a trip to the remote island of Palawan, we visited a hospital where malaria patients were so numerous they were crowding the hallways. There was no medication to treat them.

*Q: Filipinos in the States are pretty hardworking and aim for good education.*

LANGE: That's right. They had good education in the Philippines. English was thought to be an advantage in the international marketplace, and I'm sure it was. But the country always seemed to be a substandard performer in the Asian context. I think recently things have looked better; they have done better in the macro sense. But the export picture at that time was very much dominated by a few commodities - sugar, coconut, to some extent mineral products, nickel and copper - so they were subject to the vagaries of international markets.

*Q: And these were heavily controlled over which they had no, these were world cartels or whatever you want to call them. In your job were you looking towards trying to get Americans to invest in things, which would be like making shoes or shirts or electronics or what have you?*

LANGE: We didn't explicitly promote investments in those types of things. American labor unions were watching to be sure we didn't encourage investments - through the Overseas Private

Investment Corporation, for example – in labor-intensive industry. Our role was more to give an objective assessment of the political and economic picture. One of the other issues that I spent a great deal of time on was external debt and balance of payments. That was a chronic problem and one of the questions that visitors always had. For commercial banks, it was a double-edged sword. They made a lot of money off of third world debt, including Philippine debt, and the higher the risk, the higher the profit. So they didn't necessarily view the high debt situation as a bad thing, as long as collapse, i.e., default, could be put off to the indefinite future. This and related issues – the value of the peso, the balance of payments and the debt service burden – came under the economic analysis part of my job. The other part was analysis of political stability. It is much easier to see in retrospect that Marcos was not going to step down gracefully, and that eventually there would have to be some sort of wrenching adjustment.

A couple of anecdotes about the political scene: A political officer, Ralph Braibanti, and I took a trip to northern Luzon, including the area where Marcos came from. One of my reasons for taking the trip was to visit a World Bank dam project up in the highlands – the Chico River, or perhaps it was the Magat River dam – which was going to displace a number of tribal people in the area. Overall, it was probably a good project, but the immediate impact in terms of relations with the minorities in that area was not good. On our way back to Manila, we were overnight guests of the governor of Ilocos Sur, which is maybe 100 miles north of Manila. He was a character out of some novel who had - how shall I say - floated to the top after the declaration of martial law. Our stay led me to the conclusion that before martial law, everybody in that province was armed and dangerous. After martial law, only the governor and his cronies were armed and dangerous. His recreational interest – in fact apparently the sum total of his interests – was cockfighting. He didn't appear to think much about governing but rather about maintaining his hold on power. He was surrounded by bodyguards. The morning of our departure, we noticed our embassy driver was red-eyed, and we were afraid he was going to fall asleep at the wheel. He told us that some of the governor's bodyguards got him in a card game in which there was a lot of drinking. He said that he was afraid to stop playing. Maybe this was just his story, but we knew him well, and he wasn't a drinker. He was genuinely fearful of these goons. The governor had on his wall an enlarged news photo, which had him alighting from a jeep with an M-16 to confront a man in the road, also with an M-16 at the ready. They were each evidently prepared to use them. He had captioned the scene, "Outlaw Country." He was caught up in this Wild West mythology: He was Marcos's man in Ilocos Sur. Probably most people were glad that the streets, for those who didn't cross the governor, were safer than they had been. But there wasn't much of a nod toward democratic governance.

The Marcos regime was not really comfortable with genuine democracy. For example, my sailing partner was a journalist who was pretty tight with the opposition and got into trouble with the regime several times for his reporting. He was the subject of a deportation hearing that went on for several months, tied simply because to his reporting on the opposition. For Marcos, the handwriting was beginning to appear on the wall. The question was if Marcos would voluntarily loosen his grip on power.

*Q: How did you all, at the embassy, the officers, deal with the embrace of the Marcoses. I've heard about some; I know one of our consul generals got in trouble [because] he got very close to the family and all. Was this a problem?*

LANGE: Well, I mentioned Sullivan's posture, which was to remain at a distance. The last ambassador while I was there was Dick Murphy, who amusingly thought he had been assigned by mistake. He was an Arab-speaking Middle East specialist, and he honestly thought that someone had confused his name with another Murphy. Sullivan had gone on to Iran, and events there had led everyone to rethink how we relate to countries controlled by strongmen. There was a lot of internal examination, how we were relating to the regime, how we were reporting it, if we were missing indicators of the sort that would have let us predict the sort of things that had happened in Iran. I think there was much more consciousness when I left in '79 than when I arrived in '75 about looking for indicators outside the power structure. But apart from this problem that I mentioned earlier, that the AID mission specifically had of being associated with Imelda, I don't think there was a problem, that I know of anyway, relating to the Marcos group.

I became friendly with a young Malacanang staffer. His family was well off, he had gone to school in the U.S., Cornell, and he was pretty full of himself. We got together socially, but it never became a problem in terms of him trying to use the relationship. He was, unfortunately, discreet when it came to goings-on at Malacanang.

*Q: What about adjusting our job? As an old consular hand, how about visas - was this a perpetual problem for you, as far as people trying to get things through?*

LANGE: We had a very well developed visa referrals system. It was thoroughly institutionalized, with forms to fill out, as I assume is common with all high-pressure visa operations, such as in the Philippines. Long lines of applicants appeared every morning. We had a system of rotation onto the visa line for junior officers. I escaped that, having spent my junior years in Vietnam. I never issued a visa, in Manila or anywhere else. I'm not sorry I missed the work, and I'm not too sorry I missed the experience. Anyway, junior officers would go into the visa section on rotation and they were aghast at the way we treated visa applicants, funneling them through like cattle. We'd give them a 60-second interview. But I mean pressure was there, you couldn't escape it. After two months in that atmosphere, doing that job, everybody seemed to arrive at the same place. You couldn't be compassionate. You didn't have the time. You'd been lied to enough times that you were deeply suspicious of any story. And it's really an unfortunate feature of consulate work.

*Q: And I don't think it's changed much since then.*

LANGE: Every place I've been, people imagine that the ambassador could mandate issuance of a visa. As far as I could see, that wasn't true. Consuls general maintained their independence, while sensitive to an ambassador's views, to be sure. For us grunts, when we got a special appeal from a contact, we filled out the referral form and sent it in, and sometimes a reinterview had an effect and sometimes it didn't. It was the same in Poland and in China, both high-volume visa posts.

*Q: I suppose that for somebody doing this, it's a quirk of the law, in a way, that an ambassador cannot issue a visa and cannot order a visa to be issued. Sometimes by indirection; it's not a*



*good idea to cross the ambassador too often. But also any ambassador knows that they can't order a visa to be issued. So it's a good out for them; it gives them an escape clause.*

LANGE: It's very difficult, as you know, to convince applicants, or influential friends of applicants, that the ambassador cannot do it.

*Q: Just one question - did the Marcos rule in the Philippines raise its head while you were there? Because this is early days, [and] Marcos is riding high. I'm wondering if we were feeling any disquiet about him.*

LANGE: Well, this is – I'm trying to remember when Marcos actually left the Philippines, what year that was. 1986, I believe. Even by the time I left the Philippines, in '79, there was a lot of sentiment that we had gone too far in supporting a less-than-democratic leader. I remember there was a Time magazine cover article, just before I left. I think the background image was an inferno or explosion and the thrust of the article, which was by Ross Munro - whom I talked to when he came through the Philippines - the thrust of his article was that the Philippines was a powder keg and Marcos' days were definitely numbered. So there was a lot of reflection on the appropriate policy. I mentioned earlier that after the Shah was overthrown in Iran, there was a lot of government-wide examination about this issue -- the balance between supporting democracy and supporting a leader who could control and with whom you were friendly. Murphy, in Manila, held regular Friday sessions with junior and mid-level embassy officers exploring this question from different angles. How could we measure the support Marcos had, and what should we be doing to prepare for the post-Marcos period? This was a very live subject in '79, and the dilemma continued up until Marcos's departure.

**PETER M. CODY**  
**Director, USAID**  
**Manila (1976-1979)**

*Peter M. Cody was born in France in 1925. He received his bachelor's degree in 1947 from Yale University and received his master's from Yale in 1948. From 1943-1946 he served in the US Navy. His career with AID included positions in Mexico, El Salvador, Washington, Laos, Paraguay, Ecuador, Philippines, and Lebanon. Mr. Cody was interviewed in November 1991 by Melbourne Spector.*

*Q: So after that, that's when you went to the Philippines?*

CODY: It just so happened that when I went to the Philippines, the then AID director, Garrett Zimmerly, had been lost in an airplane crash. It turned out he was killed, but when I happened to be there, the plane was still missing. They were looking for it and it had come down in some heavily wooded jungle area. They finally found him; he'd been there about a year.

So when I returned to Washington, I received a call right away from Johnny Murphy asking me if I would go to the Philippines as the AID director, and I said yes. That was in October or

November of '76, because I went to the Philippines in December of '76. The Philippines was one of the more interesting programs in which I was involved. It was a large program at the time. It was one of AID's biggest programs, if not the biggest at that time, and had a variety of very good projects. The fellow who preceded Zimmerly was Tom Niblock, who I think was a good director in a forceful sort of way with many good ideas. He wasn't everybody's nicest guy and wasn't all that personable, but he was a good director. He initiated some good very programs, particularly in rural electrification. There was still a bit of a split in the mission between the Niblock forces and the Zimmerly forces. Niblock had been well entrenched. Zimmerly came in and brought some of his own people, but some of the old Niblock people were there.

*Q: And Zimmerly had only been there a year.*

CODY: Yes. But one thing I didn't do was to load the mission with "my people". Despite the fact that I didn't do so, it was said that I did. Which really annoyed the hell out of me. I just brought two people that I had worked with before during the entire two years plus I was there, and both of them came toward the end, Sam Haight and Mike Hacker. I promoted some of the people from inside. In fact, I made a conscious policy of doing that if it were warranted.

The Filipinos are nice people to work with, and while you would find some old-line bureaucrats and political hacks, they also had a large number of really first-rate, excellent people. It was interesting to observe how they mixed the variety of talents. I attended several World Bank meetings of the consultative groups to the bank, once in Paris and once in Tokyo. The Marcoses knew who to send and who to leave home. They sent Cabinet ministers who could stand up anywhere in the world--Minister of Finance, the Minister of Plan, the Budget Director some others. They had some others better left at home, and they did. You could divide the Cabinet between his and hers, cronies and technicians, but they knew who was who and they would send the right people. An example was my most immediate counterpart, Jerry Sicat, who had a different title, but he was, in effect, the Minister of Plan. He was really first-rate. Like I said, the head of the Finance Minister, the Minister of Agriculture Budget Bureau, the head of the Central Bank, these were really first-rate people.

There were lots of internal politics in the Philippines and I tried to stay out of these things. You had the Marcoses, who were an institution in and of themselves, maybe two institutions. They were both quite competent people. They certainly had their personality and ego problems. Imelda Marcos, in my opinion, was a good administrator though her vanity got in the way.

*Q: She was mayor?*

CODY: She was mayor of metro Manila and she was also the equivalent of the Minister of Social Welfare, which didn't include health, but did encompass housing and various other things. One of the cronies were Marcos' uncle who was Minister of Health. Marcos was no kid so this man was quite well along. His uncle was a medical doctor and therefore presumably had some technical qualifications [for] Minister of Health.

*Q: And he was not able?*

CODY: Not very, but he had somebody else who ran the ministry. I don't think he even did anything, able or unable. Unfortunately, Imelda's uncle was the ambassador to Washington, who was a nonentity. But we had some very good programs. We had an effective population program. We spent about \$7 million or \$8 million a year. I say "we." The Philippine government, with our assistance. The program had 2,000 direct-hire employees, called Full-time Outreach Workers - FTOWS. The Filipinos just love nicknames and acronyms. We had 40,000 volunteers who handed out pills and condoms and gave advice. The population growth rate went down from about 3.2% to 2.6% or 2.7% during the period I was there. You could find dedicated people in the Philippines willing to work in development programs in rural areas. College graduates would go out and work in the countryside, especially women. In many Latin American countries it's, "That's why I went to college, to leave the farm. I'm not going to go back and live on some farm or little town. That's why I came to Mexico City."

*Q: But there they would do it?*

CODY: Yes. We did the same thing with a small-scale irrigation program, organized into co-ops, and people who worked to convince farmers. Rural electrification was a tremendous success, in part because we really had a Filipino, Pete Dumol, who was as hard working as any person you could find. He visited all the coops. He had a plane. He and I visited practically every one of these electric co-ops, and they had one in practically every province, of which there were seventy-two, and some of them had two. This program brought electricity to four or five million people who hadn't had it before and the coverage was continuing to expand. Dumol would make his people in the city go and serve a year in the country so they'd learn what was going on before they came back, then come back to their job in headquarters. On these trips he would often scare the hell out of these people, ask them questions, go with a balance sheet and want to know all the details. It was a very effective program, and I give a lot of credit for that program to Tom Niblock. He set that up and subsequently set one up in Indonesia, where he went after the Philippines.

The program I was less enchanted about was with Kansas State University, which was a grab-bag. It was an agricultural program that was going to solve all the agricultural programs--ag education, ag policy, ag extension, ag research, ag production. It was just too big a grab-bag. Kansas State wasn't up to it.

*Q: And a much different area from Kansas, I would think.*

CODY: Yes.

*Q: Different climate. One's tropical and one is arid.*

CODY: Garrett Zimmerly had served as an Extension agent once in Kansas. One of the reasons the Extension Service has worked in the U.S. and not very well in under-developed countries is that in this country the farmers own the Extension Service and they are generally run out of the land grant colleges, whereas they're simply imposed from above by the government in too many of these developing countries, where the Extension Service person probably seldom, if ever, visits you, and if he did, he'd have nothing to say other than to give orders. That's an

overstatement, but that's too often true in too many countries. Anyway, Zimmerly had been a US Extension agent at one point in his career.

We had a had a regional development project. It was an interesting provincial rural development project, where we tried through training and providing resources to induce the provinces to take responsibility for building and repairing roads and doing a variety of things.

*Q: In that case you tried to decentralize from the central government.*

CODY: Yes, working through provincial governments. There were twenty-two provinces selected as examples, out of seventy-eight, who carried out this program. Again we gave them training and resources. The government gave the authority so they could go out and do various things, for both management improvement and the development of local infrastructure. but in variety.

*Q: Did you have any inkling of the Marcos' siphoning off funds from AID programs?*

CODY: Not from the AID programs. One thing at which AID became good was avoiding that AID funds were directly syphoned off. In earlier days in places like Indochina monies were diverted from the commodity import programs. For example, in Laos when I was on the desk, we financed the import of barber chairs. The manifest showed these big heavy kind of barber chairs you find in the United States, but the ones that actually arrived were these little aluminum tube things. Somebody put the money for the difference in their pocket. So, in effect, it was directly coming out of the AID fund. AID became quite skillful--presumably still is--in arranging its programs so nothing that's stolen directly from AID. But, in fact, our funds free local resources which can be diverted to "unscheduled" uses. Zaire is a case in point.

*Q: To be used otherwise. Fungible.*

CODY: Fungible. That's why we feel we can give the Israelis, who have the world's biggest AID program, as far as we're concerned, two checks a year. For almost the same amount of money in Egypt we've have to "projectize" our aid in an attempt to insure the funds are spent as intended. It's a big headache. We feel that by funding certain items allocated to the budget, we are "clean". We don't acknowledge or take any responsibility for the other money that should be spent for other budget items goes into somebody's pocket. So what AID has done and then pats itself on the back by having so few scandals is it has just meant that you can't steal the AID money. It doesn't mean you can't steal the other.

So I think the Marcoses were not stealing our money, but I'm sure they were stealing other monies and we stayed away from those areas. For example, I was once presented with a project to reduce deforestation, and the standard reason given for deforestation, and an awful lot has occurred in the Philippines, is the slash-and-burn methods practiced by subsistence farmers. We looked into it. It appeared it wasn't slash-and-burn; it was the commercial logging. All the logging was in the hands of Marcos' cronies. I said, "I'm not going to become involved in that project. That's a loser. I'm going to be batting my head against a stone wall with this government

in a project where I would be trying to tell Ferdinand to tell his buddies to knock it off." So I said no.

So I don't think Marcos was stealing from us or diverting funds from us, but I think he was diverting funds from other places. There were plenty of other places to divert it from. I'm not saying he was doing it from the World Bank or anybody else like that; just within his own system. It's a big country. You can argue the same thing about Mobutu in Zaire. I'm not saying he took money that the U.S. put in there, but he took an awful lot of money.

I thought the program in the Philippines was well conceived. I took the position of trying to make what we already had going better. People in Washington would say, "What new programs are you going to do?" I'd say, "None. Basically we're going to do the programs we're doing to completion and hopefully do them better." I think this emphasis on new gimmicks every year in the program presentation is a little absurd. Nobody asks you what you did last year; they ask you, "What new things are you going to do next year?"

Again I think there were some very good projects in the Philippines. I obtained more money for the rural electrification program, over Washington's initial vigorous opposition, and then helped induce the World Bank to provide more resources after that. I thought the population program needed continuing support. I thought it was going very well. The same for small-scale irrigation. The only really new project was the one that, in fact, Zimmerly had put on line with Kansas State, but it started when I was there. If I had had my way--but I didn't feel it was appropriate since he had just died and this was his pride and joy, for me to come in there and say, "No good. Cut it off." But I sort of thought from the beginning it was overextended as a project.

There were other smaller projects. We did some things with ag co-ops, ag production directly. Agriculture was one of the more difficult areas, actually, except for the small-scale irrigation, which was going well. These others were provincial administration. The Filipinos were delightful people to work with. Even the Marcoses, as individuals, seemed personable, though I only had direct contact with them on a limited basis.

*Q: What about your relations with the embassy?*

CODY: I worked under three ambassadors there. When I first arrived there, Bill Sullivan was the ambassador.

*Q: That must have been very good.*

CODY: That was good. But the funny thing was that Bill Sullivan, in Laos, was in his element. Bill Sullivan, in the Philippines, had reached a not too cordial relationship with Imelda Marcos. He appeared rather bitter or frustrated. I gathered he didn't like being there. He was ready to go. This didn't rub off on me personally in any way, but he wasn't the ebullient charger in the Philippines that he was in Laos. So it wasn't as much fun to work for him in the Philippines, despite the fact we had no problems.

He was replaced by a man who was really great, but, unfortunately, he didn't stay very long, David Newsom. Both he and his wife are really first-rate and competent people. You could talk to him about most anything and receive a comprehensive response. Again, along with Phil Sprouse, I would put him and Sullivan as one of the better ambassadors that I had worked with. His success became our undoing because he was promoted out of the Philippines and became number-three in the State Department, where, I gather, he didn't do as well. As an ambassador and as assistant secretary for Africa, he had done extremely well.

Q: *He was very good.*

CODY: Yes he was. He was replaced by a well-known ambassador who subsequently became a piggyback substitute Henry Kissinger in the Middle East, Dick Murphy.

Q: *Richard Murphy. I still see him on television.*

CODY: Yes. This was the first time that I ever worked for an ambassador who was younger than I, so that told me something. [Laughter]

Q: *How was he to work with?*

CODY: He's a bright individual. I always had the feeling--and I could have been wrong--that he was more worried about his career than what he was doing, if you know what I mean. He seemed to be a man consumed about getting ahead. So that he impresses you, in my opinion, with a lack of sincerity. I may be doing the man an injustice. He certainly was a bright enough person, and maybe I was so impressed by people like Sullivan and Newsom, that he was going to look not so hot, no matter what he did. Though, as I say, Sullivan, as ambassador to the Philippines when I was there, wasn't all that great an ambassador. If you don't have an effective relationship with the Marcoses, how great an ambassador can you be? Sullivan went on from there to be ambassador to Iran. He was our last ambassador to Iran, as you may recall.

Murphy and I got along okay, though there was some complaint, I think, that I didn't spend enough time keeping the embassy informed. I did a lot of traveling in the Philippines. I don't think I made any boo-boos in this sense, asking Murphy before I made any decisions that I thought involved policy, to ask his opinion. That was my general rule. I was there to run the AID mission on a day-to-day basis. If I had any political decisions or was going to do anything that would impinge on the embassy, I would go talk to them first. I think there was a bit of a feeling that I didn't go to enough country team meetings because I was out in the countryside. I must say I thought it was important to be traveling a lot, but I didn't necessarily come back and call up the political officer or the economic officer and have a three-hour session with him to tell him all the things I'd seen.

Q: *When you came back, did you report it in the country team meetings?*

CODY: Yes, I reported it in the country team meetings. It's limited what you can say at the country team meetings. There were 26 US agencies in the Philippines. The Veterans Administration had a bigger program than AID.

The DCM was a fellow named Lee Stoll. Unfortunately for him he blotted his copy book, because knowing that Sullivan had had poor relations with the Marcoses, when he was chargé, after Sullivan left and before Newsom came, he sort of fell all over the Marcoses to prop up relationships, and he overdid it as far as Washington was concerned. I felt they overly criticized him unfairly. He was replaced by Don Toussaint, who was quite good. He subsequently died of a heart attack.

*Q: When you didn't go to a country team meeting, did you send your deputy?*

CODY: Sure. When I first arrived my deputy was Charles Christian. He was later replaced by Dennis Barrett, who was one of the few senior AID employees who was part American Indian.

*Q: Part native American. What about your relationships with Washington when you were in the Philippines?*

CODY: The head of the Far East region, who sent me there, a lawyer, had been promoted from general counsel to head of the Far East Bureau, but he left shortly there after because of the change of the Administration when Carter took over from Ford. Then Jack Sullivan took over the position. Jack had been a House staff member. He worked for Marian Czarnecki. For some reason or other, we didn't have problems, but we didn't hit it off. Maybe I gave the impression that I didn't think he was all he might be, or inadvertently, for example, I knew there had been some complaint that our family planning program was too oriented toward just health, so I wrote a long airgram to Washington, pointing out how it was integrated throughout the various aspects of the mission and the government. I started out by saying, "Contrary to some people who have expressed . . .," not realizing that the person who had expressed that opinion was Jack Sullivan when he was a staff member. [Laughter] Somebody told me that irritated the hell out of him.

Then there were just other little things that apparently irritated, that are inconsequential. I had had an operation on my shoulder and, therefore, had permission to travel first class, which by then was no longer the mode of travel for AID employees, including even assistant administrators. Even when Governor Gilligan came out, he brought his wife, for whom he had to pay the ticket, so they rode tourist. Of course, Gilligan was paying for his wife's ticket, and he could have ridden first class. I guess Jack was allowed to ride first class, but had to ride tourist because the governor was there. I thought that was a petty thing, but it really upset him for some reason or other to think that he was riding tourist class and I was riding first class. Eventually I had another physical exam and that was changed. Anyway, we just didn't seem to hit it off. He wouldn't necessarily have been my choice for that job, but he was a reasonably competent person. He had experience and the intelligence. So we got along.

When it came time to go for a second tour, Sullivan decided that he wanted somebody else, so I spent a little over two years in the Philippines, close to two and a half. Then he recommended that I not return. Bob Nooter supported him. In fact, the person who replaced me was a protégé of Nooter's, a fellow who had been director in Bangladesh before. In fact, it was a choice post for which a lot of people were vying.

**HOWELL S. TEEPLE**  
**Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS**  
**Cebu (1976-1979)**

*Howell S. Teeple was born in Texas in 1921. He received his BA from Louisiana State University in 1943 and served in the US Army from 1943 to 1945 overseas. His assignments abroad include Seoul, Manila, New York, New Delhi, Adana, Tripoli, Monrovia and Cebu. Mr. Teeple was interviewed by Earl W. Sherman in 1999.*

*Q: At that point I believe I had wanted to ask you about the political situation in the Philippines and how it might have affected your work there in the consulate and as branch PAO. The president of the Philippines at that time was-*

TEEPLE: -was Marcos, yes. Marcos was the president the entire period we were in the Philippines. When we arrived in October 1976, there was martial law and there was a curfew of midnight. That didn't last too long, less than a year. Then things were relatively calm. There was some insurrection up in the northern part of the country, up in northern Luzon, and there was insurrection down in the south in Mindanao, especially in the city of Zamboanga, but it didn't affect us very much. We had the usual USIS operations of an American library - very good American library, well attended - and we had exhibits, of course, that would come in. We had a regular motion picture schedule of classic American films once a month. We had a press operation, because there were four or five English daily newspapers in Cebu, and we supplied them with wireless file material and other items. We had a speakers' program. We had speakers come in quite often. They were programmed out of Tokyo - American speakers. And we had some performing artists. We had concert pianists. We had a chorale group. It was an all-around operation with just one American in USIS, myself, and a staff of about 15 national employees, who, I have said, were most competent.

*Q: I wanted to ask you, Howell, about the size of a city like you were working in there. What was the population of that area?*

TEEPLE: Cebu was a relatively large city. It was close to a million people, and it became over a million by the time we left, in the three and a half years we were there. It was the second largest city in the Philippines, after Manila, situated about 300 miles south of Manila. It was on the island of Cebu and was called Cebu City. You could only get there by flying or by ship. Cebu had a port. They had an active port. We had visits of U.S. Navy ships every year.

*Q: In recounting other posts where you had served before, and as your interview indicates, you had in your background five or six different places where you had lived, served in PAO activity, and by comparison was Cebu one of your favorite places?*

TEEPLE: I didn't have the responsibilities I'd had in Monrovia, where I was the country PAO and had a larger staff. Cebu was a branch public affairs post. Because I had such a good



Philippine staff, it made my life relatively easy there, frankly. So it was a lesser post, so to speak, less responsibilities there, but still an important one. The Philippines had been our only colonial experience. When we arrived in '76, we found the Filipinos quite pro-American. It has changed since then, but we enjoyed it there and got to travel through the Far East, including a trip to China with a group of Filipinos. We went to China in 1979, on our own, as tourists, but we might not have been able to have gone to China if we hadn't been stationed there. And then we visited Hong Kong and Taiwan and all the ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations] countries out of Cebu when we got leave. We went to Thailand and Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and back, taking advantage of a special airline fare where you could visit all ASEAN countries that I just mentioned for a reasonable cost. We took advantage of that when we got leave, got to see quite a bit of East Asia.

**LANE HOLDCROFT**  
**Chief of Agriculture and Rural Development, USAID**  
**Philippines (1976-1980)**

*Lane Holdcroft was born in Iowa in 1933. He received an undergraduate degree from Iowa State University and a graduate degree at Michigan State University. He served in the U.S. Army with a counter-intelligence specialty. His career postings abroad have included Korea and the Philippines. Mr. Holdcroft was interviewed by Charles Christian in 1995.*

*Q: This was September of 1976.*

HOLDCROFT: Yes. You were there and I remember you said that the reception that you hosted the evening we arrived was the first time that the USAID staff had had a social function since his death.

*Q: It was a farewell for your predecessor and a welcome for...*

HOLDCROFT: The evening of the day that we arrived. It was at the Sea Front dining room. It seems like only yesterday, doesn't it?

*Q: Yes, yes.*

HOLDCROFT: At any rate, my time in the Philippines was really kind of fun too, although as you'll recall it had its ups and downs. But the dynamic leadership that the Philippine agricultural sector being provided by the Minister of Agriculture was something to behold. The way that various public and private resources were mobilized in this push for rice and food self-sufficiency was most impressive.

*Q: How were your working relationships with your counterparts?*

HOLDCROFT: They were really super. I had good personal and professional relations with all of my colleagues in the Philippines. It was rather expected for a number of reasons. I had had the good fortune of having been in and out of the Philippines on short-term visits since the '50s. So I knew something about the people and the country. I had known a number of the Filipino agricultural leaders for some years. Also I had worked in 1975 on the strategy that the USAID Mission was employing for its agriculture and rural development efforts. Therefore, I was well prepared to head up the USAID Agricultural Development Office in the Philippines.

*Q: Did you find them competent?*

HOLDCROFT: Very competent. Mostly they were trained at U.S. graduate schools. They were very well prepared, but unfortunately caught in a situation where they had to walk the line between doing what was expected of them by their President and a political system that wanted to maintain the status quo. They knew what needed to be done in order to move forward their programs directed to helping the poor people - the poor farmers, the poor urban dwellers. But change would usually be at some cost to those few hundred families that controlled the political economy. So reform was a slow process.

*Q: Was this politics versus economic development? Was that the way you saw it?*

HOLDCROFT: Yes, in most regards that is correct. The "patron" mentality and the application of the "patron" system to political organizations inhibited change that addressed the real problems of the poor and otherwise disadvantaged. The "patron" system is the old social system the Spaniards brought to their colonies around the world. It involves unquestioning loyalty to the big man, the hacienda owner, or the political leader. Then the "patron" is required to look after the welfare of his followers.

*Q: Did the program suffer in the late Marcos years due to the known shortcomings of that administration?*

HOLDCROFT: Yes. Increasingly those programs that were directed at improving levels of living of the poorer segments of Philippine society were less effective. For example, in terms of reaching its stated objectives, the land reform program was increasingly watered down. The bottom line was that the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer. Studies that we helped finance by the University of the Philippines/Diliman indicated that the distribution of income nationwide was becoming more skewed.

Fortunately, since that time the situation has improved immensely. And although now I'm not following the Philippines closely, my sense is that the economy is probably doing better now than it has in any number of years. Perhaps as well or better than it has done since the early years of Marcos.

*Q: The technocrats, I gather, were making considerable progress in the early Marcos years.*

HOLDCROFT: That's right. There were a lot of institutional and technological innovations that could and did quickly impact favorably on the economy in the early Marcos years.

*Q: Do you remember any of your most prominent success stories or failures there?*

HOLDCROFT: It started before I arrived and continued on after I departed, but the most successful efforts that we were involved in were those that were associated with the rice and food self-sufficiency programs. We played a very key role in linking the expertise being trained and technology being produced at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to the Filipino farmer. We were the catalysts that made it possible for IRRI's world-renown resources to be made available very quickly to Philippine agriculture. That's particularly noteworthy with rice, but the same applies to other crops as we made available the work of other international research centers. The newest technology in maize and wheat came from CIMMYT in Mexico, and in horticultural crops from the Asian Vegetable Research Center on Taiwan. At any rate, agricultural technology development and transfer was a very successful program and we were the major - and usually the only donor - supporting those kind of activities. Of course, our support to the educational and research institutions, the numerous colleges of agriculture and Philippine Agricultural Research Council, also had very high returns. Incidentally, the Philippines Agricultural Research Council has become a model for countries around the world to use in setting up institutions to develop effective and efficient national agricultural research efforts.

*Q: How was it that the University of Kansas or Kansas State that had a large project out there? Did it ever succeed?*

HOLDCROFT: You know that that program was still going on when I left. Certainly it was successful in terms of the part of it that was supporting Central Luzon State University and its college of agriculture. I don't have good handles on what the marketing component contributed to the growth of the Philippine agricultural sector. Certainly the educational part of it was very effective. The mechanisms for developing packages of technology that small farmers could easily use to increase their output in some areas - even while I was there - was successful. But I don't know what happened after 1980.

*Q: Did you experience the clash between provincial development and agriculture, as you were exposed to with community development in Korea?*

HOLDCROFT: No. It's interesting that we had a close working relationship among the Bicol Program, the Provincial Development Office, and the Agricultural Development Offices. We cooperated very closely. I don't remember even one controversy. I think it's in part a function of the cordial relationships of the office heads, namely Don Wadley, Bill Sommers and myself. We never had any problems.

I do remember a kind of turf problem between my office and Capital Development Office, headed by Dick Dangler, with regard to which office should have the small scale irrigation project. It came to my office from the Capital Development Office and he wanted it back. The issue was whether or not that it should be in the Agricultural Development Office with its agricultural technical staff or in the Capital Development Office with its civil engineering staff. I didn't feel strongly about it, but the U.S. contract staff on the project maintained that they would

get better support if it stayed in our office. My recollection now is that it went back to the Capital Development Office about the time that I departed Manila. These kinds of issues were minimal... Generally, the Philippines was a neat place to work.

*Q: The climate there was both a hindrance and conducive to agricultural development, I suppose.*

HOLDCROFT: Yes, it's a tough place, agriculturally speaking, because the land resource has been much abused. In 1955, something like 90 percent of the country was covered in forest and now it's less than five percent. There has been so much erosion and leaching, and so many associated problems that the productive capacity of those tropical soils is greatly reduced. Pest and disease problems are extreme because of the climate and people pressure on the land. On the positive side, crops can be raised the year around. Three crops of rice per annum is common.

**DAVID D. NEWSOM**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1977-1978)**

*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: You then moved to the Philippines. Is that right, in 1977? Why did that assignment come about?*

NEWSOM: I had completed over three years in Indonesia. It was deemed to be time to move, and there was a vacancy in the Philippines. So it was a normal Foreign Service transfer.

*Q: Was Carter in by the time you moved?*

NEWSOM: Yes. I went to Indonesia under Ford, then went to the Philippines under Carter.

*Q: When you went out to the Philippines in 1977 were there any things on your list that you really wanted to do?*

NEWSOM: Preserving the bases, Subic Bay and Clark Field. There had been a negotiation for an extension of the agreement on the two bases that had started under Bill Sullivan that was still unresolved. We had our first post-war agreement on the bases in the 1950s giving us a 99-year occupancy. At some point before I got there, that period had been changed to 25 years in order to meet internal Philippine political problems. The question I faced was whether to try to extend the

agreement beyond the 25 years. A scholar can get all of this out of the records, but there was a date that the Filipinos had set...I guess what the situation was, that while they accepted that we had a 25 year agreement, they wanted to revise some aspects of the agreement. Anyway, the base question was really the primary question.

The second question was to try to deal with the human rights problems in the Philippines under Marcos. The Carter administration was putting greater emphasis on this and there was an effort to get President Marcos to release some political opponents from jail. One of the things that I worked on, but with somewhat tragic consequences, was to get Benigno Aquino out of jail.

*Q: He had been sentenced to death at one point.*

NEWSOM: We got that reversed, but he was still in jail. We got Marcos to agree to let him go to Harvard, which is where he went. But then, of course, when he came back from there he was assassinated.

*Q: What was the problem with Aquino as far as Marcos was concerned?*

NEWSOM: They were two men of the same basic background, who wanted the same job.

*Q: There ain't room enough in this country for both of us.*

NEWSOM: And Aquino was pictured as a great democrat, and maybe he was. But if you looked at his background it came out that he came from the same kind of oligarchical society that Marcos had come from.

*Q: Did you find you had a problem with the Carter administration on human rights? This was sort of a brand new thing. We had always had this thrust, but you had a very aggressive Pat Derian, and others. I know we were feeling it a bit when I was in South Korea around the same time. It would seem to be getting in the way of other matters we considered more important.*

NEWSOM: No, I didn't feel that because I was very sympathetic with the thrust, and while in Indonesia I had played a role in getting the Indonesians to release some 30,000 political detainees that were held over from the 1965 abortive coup in Indonesia. Having observed revolutions in the Middle East, I had a very strong feeling that, if the United States was going to survive in countries where we had an identification with the government, and that government was overthrown, we had to demonstrate that we were not associated, or identified, with some of the practices of that government. When I was in the Department in the Bureau of African Affairs, I was involved in the very early moves in the Congress to establish human rights as a part of the American diplomatic agenda. There's a total misunderstanding of the way human rights developed as a primary concern of the Carter administration. Very few people look at the situation and realize that when Carter came into office there were eleven bits of legislation that required that human rights be taken into account in economic aid, military aid, export credits, a variety of US activities. If one was going to be true to the legislation, there was no way that this could be ignored. This thrust didn't bother me at all, and I endorsed it. And I think that one of the reasons that we were able to survive in the Philippines, where we didn't survive revolutions

against friendly rulers elsewhere, was because my predecessors and I went out of our way to demonstrate in various ways to the Philippine people that we did not condone some of the practices of the Marcos administration.

*Q: How would you tackle something like this? You've got bases, you've got a dictatorship essentially, and you've got Benito Aquino and others in jail. How does an ambassador go about doing something?*

NEWSOM: Well, you can speak out on the subject. You don't have to criticize the regime to which you're accredited, but you can talk about the interests of the American people in this subject as demonstrated by the legislation and by presidential statements -- fewer in the Reagan administration than in the Carter administration. Although if you look at the Reagan administration which came in vowing to do away with the Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, they found that this was a Congressionally mandated position and they couldn't do anything about it. So they had to turn around and embrace some of the same points of view as the Carter administration. But you could do it by speaking out; you can also do it by gestures. One thing that we did infuriated Mrs. Marcos, but I think sent a signal through the Philippine people. There was a Jesuit by the name of Father James Reuter, an American who had at one time been close to the Marcoses but had broken with them and had started a Catholic newspaper, or magazine, which the Marcoses subsequently closed down. Reuter ran an orphanage in the poorer section of Manila, an orphanage for paraplegic children. We put on a benefit for Father Reuter's orphanage in the American embassy. That sent a signal to the Philippines society that we were not intimidated by the fact that the Marcoses don't like Reuter. We're prepared to help him. Jean, my wife, had lunch with Corazon Aquino on one occasion. Mrs. Marcos heard about it and invited us both to lunch on her yacht at the same time that Jean was going to meet with Corazon Aquino. Jean kept her appointment with Corazon Aquino, and I went on the yacht. Mrs. Marcos conspicuously ignored me, talked to the Russian and the Chinese. I felt good about that.

*Q: During this time did you sit down and have frank discussions with Marcos?*

NEWSOM: Yes.

*Q: How did he respond?*

NEWSOM: Sometimes with remarkable candor. Once I went in under instructions to talk to him about torture and reports we had of torture being carried out by his security forces. He said something to me like, "Well, you know Mr. Ambassador, I have to depend on these men for my security, and I can't always be monitoring closely what they're doing." You get the standard responses: "You don't understand our country, or we have a bill of rights in our constitution just like you do" etc. But one aspect that was infuriating related to visitors. A congressional delegation including members of Congress who'd stand up and denounce Marcos on the floor of the House for his violations of human rights. So we'd get ready to go in to meet the president and I would say, You have spoken up critically of Marcos' human rights policies in the House. I want you to say the same things to him here. But they would avoid the subject when they met Marcos. They would say, "Oh, we're here on a friendship mission, Mr. Ambassador. That's your job." If they realized how it damaged my credibility they didn't pay any attention. I was the one who

would tell Marcos that the Philippines had a real problem in the House of Representatives because of the perception of Philippine activities on human rights. Marcos would say, "They came here, they didn't say anything to me."

*Q: In these delegations were there any really solid supporters, Senators or Congressmen, with a beat in your area that you could call on to...*

NEWSOM: I was there just a short time, but I don't remember any members of Congress coming out and emphasizing problems of human rights. The Marcoses were two of the greatest artists in winning people over, even people who had been critics, and they were marvelous actors in putting on a demeanor and an approach that just swept the average American visitor away. It was something an ambassador had to contend with.

*Q: Did you have a problem with the staff of your embassy? I'm thinking of a book which I have now read, Dancing with the Dictators. But essentially the title raises the thing that often the Marcoses would coopt people. They would have lots of parties, and things like this. Was this a problem?*

NEWSOM: My staff when I was there pretty well saw things the way I did. We were there as the official representatives; we were accredited to the government of the Philippines, which Marcos headed. We had a lot of business that was important to American interests. So we dealt with them properly. But we didn't go out of our way to pander to them. The result was, I'm sure, that I was not a very popular ambassador and probably some of the members of my staff weren't popular with the Marcoses. The Marcoses, particularly Mrs. Marcos, wanted to coopt every American ambassador. She watched you closely, and if you were going to do something that she didn't like, she would try to interfere or get you to come to something that they were doing. Sometimes Mrs. Marcos would just show up at a function and consider herself invited. So it was an interesting tour, but I was never very enamored of the Marcoses.

*Q: What was the government situation when you were there?*

NEWSOM: Well, Marcos was clearly in charge. The Congress was in suspension. Martial law was still on. So, while you dealt with other ministers and other officials, ultimately everything came back to Marcos.

*Q: On business matters, say the bases, could you talk to him?*

NEWSOM: Oh, yes. Carlos Romulo was the foreign minister, a nice man, old at the time, and kind of sad because he was a man that did have a certain stature. But he pandered so to Marcos that it was sad. However, Marcos was the man you had to deal with. I had a pretty good relationship with him, maybe he in some ways respected the fact that I was prepared to raise difficult questions with him.

*Q: How did he respond to a difficult question?*

NEWSOM: He was a lawyer, and he liked to respond with legalistic answers. But sometimes his responses were helpful. Mrs. Marcos got the idea that the UN General Assembly should meet in Manila. This was part of her great dream. And it was a horror to the US government because of the cost, and the setting of precedent, and moving the General Assembly, etc. So I went to Marcos and said, "You know we understand the first lady's interest in this; there's certainly no place in the world that we'd rather see the General Assembly than in Manila, but it raises a lot of questions of precedent, and cost." He said, "The first lady feels very strongly about this. Is there some way you could work out a formula in New York for thanking the Philippines for this gesture, and maybe going on to something else?" That's what we did.

*Q: How about the American military? I think of the military leaders, the people coming out from the Defense Department. Did they understand what we were after, or were they sort of fixed on the bases being there, and this is where we're going to be for the rest of our lives. How did you find them?*

NEWSOM: I found the base commanders, certainly, in particular, the admiral at Subic Bay, very sophisticated, and aware of some of the problems of staying in the Philippines. I had negotiated other base arrangements in Libya, Saudi Arabia and, Morocco, so working with the military on a base negotiation was nothing new. I generally found the military easy to work with if you understood their position, what they wanted to do. If you came up with a dramatic variation in a position and if you could explain it to them and get their acceptance, there was no problem. I always tried, and with reasonable success, to avoid situations in which you had telegrams going back from the post demonstrating divisions in a delegation between the military and non-military members. We tried to work things out in field. I think we did so reasonably well.

*Q: How about what's just come up very recently on Okinawa. Did you have problems about the military...*

NEWSOM: Oh, enormous problems in the lower-rank military relations with the Filipino community, a constant problem. One of the things we settled in the negotiations that I brought to conclusion was the question of guarding of the base perimeters. Previously there had been Marine guards around the base perimeters, and the bases were the hunting ground for the poor Filipinos living in the villages around, and so they were constantly infiltrating, trying to steal stuff. With American military personnel out there, it was just one continuing series of incidents of Americans stopping and searching women, and then being accused of rape. Or Americans being accused of beating up Filipinos, etc. So we switched it around in the agreement so there was a Filipino guard around the perimeters, and as far as I know that worked well enough until the end of the agreement.

No, when you have...I've forgotten how many thousand troops we had there at that time, face to face with poor Filipino communities, incidents are inescapable.

*Q: Moving to another area. What about immigration? I'm an ex-consular officer, and of course the Philippines has always been a major consular post. How did this impact on your embassy?*



NEWSOM: It was one of the few embassies in the world that had an officer solely to deal with fraud, false passports, false papers, false birth certificates. The Filipinos were geniuses at coming up with false documents. We had long lines outside the embassy all the time, and you rarely ran into a Filipino who didn't have a cousin or a brother or something for whom he wanted a visa. So this was a big part of the relationship.

*Q: What about American business interest in the Philippines? I've never served there, I have a feeling that many of these people have been entrenched since the beginning of the century, and they have almost extra territorial privileges, or at least felt that way. If true, would have made it rather difficult because this is not a way to win friends and influence people.*

NEWSOM: Remember, a lot of people left during the war. But there were still some American families spread through the Philippines. I don't remember them as being a problem. One or two of them that I came to know were very helpful in helping us to understand things in the Philippines, but it wasn't a problem as I recall.

*Q: How did you find the Carter administration? They talked big on human rights, but Carter seemed to be as coopted by the Shah of Iran as Nixon and Kissinger had been. I was wondering, did Carter ever get involved one way or the other with Marcos, or Mrs. Marcos?*

NEWSOM: Generally, my recollection is, that Carter tried to hold the Marcoses at arm's length. I don't remember whether the Marcoses visited Washington during the Carter administration; they certainly didn't on my watch. I know they were delighted when Reagan came in and they were able to visit Washington. There were people in the Carter administration who recognized that we had to deal with the Marcoses, so it wasn't a complete isolation. Dick Holbrooke was the Assistant Secretary for East Asia at the time, and was a realist. So with Marcos himself, and with his government, we had reasonable relations but there were no particularly flowery words that were used. There's always, whatever the inclinations of the President, there's always these difficult balancing acts between dealing with rulers with whom you have to make agreements, and distancing yourself from some of their less desirable features.

*Q: Vice President Walter Mondale came out to visit in May of '78. Were you still there at that time.*

NEWSOM: No, I left in April of '77.

*Q: There was a Muslim revolt going on, and your old stamping grounds of Libya was supposedly involved. Was this of concern to us?*

NEWSOM: I don't remember much about that. I did visit Mindanao but the revolt was not active. I don't recall any major incidents.

**HORACE G. DAWSON, JR.**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIS**

### **Manila (1977-1979)**

*Born in Georgia, Ambassador Horace G. Dawson, Jr. entered the foreign service in the early sixties. His assignments included Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, and the Philippines. Ambassador Dawson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 7, 1991.*

*Q: What was the situation that you were dealing with from '77 to '79 in the Philippines?*

DAWSON: Basically we were in a period of growing nationalism among the Filipinos. Like the Liberians, they had this American orientation. Many of their institutions were modeled on ours. But they were reassessing the situation. They were beginning to have a sense of, I guess you'd call it...we're calling it nowadays Afrocentrism, they were beginning to feel a Filipinocentrism. They wanted to go back to Tagalog as a language. They wanted to go back to their own dress. They wanted to distance themselves, in a sense, from total reliance upon the United States and on American culture. And that was mainly the issue.

It was nothing that upset us, except in terms of it becoming anti-American. That was what we were trying to avoid. We were trying to assert that Filipinos could become more Filipino without having to become anti-American. And I think that was the challenge.

*Q: How did you find that worked out while you were there?*

DAWSON: I think it worked out very well. The problem with it, of course, was that you had a number of demagogues who were preaching that these two things were simply incompatible. Somebody along the way, I think it might have been MacArthur, certainly somebody along the way, had referred to the Filipinos as "our little brown brothers."

*Q: Oh, God, yes. I think that was Arthur MacArthur, probably.*

DAWSON: Yes, yes, "our little brown brothers." And that just rankled. So, whenever they could, they hit us with that.

*Q: "Civilize Them with a Krag," too, was the song, I think, at the time. Krag being the rifle that our troops used in the Spanish-American War.*

DAWSON: That's right. And, to be sure, the Filipinos are very, very pro-American. There was a referendum taken out there, and it was clear that by a clear majority they wanted to become the fifty-first state. They love everything American. They line up early in the morning, trying to get visas to come to the United States. And it was just a situation, I think, that in many ways was unnatural; maybe they had gone too far.

*Q: At a certain point you have to call back and reassert your own self.*

DAWSON: I think so.

*Q: Or it gets dangerous.*

DAWSON: And the US certainly was not averse to their sense of nationalism, except, as I said, where it caused some people to challenge the value of the relationship. They wanted to throw the bases out and break off that kind of relationship with us. They wanted to curtail the American presence in the country, didn't want American teachers, you know, the whole bit.

This was a period, also, as you know, that Aquino was in jail.

*Q: This was Benigno...*

DAWSON: Benigno Aquino, yes. They called him "Ninoy."

*Q: Ninoy was the husband of the present president of...*

DAWSON: The Philippines today. Yes, Cory. He was Cory's husband. They were in exile. Well, actually, he was in jail at the time I was there. And Marcos let him out, and he came to the United States, to Harvard, during my stay. And, actually, it was on his return to the Philippines, after we had left, when he was killed.

*Q: From the USIA side and the embassy side, how were we dealing with the Marcos regime?*

DAWSON: We had a very friendly relationship with the regime, and we had had, I think, from the beginning. But, as I said earlier, it was becoming clearer and clearer that Marcos had stayed on longer than he should have. And, as often happens in such cases, he was becoming more and more repressive. And, as that continued, the US had to distance itself again, to the extent that it could, from his administration, while at the same time relying upon him for all of these programs and projects that we had going on jointly.

As you know, we were what I call heavily exposed there, with bases and with VOA relay stations. There are more Americans there, I would say, per capita than you find anywhere else in the world outside of the United States. And so we had a very difficult problem very much like the one in Nigeria, but magnified because of the size of the country. And Philippine society, now that Marcos was being challenged more and more, was becoming more unruly.

So there were some anxious moments there during my stay. We had to be a little more concerned about security. We had to worry about the growing disenchantment with Marcos, without doing anything, of course, to undermine him further.

*Q: Well, as public affairs officer, this was your thing, the image of the United States. Did you find yourself, say, telling our people to cool it as far as getting their pictures taken with Marcos, or inviting Mrs. Marcos or Mr. Marcos to openings? Was there a deliberate sort of withdrawing into our shell?*

DAWSON: We had to be conscious of that, yes, definitely had to be conscious of that. We did not welcome a full embrace, as it were. We were very, very careful about how we associated

ourselves with the activities. (There is Mrs. Marcos's picture there.) And she was much more active than he. By this time, you see, Marcos had sort of withdrawn to Malacañang Palace and you almost never saw him anyway. But she was very active and quite a controversial figure, much more so than her husband was in those days. So, yes, it did require a certain pulling away.

*Q: This was just a period of growing unrest. I mean, there were no great shifts at that time. By the time you left there in '79, it was still...*

DAWSON: Oh, it was still very much on track. But, again, as I said, Marcos was being challenged more than ever before. It was clear that all was not well and that the country would be subject to more and more disruption as time went on.

**RAYMOND MALLEY**  
**Investigation of Manila Mission, USAID**  
**Washington, DC (1978)**

*Mr. Malley was born and raised in Massachusetts and was educated at Boston University, the University of Geneva, Switzerland and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving in the US Air Force and engaging in private business, Mr. Malley joined the Treasury Department. He later joined AID, where he worked in senior level positions at home and abroad until he retired. During his career Mr. Malley was posted to Karachi, Rawalpindi, Kinshasa and Paris as well as in Washington, where he worked on economic development projects of AID and with international organizations concerned with foreign assistance and development. Mr. Malley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

MALLEY: Initially I came back to an executive evaluation job. USAID had organized an office of senior officers to conduct high level program and management evaluations of problem situations. It reported directly to the Administrator. Don Finberg was the boss when I arrived. It was recognized that for some officers this would be their last assignment before retirement. But in my case, it was a sort of holding action until an appropriate opening came up.

*Q: What sort of things were you looking at, and what did you find?*

MALLEY: USAID headquarters got complaints from various sources from time to time of poor planning, mismanagement, bad morale, or inefficient use of funds, especially regarding field missions. Of course such charges had to be investigated.

There were problems with our mission in Manila. The situation was particularly tense because negotiations were underway with the Filipinos regarding our continued use of Clark air base and the Subic naval facility, which would require an increase in our ongoing aid program. Which by the way, is another example of foreign aid helping in the attainment of a political objective. I went with a veteran economist named Al Boucher to check the situation. We spent about two

weeks there, then returned to Washington and made our report. It resulted in some changes in mission personnel and programs.

*Q: What tipped you off? What did you find?*

MALLEY: I don't want to get too personal in this. The USAID mission director had problems with his spouse. In fact, his spouse had stabbed him – fortunately he was not seriously hurt. He was not devoting sufficient time to management. Morale in the mission was low. The whole U.S. community in Manila was aware of this.

Also, we assessed the type of aid program we had in the Philippines, and what kind of activities we should undertake with an increased aid package if we reached agreement with the government to continue using the bases.

I was only in this assignment for two or three months. I did a variety of other tasks, but the Philippine evaluation was by far the most important.

*Q: I speak as an old consular hand in the Philippines. They have all sorts of problems concerning corruption. In the giving of visas for example. Was USAID having a problem with corruption?*

MALLEY: I am not aware that we did with our program, but I was not close to it. We discussed corruption earlier. If officials want to steal funds, it is easier to do from their own resources rather than from foreign aid. But some stealing often takes place in emergency aid situations, humanitarian situations, where you are distributing goods quickly, rapidly.

*Q: Such as blankets, tents, and food.*

MALLEY: Yes. And medicines.

**RICHARD W. TEARE**  
**Deputy Director of Philippine Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1978-1980)**

*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: So we are talking about '78. Where did you go then?*

TEARE: Came out of the War College with no assignment and the same thing had happened to a lot of people the previous year. Personnel had resolved they were going to do better and the Director General had come over to see us and to hold our hands and say they were going to make

every effort to get all of us assigned by the time we graduated. Well they still hadn't! At least some of us hadn't!

The East Asian and Pacific Bureau was looking for people and I guess was looking out for me to some degree and I was soon offered the job of Deputy Director of Philippine Affairs, concurrently the political-military officer on the desk. The country director was John Monjo. So I took up that position in the middle of the year and spent two years toiling away on Philippine matters.

*Q: That was '78 to '80?*

TEARE: '78 to '80...correct.

*Q: During the '78 to '80 period what was the status of Philippine-American relations?*

TEARE: It was testy I guess you could say to some degree mainly because by this time Marcos had been in office since the end of 1965. He'd had the regular two terms. He had then instituted martial law in early '73 to change the Constitution and avoid another election, an election that would not otherwise have been legal. Thus he had stayed on under martial law and now it was five years later. He'd been in office eleven, twelve years and we were getting very worried about him. He was spending money. He was amassing money illegally. He was treating his opponents quite harshly and we wanted him to throttle back and to start thinking about succession. This was anathema to him just as it has proved to be for Suharto and others. So we tried and I think we made not a dent in his posture.

Imelda meanwhile was becoming all the more grandiose. She had herself declared Governor of metro Manila which was the city plus all of its many suburbs. She was building a cultural center. They were just aggrandizing themselves all over the place.

The Philippines did not lean on us I guess for any particular favors during the period that I was there. They did want to buy new aircraft and we wound up selling them the F-8, which was a semi-obsolete plane mainly mothballed in the deserts of Arizona. We learned later on that most of the Filipino pilots were not tall enough to reach the foot control so they had to have wooden blocks fastened on. I guess that was the rudder or whatever.

I think they were trying to buy old ships.

We had I guess nothing particularly contentious although I'm sure I'm glossing over some things in my mind except that, and this was the big project that I worked on and it was already far advanced when I started, and that was the 1979 revision of the Military Bases Agreement. That was contentious mainly because Marcos was trying to get more money out of us and was not above using the threat of closing Clark and Subic in order to do it. He didn't really want to do that. The Carter Administration was still rather new in office and I think Marcos didn't like or respect Carter from a distance and thought he could hold the United States up for more and more money.

As I've always heard it what finally induced Marcos to settle was a visit to him by Senator Inouye of Hawaii representing the Administration. This would have been around November 1978. Inouye reportedly said to Marcos that as a fellow Asian he could not advocate that Marcos settle for anything less than what President Carter had offered and as a United States Senator he could not promise that Marcos would get any more. So eventually Marcos did settle and I've forgotten the precise terms but I think it was on the order of 450 million dollars over five years.

But the real point was that the appropriations were to be subject to the best efforts of the Administration to obtain the appropriation from Congress. That was not a very solid guarantee. But it was the only way we could get anything approximating a multi-year appropriation that the Congress would not grant. I don't think we even did two years at that time in those days. I think it was all annual. Now I guess we authorize for two years although we still only appropriate for one. So, a best efforts guarantee and I worked on the letter that Carter eventually signed and went to Marcos about that.

Finally, and the money had been increased somewhat from the Administration's original offer, Marcos finally agreed to sign. This was right at Christmas '78, New Year's '79. But then we had to find a day on which he would do it because Marcos' lucky number was seven and he would only take significant actions on days that had a seven, dates with a seven in them. I think it was finally signed in Manila on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1979.

It had taken a lot of work by a lot of people. I was not foremost among them by any means. Lawyers from OSD, ISA, Foreign Military Rights Affairs, there was a Navy lawyer assigned to the embassy in Manila for a long period, the political-military officer in Manila, Mike Connors was the leading exponent. He did a lot of work on the Agreement there.

So this was wrapped up about six months after I joined the Desk and we sat back and breathed a sigh of relief but again operating the bases with the Filipinos was never easy. There was always something.

*Q: Were you at that time and maybe on the military side trying to look ahead and say this won't keep up forever? You know nationalistic pressure is something that would eventually cause us to get out?*

TEARE: We worried about that but I think we were really focused on what was then considered the vast importance of the two bases. What I was told by my military colleagues at the time was that Clark was highly important but Subic even more so, that Subic was vital to our ability to operate in the Western Pacific and beyond. Not so much because of the wonderful natural harbor and the adjacent naval air station at San Miguel which enabled the carrier pilots to practice even while a ship was in port but above all because of the ship repair facility at Subic. We had a highly talented and experienced Filipino work force at economical wages and there we could determine the priorities of all the work whereas if you go into somebody else's shipyard you can't necessarily set the priorities. So this was portrayed as highly valuable and we negotiated for it in those terms.

I suppose we didn't give enough attention to the future and the likelihood that the bases someday would be more difficult to hang on to or indeed impossible. I think also this '79 revision included a provision for a quinquennial review, every five years we were going to sit down and review the whole thing. Well again when you just sign something five years seems a long way off but in the end that proved...well...it wasn't the fact of the review it was a sign that things would not go on forever. Indeed in the subsequent reviews they could either jack us up for more money or cut us off in other ways. Something like that eventually happened although not until the Philippine Senate voted in 1991.

*Q: In this period with Marcos were we making any move to change the situation, I mean toward freedom to be a more democratic country?*

TEARE: We tried some things I think. We encouraged legislative exchanges and I don't know that we offered them help with their judiciary, probably not; they were pretty sensitive on that score. But I don't think we did very much. I think our main focus was on trying to alter Marcos's behavior and that was an impossible quest.

The Ambassador in the second Nixon-Ford Administration had been Bill Sullivan who was certainly no pushover. He also had a good singing voice and the story was that he and Imelda used to sing around the piano. I guess Ferdinand would sing too and they had happy times in Malacañang Palace and there was some belief that Sullivan and the embassy were co-opted, charmed by Marcos. This was before I got to the Desk. And then David Newsom went out there for just a few months the end of '77, beginning of '78, before he was called back to become Under Secretary for Political Affairs. And then Dick Murphy went out.

First of all the story was, I think even in '77 before Newsom went, Hummel was the original person intended for the Philippines, and I think that was floated informally with Marcos and Marcos reportedly sent word back that he would like someone closer to the President than Hummel. In other words not a career officer. The name of Billy Carter was even mentioned, the President's brother.

*Q: Basically a very ne'er-do-well person.*

TEARE: Precisely.

*Q: He was pretty close to being what would in our terms today that we'd say was sort of a lay-about or red neck?*

TEARE: Exactly. It was a ridiculous proposition. But, if it's true and I rather think it is, it reflects the way that Marcos liked to work. Everything was on the basis of personal connections and obligations and so forth. About this time, maybe a little later, Marcos sent his own brother-in-law who was already Governor of a Province, to be Ambassador to the United States. He had the two jobs concurrently. Earlier he had been Ambassador to China. This was Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, a younger brother of Imelda's. Who, and I don't think I've told this story, had once fetched up in Saigon when I was there complaining that the Philippines was not getting its share



of contracts out of Vietnam whereas Japan, which had sent no troops to Vietnam, was getting a lot of contracts.

So Kokoy came on a secret mission to Saigon to get some contracts. Maybe I did tell this story. He wanted to stay with me so he would be out of sight so I let him do that. But I worked on it for 24 or 48 hours and finally got him at least to call the Philippine Ambassador and acknowledge to the Ambassador that he was in the country. Otherwise it would have been mighty embarrassing. I don't know whether he got any contracts as a result of that trip. I did set him up with an appointment with MAC-V J-4 with somebody who was doing procurement.

Anyway, Billy Carter to be Ambassador is what Marcos allegedly wanted. That did not happen. But I think there was a gap of several months between Sullivan's departure and Newsom's arrival. And then Newsom was pulled out again after only a few months and Dick Murphy went.

Murphy was an Arabist of course and had never worked particularly in East Asia or the Pacific. But he did the job manfully and I think he also has a good singing voice and may also have wound up around the piano with Imelda. We would send him instructions, EXDIS messages for his meetings with Marcos. We would say to tell the President that the United States is worried that the rule of law is not being met, or that political opponents seem to be denied equal access to the media, that there were reports of disappearances, and so forth. Meanwhile however the New Peoples Army was arising as a new insurgent threat. That probably gave Marcos all the more excuse to crack down.

So it was not a happy situation although the re-negotiation of the Bases Agreement took some of the heat out of it and again I think probably reduced our ability to complain.

*Q: Did Benigno Aquino play any role at this particular time?*

TEARE: I think that he was already in self-exile in the United States. I think I'm correct in that. This was in '78; he was killed in '83 on his return. Yes, I'm sure he was back here in the U.S. and I don't remember that we on the Desk had any dealings with him.

John Monjo left in '79 to go to...was it to Korea or Djakarta? I think he went to Djakarta as DCM and very soon Charge. I had rather hoped that I would be moved up to the Directorship. Holbrooke had arranged stretch assignments for two or three other people that season, the summer of '89. But I think he had used up his credits with the Secretary. And he used to go to the Secretary directly, over the head of the Director General, and get people where he wanted them.

So I was acting for a few months and then Frazier Meade who had served in Manila as political counselor, I guess, and then in Cebu as consul, came in and took over the directorship. It seems to me the second of my two years on the Desk was less eventful than the first.

*Q: What was your impression of Dick Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary?*

TEARE: Brilliant and undisciplined. He had good ideas. He was certainly alert and vigorous in pursuing them. He drove his staff pretty hard but he was always late for meetings. He was, I guess, difficult to manage. His secretary used to have to corner him and send him off for a haircut, even. He sort of operated at high intensity all the time and I think he was looking ahead. Among other things it was on his watch that they established the Pacific Island Affairs Office as a separate one, which a lot of people thought was an important step. Recently rescinded, by the way.

*Q: What kind of Affairs?*

TEARE: Pacific Island Affairs. It was split off as a separate office from Australia-New Zealand. That was seen as symbolically important to the Island countries at least.

Beyond that I find it hard to say. I was there, as I said, for two years and I would go to his meetings. At least when I was acting country director. I worked directly with him on a couple of things, particularly Philippine Bases. Although again he was constantly moving from one topic to another so I don't suppose he thought about Philippine Bases for more than half an hour at a time during those several months when we were putting the negotiations to bed. But you were always conscious that he was there.

**DAVID RYBAK**  
**Philippine Desk, USAID**  
**Washington, DC (1978-1981)**

*Mr. Rybak was born and raised in New York and educated at LeMoyne College. He joined the Peace Corps in 1963 and was assigned to El Salvador. In 1966 he joined AID in Vietnam, serving first in Public Administration and subsequently in the Refugee Program. He returned to Washington in 1973 working in the Disaster Relief Office of AID, later being transferred to Jamaica. Mr. Rybak had a number of senior level assignments in AID headquarters in Washington, including assisting in the creation of the Center for Trade and Investment. Mr. Rybak was interviewed by Frank Pavich in 1998.*

RYBAK: I was the assistant desk officer on the Philippine desk. Peter Cody was the mission Director at that time.

*Q: So your job was to go on TDY's to the Philippines...*

RYBAK: TDYs were difficult to get. The thing is that money was always a problem in AID/Washington getting people out to the missions. And I would sometimes observe that the wrong people got to go. The job was to be an advocate in AID/Washington for the projects the Mission in the Philippines was implementing. Additionally, the job entailed completion of program documents like the Congressional Presentation done each year, participate in project

reviews, prepare papers on issues for symposia with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc.

*Q: Why is that?*

RYBAK: Simply because people who were back-stopping the programs following the day to day progress or lack thereof, of programs were the ones that were at the bottom of the totem pole money wise. The higher-ups...the people in the hierarchy that were above you were the ones that normally got to go. I only made one trip to the Philippines. And I think it would have been beneficial if we could have made trips at least once every six months. I made one during the time I was there. It was a good trip because I was able to meet the people out there I was back-stopping by telephone. And I got to meet them personally.

*Q: What were the conditions in the Philippines in those days?*

RYBAK: The Philippines was a very large program. It was under President Marcos and his regime. It was a multi-million dollar program AID was supporting over a hundred million dollar program. Projects included every aspect of development. The Philippines was also like a proving ground because so much money was going into that country. And hopefully we profited both ways. From those projects that failed and those that succeeded.

*Q: Looking back at that experience and looking at the situation in the Philippines today, do you think that things that you were doing then had an impact?*

RYBAK: I think many of the projects that AID was supporting had an impact. Particularly in the agriculture and health fields. And I think the reason is we had AID officers actually assigned outside the capital in areas in the Philippines where they lived day to day and were closer to the problems than people who resided and worked in Manila. It makes a big difference whether you have people in the field or people who are able to cover a particular area and be responsible for that area and work with the people to develop the area than having people just occasionally going once in a while from the capital out on a field trip.

I know this goes back to my Peace Corps experience and at this point I'd like to make a distinction if you would between economists in the agency and the Peace Corps ex-Volunteers working at AID. We had over 500 ex-Peace Corps volunteers who joined AID. They also hired a lot of economists out of college. And you get into this thing about theory vs practicality. Pragmatic vs theory of economics. When you are talking about rural areas, theory is fine in its place. But people in the village don't understand theory. They understand the pragmatic aspects of getting drinking water or wells or better drainage or better housing. Things that touch them personally. Perhaps this debate will go on forever and never be resolved. Who accomplishes more in Third World countries - economists with their unproven theories or trained and experienced urban and rural development specialists who get down to the grassroots level of society.

And I had discussions with people in the agency who were of the opinion the economists are the ones who really make things happen. I took the contrary position that, I believe many of the ex-

Peace Corps Volunteers became real implementers of AID projects. They wanted to get something done. I observed economic theoretical programs imposed on countries like Senegal and The Gambia that are still being judged whether or not they really helped those countries in the long run.

*Q: Those are two ends of the continuum.*

RYBAK: They are two ends of the continuum and I guess the debate is still going on. I was termed a "do-gooder," whereas the economists with their high falutin theories, even though much of that theory when it was put in practice, did not work out as well as expected.

*Q: So what lesson did you learn from that?*

RYBAK: Perhaps you need a combination of both. That you have to mellow and adjust the applied economics to the country and the situation existing in that country. That what a Ph.D. graduate feels should be done isn't exactly the same way they look at it in Sudan, Mali, Senegal, or somewhere else. We must take the country's situation into consideration when planning and implementing projects and programs.

*Q: What kind of programs did you work on in the Philippines?*

RYBAK: In the Philippines I didn't have the agricultural portfolio. I did have the health, education, family planning, rural development, and other social programs. I handled that part of the overall portfolio. It was just too large a program to have one assistant. Therefore, two assistants worked with the desk officer for the Philippines.

**LESTER E. EDMOND**  
**Asian Development Bank, US Executive Director**  
**Manila (1979-1981)**

*Lester E. Edmond attended the City College of New York and Harvard University. Edmond was in the US Army during WWII and worked in the State Department before entering the Foreign Service as a Rotation Officer and International Economist. His posts in the Foreign Service include Japan, Finland, Washington, DC, National War College, France, and the Philippines. Edmond was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2001.*

*Q: Now, at this time this was getting close to the beginning of the Carter Administration when you obtained your appointment as the US Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank: How did that come to pass? Those jobs usually are given to people from the Treasury Department, I thought.*

EDMOND: I can't give you a definitive answer of how it came about but I am able to tell you what I was told. I was replaced as Deputy on January 20th, 1977, the first day of the Carter

Administration. Dick Holbrooke, who came in as Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, replaced the three deputies and appointed officers with whom he had served in the past or with whom he was familiar. I later developed a good relationship with Dick during the years that I served at the Bank for I would always call upon him during my consultation visits to Washington. I wished to obtain more effective State Department support for the ADB in any interagency discussions that dealt with the regional banks and wished to keep him advised as to how the ADB activities in East Asia might further US policies and interests. At the time of my appointment he accompanied me to my Senate confirmation hearings and introduced me to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee members who were attending the session. This was an unusual gesture on his part as the ADB Executive Director's position previously had been filled either by a Treasury Department official or by a non-governmental political appointee.

I was told that Mike Blumenthal, who had been appointed Secretary of the Treasury and Tony Solomon, who served as Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs had come to the conclusion during the Presidential transition period that we were paying insufficient attention to the regional multilateral banks and that the United States could use them to better advantage in the furtherance of US interests. I was also told that in the search for candidates, I had been suggested as a possibility by at least two of the individuals that they had approached for suggestions. In any event, after I was interviewed by Tony Solomon and vetted by Fred Bergsten, who had been appointed Assistant Secretary, I was offered the job. I don't know what position State might have offered me but since the ADB position was a Presidential appointment that required Senate confirmation, they readily concurred. The ADB position was rated by State as a Class Two Chief of Missions post.

*Q: Did you have any problem with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, or was it fairly routine?*

EDMOND: It was about as routine as you can possibly imagine. If you hope for a routine confirmation hearing I recommend that you attempt to have it timed so that it occurs just before lunch and that you not be bracketed with some one's hearing that may be controversial.

*Q: The job was in Manila? What sort of staff did you have?*

EDMOND: The Asian Development Bank is located in Manila. This resulted from a compromise reached by the founding members. Japan, whose financial backing would be instrumental to the success of the institution, wished the Bank to be located in Tokyo, the financial center of Asia. The Southeast Asian members, still somewhat suspicious of Japan as a result of Japan's World War role and holding fears that Japan might exert undue influence on their economies wished the Bank to be headquartered elsewhere. Japan also was claiming the Presidency of the Bank. In a compromise, the decision was made to place the Bank's headquarters in Manila together with the understanding that the President of the ADB would be Japanese.

The birth of the ADB, which took place in 1967, was not an easy one. The Asian nations had been clamoring for an international lending institution of their own, that would be a source of borrowings additional to those that they were obtaining from the World Bank. It would also be an organization which might pay greater attention to the particular problems facing Asian nations

and in which they would be able to exert greater influence. The United States had vigorously opposed this effort. We believed the proliferation of international institutions with overlapping mandates was clearly inefficient. We already were the dominant voice in the World Bank and we did not wish to bring into being another claimant for US funds.

It was primarily the Vietnam War that persuaded President Johnson to reverse the US position and to announce that we would favor the formation of the Asian Development Bank. First, he was stung by the criticism that our Asian policy only had a military component and that we were insufficiently concerned with economic and social progress in Asia. US leadership in establishing the ADB might encourage the Asian countries to be more favorably inclined toward the United States and the positions it was taking in Asian affairs, and also the ADB might prove to be an additional source of financial assistance to the Government of South Vietnam.

My direct staff was quite small and consisted of a Deputy who was a Treasury Department official, and two secretaries, one financed by Treasury and the other by the ADB. I maintained two offices, one in the ADB headquarters, and a second in the Embassy. The latter office enabled me to view the sensitive political and economic messages issued by our Asian Embassies as well as by the State Department. Although I had a standing invitation to attend the Manila Embassy Country Team meetings, I did so only infrequently as I deemed it important to stress the independence of the US ADB Mission. One of the criticisms that was made of me by some of my counterparts was I may have been overly concerned with the broader politico-economic issues and that I paid insufficient attention to detailed makeup of the particular projects.

*Q: Les, you said that some people felt that you were paying more attention to broader political considerations than minor points of particular projects and the economic criteria that generally should be the basis for decisions by a development bank. What kind of political considerations did you have to pay attention to? This was the Carter Administration. Was the question of human rights something that you had to support, even in a bank like the Asian Development Bank?*

EDMOND: Before continuing, I am going to take minor exception to one of the premises behind your question. The economic criteria and requirements for the Bank's projects were of the utmost importance to me and I was one of the most demanding inquisitors of the Bank's staff in pressing them to defend the economic viability of the Bank's proposed projects. The criticism that was made was that I may have paid insufficient attention to the technical aspects of the projects; their physical and engineering aspects, subjects about which I had no special competence and which I therefore was prepared to leave a leading role to others.

Soon after my arrival in Manila, actually in October 1979, in response to growing American concern over human rights violations world wide, Congress passed a law instructing U.S. executive directors at international financial institutions to use human rights criteria in voting on development loans. We were to oppose loans for countries the State Department determined to be "gross violators" of human rights, unless the loans were aimed at basic human needs. Earlier in the month, U.S. executive directors at the Inter-American Development Bank and the African Development Fund had abstained on or opposed loans for Argentina and the Central African Empire. These actions attracted considerable attention internationally and my fellow Board members were alerting themselves to the possibility that a similar action would take place at the

ADB. Then on October 31, under State Department instructions, I voted “yes” on a rural road project for South Korea, but abstained on a power development loan to the same country. That vote probably caused the largest outburst of anger ever displayed at the ADB Board despite the fact that the loan was otherwise unanimously approved by the Board. Many of the other directors including some who sympathized with our concern for human rights were angered because, in their view, the United States violated the ADB’s Articles of Agreement which specifically forbade the use of political criteria in evaluating loans. Several directors wished to issue a formal expression of regret, a public condemnation that undoubtedly would have seriously strained US relations with the Bank. I literally spent hours attempting to assuage the ill feelings of some of the directors. I approached others, who were more sympathetic to the US position, to persuade them to argue in their caucus against taking any drastic position vis a vis the United States. I persuaded most that an open conflict would only serve to harm the ADB and that United States support for the institution would be bound to suffer. I kept the President of the Bank up to date on developments and urged him to use his influence to dampen the hostile atmosphere, despite the fact that he personally deplored the Bank’s being dragged into a political struggle. Eventually it was agreed that several directors would issue protests to me personally but that they would not make their approaches public. And so the issue was diffused. After that, I found it necessary to issue a dozen or more no votes or abstentions but they no longer created any controversy. Pat Derian, who President Carter appointed to be the point person in the Administration to promote our human rights program, some time later informed me that she regarded me as one of her most effective supporters.

Another issue to which I had to devote a fair amount of time grew out of the heritage of the Vietnam War. The United States’ reaction to Vietnam’s normalization of relations as it involved ADB operations was controversial and aroused serious tensions within the Bank. One of the relatively few Bank issues that exercised Washington was its desire that Bank delay the renewal of any lending to Vietnam. After Saigon’s fall in 1975, the Socialist government of Vietnam took South Vietnam’s seat at the ADB. It began pressing for the reactivation of several loans that had been suspended when the South Vietnamese government fell. These projects had been approved by previous Boards of Directors and it was difficult to find legitimate reasons to prevent the projects from going forward. In addition most bank directors favored renewed lending for Vietnam as a means of rebuilding the country and establishing normal political and economic relations with it. On the other hand Washington feared that ADB lending to Vietnam would arouse considerable political opposition within the United States and it also clearly rejected Vietnam’s political orientation and economic policies.

Although there was never any possibility of rejecting the previously approved loans, Washington instructed me to attempt to delay their implementation. Most of my efforts took place outside the formal deliberative bodies of the Bank. I was able to persuade the President’s office that it was in the Bank’s interest not to provoke that segment of the United States Congress which already was increasingly sympathetic to the idea of curtailing appropriations to international financial institutions such as the ADB.

My personal experience had persuaded me that an early renewal of Bank lending to Vietnam might well weaken US support for the institution. For example, when during Washington consultations, I called on certain influential members of Congress to enlist their support for an

increased ADB financial replenishment, I discovered that one of the most favorably received arguments that I could make to some was that Taiwan was an active member of the Bank whereas Communist China was not and thus received no assistance from the Bank.

The delays in reinstituting the loans increasingly became an embarrassment to Bank management since the delays clearly came close to violating the Charter's precept that political considerations not enter into the Bank's lending decisions. Most, if not all the Directors were aware that the Bank's management was supporting the United States position in opposition to Bank's staff's recommendations and the views of a majority of the Directors that the loans be reinstituted. When the issue occasionally was raised formally at Board meetings by the Director representing Vietnam and some of the more determined directors who supported him, I used the argument that current Vietnamese political and economic conditions and policies differed so greatly under the Hanoi regime as compared to Saigon that the economic bases of the projects had to be reexamined anew.

Although I did not receive much vocal support from other directors, my private discussions with some of the key ones persuaded them to remain silent for close to two years. Eventually the Bank's management found it too embarrassing to continue to deny these loans as even directors who had displayed an understanding of the US position became increasingly restive at the Bank's treatment of Vietnam, which was a Bank member and was meeting all the obligations of membership. As a result of these efforts, the ADB's consideration and approval of the first loan did not take place until October 1978, three years after the fall of Saigon. The Bank continued to move forward in deliberate fashion in developing any new projects for Vietnam and I thus was successful in preventing any political controversy from arising.

I might as well mention now a third task which was laid on me by Washington and one which I personally believed to be less than fully worthy of the United States. To protect certain US agricultural interests, the Congress required that the United States executive directors to international financial institutions oppose loans for certain agricultural products that could compete with US exports. I therefore was instructed to oppose aid for projects that were designed to develop palm oil, sugar, or citrus fruits that could compete with U.S. vegetable oil, sugar or fruit producers.

I clearly was not going to receive any support from Bank management or other Board members if I were try to oppose such loans directly when they came up for approval. The approach that I took was to swallow my pride and to discuss the issue directly with members of the Bank Secretariat who were assigned the responsibility of developing projects. They appreciated that it was not in their interest to force me to oppose the projects which at a minimum would considerably delay them and might require their revision. I persuaded the project designers to alter their projects and their justifications in ways that the recipient governments did not find objectionable; would still meet the economic requirements and yet would appear to minimize the export potential. Some of the projects were so reconfigured as to emphasize the domestic consumption of palm oil rather than its export to world markets. I was well aware that much of this was sophistry and many of the changes were primarily presentational in nature. Washington found all these projects to meet Congressional requirements. At the same time I did not believe



that any of the changes that I advocated seriously weakened the economic justification of the projects.

I am a little disturbed that my comments might lead a reader to believe that my principal activities at the Bank were to protect the United States interests from Bank programs that we might have found objectionable. This would be far from the truth. I spent the bulk of my time trying to promote activities that would promote economic development in Asia and thus directly advance US interests. Together with a few other like minded directors, we persuaded the Bank to alter its lending policies to support lending that more directly assisted the countries in fields such as health, education and population. This was accomplished over the objections of many of the Bank's borrowing members who were reluctant to see a diminution of major project lending for such items as dams, power generation, and highways.

I believe it is not too self serving to say that I was one of the more instrumental parties in persuading the Bank to begin to finance small private enterprises in the developing countries in the belief that such seed investments could promote economic development.

And then there was one small item that has always intrigued me more because of the coincidence involved than its inherent importance, although it was significant for those directly concerned. I mentioned earlier that President Ford had appointed me to be the US Representative to the South Pacific Commission. The appointment was for a period of two years and thus I still retained my appointment during the first year of my assignment in Manila. I therefore received word that I was to attend the 1977 annual meeting. I had not received any advance word about the agenda of the meeting and discovered after my arrival that the principal item to be discussed was the proposed establishment of a South Pacific Fund to assist the development of the newly independent island states. Timely communication between Noumea and Washington was difficult, but I was well enough aware of Washington attitudes to realize that the it would not look with favor on the establishment of a new international lending institution for this purpose. Although I did have sympathy with the needs of these tiny impoverished states it was not too difficult to persuade the other participants that the subject be removed from consideration at that meeting. I was, of course, not alone in my negative views. I did promise as an alternative that I would return to Manila and propose that the Bank pay increased attention to the needs of the island states. This fit in quite well with the Pacific island support program that I had worked on prior to the ADB appointment. With the support of other interested donor countries, such as Australia and Japan, the Bank agreed to establish a new office within its Operations Department that would be responsible for Pacific island affairs. The Bank, of course, was anxious to head off any proposals that called for the establishment of a new competing body, although I think such a development would have been extremely unlikely.

*Q: I would like to just make reference to a very interesting lengthy front page article in the Asian Wall Street Journal of August 23rd, 1979, entitled "Diplomatic Touch: US Representative at the ADB is Man in the Middle." It quotes another executive director referring to you as saying, "He hasn't had an easy role here Relations between the US and the ADB could be a damn sight worse if not for him." Another is quoted "He's not just a political appointee picked up off the street and sent over. He has great contacts in Washington, plus knowledge, understanding, experience. He gets more authority to use discretion here than some of his predecessors either*

*could or wanted to have.” It sounds like quite a credit to you in terms of working problems out. If you had simply gotten up on your high horse, so to speak, and said, “Because of human rights or because of whatever, we will oppose this,” they really would have had every reason to resent. Because of the way you handled it, things often worked and the institution was strengthened. Is that fair to say?*

EDMOND: I'd like to think so. That certainly was my objective. I was helped by the knowledge that I was a professional and that my academic as well as professional background made me reasonably knowledgeable and familiar with political as well as economic issues. I also think that it was important that both the Bank hierarchy and the representatives of the other countries were aware that I supported the ADB objectives. I clearly believed in what the ADB was trying to accomplish, and within the limitations of my instructions would endeavor to make it a stronger and more efficient organization, not only because I believed in its mission but because I thought it advanced US foreign policy interests to do so. I suspect that if you come in with that attitude, others will give you a fair hearing. If they believe that you come in just as a spokesman for an administration that may or may not be sympathetic with what the institution is trying to accomplish or whose principal objective is to limit the role of the institution because of a suspicion of multilateral bodies you undoubtedly would receive a different reaction.

*Q: I notice that you received the Distinguished Service Medal from the Department of Treasury in 1981. I assume that was because of your service as ED, Executive Director, at the Asian Development Bank.*

EDMOND: It was solely because of that. I was pleased to be recognized. I had no real knowledge as to how my performance was viewed in Washington, Regrettably, from my personal point of view; the State Department was only marginally following ADB affairs since the Treasury Department had been assigned the responsibility of being the principal backstopping agency within the US Government. I was therefore particularly pleased to discover that the citation which accompanied the Distinguished Service Award stated in part that “As United States Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank, Lester Edmond has been instrumental in shaping the character of this important regional institution. During his tenure, the ADB has moved energetically into many new and challenging areas. Mr. Edmond deserves personal credit for the Bank's growing involvement in the areas of population and private enterprise. Lester Edmond has shown a singular gift for effectively and persuasively presenting United States Government views to the Management and the Board of Directors of the ADB - a talent all the more noteworthy given the constraints on physical communications between Manila and Washington.”

*Q: Anything else we ought to say about this period as US Executive Director at the Asian Development Bank?*

EDMOND: I might mention one additional initiative which was to alter the Bank's lending policies so as to permit it to undertake highly concessional lending to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand for projects designed to improve their health and educational delivery systems. When I arrived at the Bank, such highly concessional loans were being offered only to a few impoverished South Asian countries. While serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary, just prior to

the ADB appointment, one of the efforts of the East Asian Bureau was to try to increase the level of economic assistance that the United States was providing Indonesia. Since concessional lending by the ADB to these countries appeared to be substantively justified and consistent with US foreign policy interests, I joined with the Executive Directors of a few donor countries which also had strong political interests in Southeast Asia, particularly Australia and Japan, to revise the Bank's lending policies. With such strong internal support within the institution, it was not too difficult to overcome the objections of several European countries to the change. The latter's opposition was not entirely unreasonable since they did not wish the most impoverished members of the Bank to in effect lose resources that otherwise would be available to them. On the other hand, we noted that these particular loans to the somewhat wealthier Southeast Asian nations would be directed to support the most impoverished segments of their populations. It also seemed possible to me that the broadening of such concessional lending might encourage donor countries to increase the amounts of their pledges in future Bank replenishments. In that I was disappointed as the United States proved to be one of the most reluctant members to increase its level of support.

My four year tenure at the ADB ended in May 1981. I had submitted my resignation to incoming President Reagan, as did all Ambassadors and presidential appointees and was asked to remain at post until a successor had been appointed. By that time, Shom and I had been serving abroad for twenty one of the previous twenty five years. In addition, I found it difficult to think of any new assignment that would provide me with as much satisfaction as did the one at the ADB and therefore decided to conclude my Foreign Service on that high note.

**BERNARD F. SHINKMAN**  
**Director, American Center, USIS**  
**Mindanao (1979-1981)**

*Bernard F. Shinkman was born in New York City and raised in Vienna. He graduated from Dartmouth College. After entering the Foreign Service in 1978, he served in Accra, Mindanao, London, Belgrade and Ottawa. Mr. Shinkman was interviewed in 2004 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

Q: *Whither?*

SHINKMAN: We went on direct transfer to the southern Philippines. At that stage we had an American Center on the island of Mindanao, in the far southern Philippines. It is the largest island or the second largest island in the Philippines. And the U.S. had an American Center. We did not have a consulate there. There was only one consulate outside Manila and that was in Cebu. We had an American Center there also. USIA had a USIS center in Cebu. And we had our USIS center in Davao, which is a very agricultural area. Davao was a big city of half a million people, but the island of Mindanao was pretty rough, mountainous, a lot of agriculture.

The reason we were down there, partly, was because there were a lot of big American business interests there. There were enormous plantations. Banana plantations. Pineapple plantations. And

Dole, Del Monte and United Brands all had just gigantic operations down there. We were one of only three diplomatic entities on Mindanao. I had diplomatic status, but as I say it wasn't a consulate. There was the American presence, which was me. It was one American and I had eight FSNs.

The Japanese also had a diplomatic mission there, and the Indonesians had a large diplomatic presence which mostly consisted of consular officers because that part of the Philippines, lying near Indonesia, has historically been owned by Indonesia and by the Philippines. The island of Mindanao moved back and forth in ownership. And so there are a lot of people with Indonesian citizenship there. I think there were a dozen or 15 Indonesian diplomatic personnel at their mission there.

*Q: What were you doing?*

SHINKMAN: Well, I ran the American Center. It was a dream jobs for a young Foreign Service Officer on my second assignment. I did everything. I did some political reporting for the embassy. Did a lot of cultural programming. There was a lot of press in the Philippines. Most of it was highly irresponsible. But there were one or two newspapers that you could talk to and make some sense with. And I just did everything.

I traveled all over the island. There was still an active – as there is today – insurrection going on. There was the New People's Army, the Communist insurrection, which was relatively small, and the Moro National Liberation Front, the MNLF, which was large. Americans and other foreigners generally could not travel around the island. But I had as one of my cherished possessions a letter signed by Juan Ponce Enrile - who was Minister of Defense at that time, and went on to be one of the leaders of the revolution that threw out Marcos. The letter says "Mr. Shinkman of the American Center is allowed to travel anywhere in Mindanao that he likes." That was kind of a fun thing to have. And I did. I traveled to San Zamboanga.

*Q: The monkeys have no tails.*

SHINKMAN: The monkeys have no tails. That's right. One of those places a lot of people who like to travel think of one day going to. So I did. I had a good time traveling around.

*Q: How did you see the revolt, both the Communist and Moro revolt.*

SHINKMAN: I never felt danger. Well, I won't say I never felt danger. I never felt targeted. I thought that if we were injured in this – these revolts – it would just be because we were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It would be because my wife was shopping in the market and somebody rolled a grenade into the market. It would be that sort of thing. We never felt targeted at all.

Plus, the Embassy had its own airplane. The Ambassador had a little twin engine plane that sat eight or ten people. Richard Murphy was our ambassador. A terrific ambassador. Very supportive of us in the south in Mindanao. And he made it very clear that if at any stage – we had a shortwave radio with which we could communicate with Manila – he said, "if at any stage you

feel endangered and want to get out of there, we'll have the plane down there as fast as the plane will fly. It will probably be about an hour and half and we'll have you out of there." So that was comforting also. My wife and I talked about this a lot.

We lived in a gated community. And we had an armed guard at our house 24 hours a day. I don't really know how effective he was, but I guess he was something of a deterrent. But as I said, we didn't feel targeted – maybe it was because we were young and foolish, but I don't think so. We talked about it a lot and we felt that the situation was probably okay.

One of the occasions when security really came up again was after I got to know the governor of one of the adjoining provinces. He offered us the use of his beach house if we wanted it. So one weekend we thought, we'll go off to his beach house. It was about an hour and a half drive from Davao over pretty rough roads. Well we got to the place and it was an absolutely beautiful, beautiful beach house. Just splendid. Tile roof, stucco. On a beach with no other development – a couple of fishing huts – but no other development in sight. It was just an idyllic setting. And the local villagers or the people who maintained the house for the governor had slaughtered a little piglet for us which was "lechon", a great Philippine delicacy, roast suckling pig. And they brought some fresh fish they had just caught. It was absolutely gorgeous. We had a little baby at that time. Our daughter was born, our first child, while we were in Davao. She wasn't born in Davao, but while we were stationed there. And we had taken one of our domestic staff along with us.

Well, we spent the first night there. And at one stage the local fire truck – water tanker - showed up with water to fill the tank on top of the house because there wasn't a well. I thought it was interesting that the fire department would take on this task. But I guess if you are the governor you can do what you like. So they filled us up with water. Well, we woke up the next morning and surrounding the house was a squad of soldiers with M-16s, all of them. It was a stunning sight to get up and look out the window. There every ten feet all around the perimeter of the house was a soldier in fatigues with an M-16 over his soldier. And my wife took one look and looked at our three month old baby and said "we are out of here right now." So we got back in the office car and drove back to Davao. I, of course, had permission to use the office car because it was lightly armored and the embassy said I could use it for these sort of excursions.

*Q: Did you get involved in any Philippine-Indonesian disputes while you were there?*

SHINKMAN: No. We became fast friends with the Indonesian consul general. A very nice guy. We used to go over to his house for endless "cultural manifestations", as they were usually called in Eastern Europe. Lots of dancing and puppetry. Beautiful, beautiful stuff. I mean it was a very, very rich experience. But no real conflicts. At that stage Ferdinand Marcos had an iron grip on the Philippines and I don't know who would have been in Indonesia – would it have been Suharto back then? – but there was minimal room for visible friction.

*Q: Yeah, it would have been Suharto.*

SHINKMAN: So the two leaders each were smart enough to keep their hands off the other's territory. I never met President Marcos but Imelda came to Davao for some function and I met her as the American diplomatic presence on Mindanao.

But as you can imagine in this remote place, there were endless interesting adventures. And I will always remember on the wall of my office I had a map – a National Geographic map – of Mindanao. Not more than 30 miles from my office there was a line drawn on the map separating two provinces. And printed by National Geographic on this line in brackets were the words “Unexplored.” And I thought, My God, I'm sitting here in a U.S. government office, air conditioned, with a car outside. And not fifty miles away as the crow flies is an area that is so rugged that – obviously it has been explored by natives who lived there. In the Philippines, like many places, they are always “discovering” new sorts of “stone age” tribes – but this place is so remote and so rugged and so inhospitable that National Geographic says that border is unexplored. I thought that was kind of impressive.

*Q: Well who were your clients?*

SHINKMAN: Mostly prominent Filipinos. Businessmen, government officials. I mean I knew everybody on the island. And because they were well to do – either because they were well to do, they were very prominent, or they became prominent because they were, however you want to work that – we got to know everybody. And we made some good friends. There is a very prominent Filipino family which I think still is very prominent called Aboitiz who own one of the world's major shipping lines. One member of that family, Ernesto, was based in Davao overlooking their plantation holdings. And he and his wife Marie we got to know well. People just liked having us there, it seemed. They were very supportive. Very friendly. We really had a very pleasant two years.

Our baby was due in April of 1980, the middle of our tour there. And being a good, young, Foreign Service family, we thought we would try and have the baby there, in Davao. We looked at the hospitals and they were pretty marginal. But we had an excellent local pediatrician who had received his degree from medical school in the United States, as so many prominent Filipinos had. So we had a high comfort level with the skills of the medical people. The facilities were a bit marginal.

But then the Philippines at that stage – Marcos – had something where he could declare a person a National Treasure because they were so prominent. It was like getting a Kennedy Center Award or something. About two months before our baby was due our pediatrician was declared by Ferdinand Marcos a National Treasure and around the time the baby was due, he was going to have to go to Malacañang, the palace in Manila, for his awards ceremony. So we thought we'd rather not, at that stage, try to find another local doctor. There was a Regional Medical Officer in Manila who said “you go up to the USAF Regional Medical Center at Clark Air Base, which is one of the best, world class medical facilities, and have the baby there.”

I had stayed in the Army Reserve after I got off active duty in 1968 and did two week tours of active duty each summer somewhere in the world. And I arranged to do a two week tour in Quezon City, just north of Manila, where we had – just like we had in Vietnam – a JUSMAG

headquarters. And I went up. My wife came with me. This was about a month before the baby was due and I had two weeks in Quezon City staying in the visiting officers quarters. And we then moved to Clark Air Base and stayed there for a couple of weeks. About that time, my mother flew over from the States and joined us. And the baby was born in April of 1980 in Clark Air Base Regional Medical Center, which gave us a lifelong love and respect for the Air Force and their medical facilities. Just fantastic.

**GILBERT H. SHEINBAUM**  
**Principal Officer**  
**Cebu (1979-1983)**

*Gilbert H. Sheinbaum was born in New York on April 20, 1929. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from New York University in 1950 and served in the U.S. military from 1951-1953. Mr. Sheinbaum entered the Foreign Service in 1957. His career included positions in Laos, Vietnam, Denmark, Madagascar, Malawi, the Philippines, and Switzerland. This interview was conducted by Tom Dunnigan on September 6, 1995.*

*Q: And after those two years, you went off to Asia again, to the Philippines?*

SHEINBAUM: Well, actually I was supposed to have gone to Hong Kong and I was ecstatic over that. But Jimmy Carter decided - rightfully - to establish full relations with China January 1, 1979, the Department was going to move this job -- a non-Mandarin-speaking job -- to Beijing and, of course, I didn't have any Mandarin or any Chinese dialect. So I got scratched out of that. I was scrambling around because it was March when I got the bad news -- after the good assignments have gone -- but then Cebu came up accidentally because the guy who was going originally couldn't because his wife was a doctor and couldn't practice in the Philippines. So I wound up in Cebu and that was a wonderful four years. For our young family, it was probably a far better place. And in the end, the Hong Kong wasn't moved to Beijing after all.

*Q: How large was your staff there in Cebu?*

SHEINBAUM: I had one vice-consul and four FSNs at the outset -- five when I left.

*Q: Was most of the workload consular at that post?*

SHEINBAUM: Yes, much of the workload was consular but my function was not consular, except to oversee the vice-consul. The vice-consul, prior to my arrival, did spend some time on economic and political reporting. I would say maybe twenty-twenty-five percent of his time, but there was a ten-fold increase in the number of visa applicants between 1976 and the time I arrived in 1979, so he had no time for anything other than visa and passport work -- consular services. And I didn't have much time for anything other than the political and economic reporting and I did a lot of that. I did occasionally do the visa stuff because I wanted to understand what he was facing, as best as I could so I could write accurate efficiency reports.

Well, I've visited Cebu several times since we left in 1983. Four years ago, I think the staff numbered something like six Americans and like twelve FSNs. It's now down to zero Americans and about two FSNs and the post will be closed by the end of the year (1995).

*Q: Leaving us with only Manila in the Philippines?*

SHEINBAUM: Correct.

*Q: Gil, you were in charge of your own post in Cebu, the only other post we have in the Philippines after Manila. Did you get to the capital often?*

SHEINBAUM: I got there once every four to six weeks because I didn't have a confidential secretary and felt it was necessary to check in with the DCM and the Ambassador. The DCM was an old friend from Vietnam, Jim Rosenthal. The Ambassador first was Dick Murphy, whom we got to know quite well and we still have very close relationship with the Murphys, and then Mike Armacost whom we got to know quite well also but not the same social relationship.

*Q: Did the Ambassador visit Cebu?*

SHEINBAUM: Each one visited once. And each one had their feet hanging out the end of the bed. They were both rather tall.

*Q: Yes, they were tall. I know Dick Murphy. I don't know Armacost. Were there rebels in your district?*

SHEINBAUM: Yes.

*Q: Active while you were there?*

SHEINBAUM: Yes. The district covered the central Philippines, the Visayan Islands, and Mindanao and a few islands southwest of Mindanao call the Sulu Archipelago. You had the Moro National Liberation Front fighting the government but it had quieted down after Marcos made agreements with some of the Muslim rebels. But still it wasn't entirely quiet. Then you had the New People's Army, the NPA, the communists, the leftovers from the old Huks except reincarnated with different types of people. There were not so many in Cebu but there were some on various islands such as Leyte and particularly Samar which was almost completely infiltrated, then Negroes had many in the sugar plantations, and some in northern Mindanao.

*Q: How often did you get to visit other islands besides . . .*

SHEINBAUM: I was out on a trip, I would say, once every four to six weeks. I did a lot, much to the Embassy's anguish because I was using travel money, but I went on the cheap. Most times -- I took my own vehicle, put it on a ferry and was on the ferries myself rather than flying over - and most of those ferries were old, rotted ships. I would drive up and down, much to the consternation of good friends in the Philippine army who were very concerned about my safety



because they didn't want me to be an embarrassment by becoming a statistic. I did a lot of driving up and down roads that they themselves would not drive, except with heavy security.

*Q: Were you ever in any physical danger there?*

SHEINBAUM: No, not that I'm aware of.

*Q: Now in your district, did you notice any anti-Marcos feeling?*

SHEINBAUM: Yes. Cebu was sort of oppositionist. Cebu was always sort of oppositionist. For one thing, Cebu, which prides itself on having existed from before the time that Manila became a city, is now the second largest city in the Philippines, has been for many, many years. Magellan landed in Cebu and also died there. It is a very dynamic city, people are nicer there than in Manila. They have slums but not to the extent, proportionally, that you'll find in Manila. Cebu has been booming since shortly after the Marcos departure from the scene, whereas Manila took several years. That was because there was a very dynamic governor in Cebu, whose name was Lito Osmena, grandson of the old Osmeña president, who is very close with President Ramos by the way - he ran as Ramos's VP but lost.

*Q: Were there ever any anti-American demonstrations at the Consulate. They had them in Manila but you didn't reflect them down there?*

SHEINBAUM: That's correct.

*Q: And did martial law affect what you did? I know that it was in effect for many years there.*

SHEINBAUM: That's correct. Martial law did not affect Cebu in any way. . . Well, for one thing, although everything was dictated in a way from Malacañang, martial law was fairly casually enforced. So martial law didn't really apply except they knew who was giving the orders for the running of the administration.

*Q: Could you see a build-up of the opposition to Marcos? Was it . . .*

SHEINBAUM: We left three weeks before Nino Aquino was assassinated. But yes. I was surrounded by all the many Cebuanos who were anti-Marcos. I think what was happening during the last couple of years when I was there that stuck out in my mind and that was the drought. It wasn't a severe drought but it had a great effect on the production of coconuts and copra, you know, the oil that comes from coconuts. It's a very important commodity in the in central and southern Philippines. And the Cebu economy, to a certain extent, is built around copra on one hand and shipping and trade on the other. And the dryness, while not a real drought, caused the production of copra to drop considerably, depriving copra producers of coconuts. Really, we were waiting for the coconuts to fall down and that slowed down the economy in other ways. I could see that people were getting restless because number one: the coconut industry, the production side, had fallen into the hands of a couple of Marcos' cronies and this was bad news. But that wouldn't have been so bad had it not been for the fact that the production was down and

the farmers and the copra producers were feeling the impact of the low coconut production, plus paying fees to the Coconut Authority (Marcos' cronies).

*Q: Were there any Indo-Chinese refugees in your district?*

SHEINBAUM: No.

*Q: I know the Philippines took a lot in but apparently not . . .*

SHEINBAUM: I guess some were on Luzon but most of them were on Palawan which was not in my district.

*Q: And were you able to meet with opposition figures while you were in Cebu?*

SHEINBAUM: Yes. And occasionally this was reported to Marcos himself. There were two incidents when Ambassador -- I think it was Armacost -- both times let me know that this was reported to him from the Palace. I also had written a report, an airgram, that leaked - we think it leaked on Capitol Hill - and it wound up in the hands of the press in Manila, played on the first page, even with a reproduction of the first page of the airgram. And there was my name very prominently at the bottom. Marcos told Armacost that I should be withdrawn, not to have me PNGed, just please have him re-assigned. Armacost said no. And Armacost was pretty strong about that. He asked me for advice. I said that, "You know, if I left at this time when everybody knows I'm not supposed to leave for a year from now, everybody would know the reason for it, and you've got the Marcoses going to the States on a State Visit a month from now." Marcos thought that we were trying to sabotage the State Visit -- that a couple of us in the Embassy were always against him -- the other one being John Maisto. John had left by that time but I was still there, and I'd written the airgram describing the economy in Mindanao. But, of course, the economy had to do impacted on the political scene and it was negative, very strongly negative. I thought if anything was going to erupt it would come from Mindanao because of the coconuts, particularly. So Armacost withstood that pressure. In September, they went on what seemed to be -- and was -- a very successful State Visit. As the Marcoses arrived on the helicopter from Andrews into town, George Shultz -- who had only been in office about six months -- asked Marcos, "What do you intend to take up with President Reagan tomorrow?" And Marcos says, "Mr. Sheen-bum." I was the first thing he mentions. And George Shultz, who had never heard of Mr. Sheen-bum, had to turn to Mike Armacost who explained the case briefly, after which, according to Mike, George tells Marcos, "Oh, I don't think that's a subject you should raise with President Reagan." And he didn't raise it. However, a month later, the Marcoses and the Armacosts and the Sheinbaums were all at Imelda's home on Leyte at the annual Leyte Landing Celebration (October 20) and Mike comes to me and says, "Marcos still would like us to get you out of here." Mike saw how friendly Inger and I were with Imelda and Imelda's brother, Kokoy, and he asked me (this is Armacost) "Who should I approach? Do you think it will do any good?" And I said, "Oh, it might do some good." We thought first of Kokoy, but in the end, Armacost ran into Imelda first and explained what had happened. Imelda said, "Don't worry, I'll take care of it." Imelda knew us (including both our kids) fairly well. As a matter of fact, I saw Imelda in the last month. I went to see her when I was in Manila and we laughed over the story. Imelda had invited us - and many others - to stay many times in her sprawling setup in Leyte, and being the

only diplomats around, the head table usually was only the Marcoses and the Sheinbaums. When the Armacosts were there, they were added to the table.

*Q: Were you there for the Aquino assassination?*

SHEINBAUM: No, we left about three weeks before. We were in Geneva at the time.

**WILLIAM PIEZ**  
**Office Director, East Asia Bureau, Economic Policy**  
**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: Well you left there when?*

PIEZ: Well I left there in 1980 to come back to the East Asia Bureau to the Economic Policy Office. I was the office director.

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

PIEZ: I was there for about two years. In 1983 I left that job. Transferred again.

*Q: Well what was this '80 to '83 period. We have been talking about economic difficulties. How stood Asia at this point?*

PIEZ: 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: You mentioned the Philippines dragging behind. What was the problem? How did we perceive it?*

PIEZ: Well Marcos and his cronies stole everything they could get their hands on. If they saw a sector of the economy that was doing Ok on exports they might seek a way to milk it. The prime example was cocoanut production and exports of copra. Marcos and his cronies literally took over the business. And the actual growers of cocoanuts and copra were really reduced to subsistence levels. The cronies tried to control and time the exports in order to maximize the prices. That doesn't really work too well when you have a lot of competition from other countries like Indonesia and Malaysia. But they thought they could do it. They did certainly make a lot of money out of it. The bad thing was the Filipinos who were getting all these profits tended to stash them abroad in the United States or in Hong Kong, or put them into showcase mansions that did not add much value to the economy. As I mentioned before a country could tolerate some corruption if the people who make the gains from corruption invest it wisely in their own country. In the Philippines they weren't doing that. They would send the money out.

**STEVEN W. SINDIG**  
**Population, Health, and Nutrition Officer, USAID**  
**Manila (1980-1983)**

*Steven W. Sindig joined USAID in 1971. His posts included Pakistan, the Philippines and, Kenya. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 2001.*

SINDING: Population, Health and Nutrition.

*Q: What was your position, your job?*

SINDING: I was chief of the Population, Health and Nutrition Office in USAID Manila. Tony Schwarzwald was the Mission Director. He called me up one day asked me whether I would be interested in that assignment. He said he thought he had a good job in the Capital Development Office for Monica. So it was our first tandem assignment. We were very pleased that there was an opportunity for both of us in a large mission. I think both of us had a certain amount of misgivings about working in the Philippines because of the Marcos regime and the very complicated nature of U.S. Philippines relations. But it was good career opportunity for both of us, and we knew that it was time for us to get back overseas. So off we went.

*Q: What was the situation in the Philippines at that time in general, not just in population?*

SINDING: I would say that we arrived kind of at the beginning of the end game for Marcos. It was clear that he had lost his popular support; there were a lot of Filipinos who, in the absence of an alternative, would support Marcos, but the early popularity that Marcos had had as a reforming authoritarian had passed. He was now seen as a reactionary authoritarian, increasingly. The corruption of the regime was widely known; and many of the people around him were

disliked. I felt that we were arriving in the Philippines at a time of cynicism, corruption, and a regime that was rapidly losing its legitimacy. Nonetheless, I was very enthusiastic about working on population issues in the Philippines.

*Q: Ok, let's focus more on the population, health, nutrition issues that you were moving into? How did you view the situation you were to work with?*

SINDING: In the early years of USAID involvement in population in the Philippines this was pre-Marcos the government because of the sensitivity of family planning and population issues in the country was very reluctant to adopt a population policy or a family planning program. The result was that a lot of the USAID resources flowed to private nongovernmental organizations of which there were several; some of which were quite effective. And in that early period - thinking back to the late '60s and the very early '70s - contraceptive use increased so rapidly from near zero to about 25 percent in the population of reproductive age, and there was corresponding decline in Philippine fertility. Interestingly, the Philippines was one of the earliest of the southeast Asian countries to experience a fertility decline, before Indonesia and Thailand.

*Q: Why do you think it progressed so well?*

SINDING: Because it was private, and because, I think, there was a latent demand for fertility control. The Philippines had unusually strong social indicators, very high levels of female education comparatively, and relatively high income by southeast Asian standards. It was before the rapid economic takeoff of many of the neighboring countries. And the social setting was conducive to lower fertility and demand for the means to control fertility, particularly among the women.

*Q: Was this fairly widely spread around the country?*

SINDING: Particularly in the urban and suburban areas, as is usually the case. But it wasn't limited to the urban areas. And there were a couple of very brave pioneers. There was a woman named Fe del Mundo, who opened up a large family planning clinic which gradually spread to other parts of the country. The dean of Asian demographers Mercedes Concepcion, she contributed importantly to the early recognition of population pressures and rapid population growth in the country. The Family Planning Organization in the Philippines was one of the earliest affiliates of IPPF. I think a lot of this had to do with the fact that the Philippines was so closely linked to the United States; a lot of American missionaries and others, who were sort of hanging around the Philippines, started these things. There was an early movement that was comparatively effective.

What happened when Marcos took over was that after two or three years family planning became an enthusiasm of Imelda. She started up things. I used to say that the development landscape of the Philippines was littered with the discarded enthusiasms of the first lady. And nutrition and family planning were two of those. She got private people to put up money, and she established the Population Center Foundation, the National Nutrition Center, and a few other things. They had big palaces, not palaces, but very fancy buildings out in Makati. But, at the same time,

Marcos really pushed the government to get actively involved in the family planning. Something called the Commission on Population (POPCOM) was established in the Marcos years.

Initially the population program of the government enjoyed some success, but there were two reasons why ultimately it was doomed to fail. One was that the Philippines followed the pattern of a number of the Asian countries of establishing a population program outside the health service. Like Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and a number of other countries, but, unlike Thailand, they decided - and I don't know why this was, I don't know whether USAID was particularly responsible for this, or whether this was a decision of the Filipinos; I suspect that USAID had a role - they couldn't wait for the health system to incorporate family planning. In any case, even if it did it would probably have had a low priority, and so they had to bypass the health system. In doing so, they created an adversary relationship, and that never went away. That was the first mistake. The second mistake was in shifting the resources and the responsibility from the private to the public sector. In a lot of Asian countries that would have been the right thing to do, but in the Philippines it was the wrong thing to do because it really incurred the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church. It became a matter of public policy and public programs that the church felt that it had to oppose it, and it did but with increasing vigor over the whole period of the Marcos regime. So that by the time I got there in 1980, the dialogue between the church and the government was at fairly high decibel level and Marcos had already begun to back away. This became a discarded enthusiasm, and the government was on the defensive.

One of my predecessors, Lenni Kangas, had carried out a study in the late '70s in which there was the striking finding that there was a very strong inverse relationship between the distance a woman lived from a family planning clinic and the likelihood that she would be using contraceptives. From that Kangas and his colleagues in the government drew the conclusion that the government ought to shift from a clinic-based to a village or outreach system. The national outreach program became the centerpiece of USAID's support for population in the Philippines. Responsibility for the national outreach program was housed in the PopCom, again bypassing the Ministry of Health. PopCom was to work with the local governments to find specific mechanisms, but a huge outreach force was recruited and deployed who answered to PopCom. So that instead of finding existing service delivery mechanisms that were already part of the structure of public services in the Philippines, they created a new one at enormous expense and, essentially 100 percent underwritten by USAID. I wouldn't say that it didn't work; it wasn't the classic failure that we had in Pakistan, but it didn't work very well. We pushed very hard in spending a great deal of money and nudged contraceptive use up from 25 percent maybe to 27-28 percent. It didn't have the dramatic impact that I think Kangas and his colleagues had hoped for.

*Q: Why didn't it work?*

SINDING: Why didn't it work? Well there a lot of reasons why it didn't work. One was that the Philippines made the same mistake that Pakistan made; that is, the workers were basically young college graduates, typically unmarried, who had very little credibility in the villages. Also it depended heavily on whether the local governments were willing to be cooperative and in many cases the local mayors and governors didn't believe in family planning and weren't willing to give it their support. By this time Marcos was no longer speaking publicly on the issue; this is, in part, based on what I subsequently observed in Kenya and also saw during that same period of

time happening in Indonesia. Had Marcos spoken out forcefully and publicly and powerfully for family planning, the local government authorities would have recognized this as a high priority and would have given it much more time and effort to it. But they knew that Marcos himself was on the defensive and didn't have much enthusiasm for it; he never spoke on the subject, and he wasn't particularly interested in holding them accountable. And so they put their time and effort into other things. Without local government support, without political support generally, programs of this sort often don't do very well. So I think it was the lack of political support. I left the Philippines after three years convinced that the public sector strategy didn't make sense for that country; this was a country where it would have made a lot more sense to stay with a strategy of working with NGOs and building up the capacity of the NGOs to be the primary source of service delivery, as it had happened, for example, in Colombia.

The Colombians solved the same problem the Philippines had, which was overt Roman Catholic Church opposition. They established a very large and effective private family planning association with the passive support of the government to permit international resources to support its work. The Church found it much harder to go after a private organization than it would have to go after the government. I think that that kind of a strategy would have worked better and, in fact, in subsequent years that was the way USAID turned in its support for population.

*Q: During your time there you were trying to get this national outreach program to work?*

SINDING: Yes

*Q: What were some of the problems you faced given there wasn't much support; what were some practical issues you had to deal with?*

SINDING: Well, I think I have mentioned most of them. The bureaucratic organization for outreach was actually quite good. The people at PopCom, who were responsible for it, were young but very energetic, smart people, highly committed, who understood the importance of working with local government authorities, and who put a lot of time and effort in doing it. It was just an uphill battle because of lack of support from Malacañang the presidential palace. And the young people were the wrong kind of people for the outreach work. We didn't have big logistics problems. This wasn't the case where we had overloaded the system with contraceptives that weren't being used. It was primarily an oral pill program with some condoms and IUDs. But I think by that time we had gotten a handle on how to estimate demand to make sure that we didn't overstock, which had been a problem in many of the Asian countries in the earlier years.

*Q: Was there much resistance among the people?*

SINDING: No, I don't think so. I think that, if the program had itself had been more enthusiastically embraced by political figures at the local level and they had spoken in support of family planning and responsible parenthood, there would have been more of a response. But I'm not enough of a student of Philippine culture to be certain of that. The Philippines is an interesting case. It is a country in which because of socioeconomic conditions one should have

anticipated a strong demand for family planning, particularly given the high status of women and so on; at least the high accomplishments of women in educational terms.

*Q: Was that true at the lower levels of society?*

SINDING: Well, it was truer than in Indonesia or even in Thailand. Even in the rural areas most Philippine girls had a few years of primary education. The primary education system in the Philippines was very highly developed, and the people had an implicit faith in education; and in fact, there was compulsory primary education. Girls were pretty well educated; there weren't a lot of jobs for them when they finished. Male dominance and machismo were very strong in the Philippines, and that was one of the negative factors. But I also think Roman Catholicism was important. I think the Filipinos internalized the church to a sufficient degree so that church teaching became an important inhibiting factor. Many of them believed that it was a sin to use contraceptives and wouldn't do so for that reason. This was different from Latin America where I think people were inclined to take the teachings of the church with a grain of salt, particularly where they saw the teachings conflicting with their own interests. I think Catholicism was perhaps a more important feature in individual lives in the Philippines than what I had seen in Latin America. But I'm not really enough of a student to be very certain about these things. But I had no other way of explaining why the Philippines performed so much less successfully than its neighbors in family planning. The government didn't do a great job, but it didn't do an awful job. It may not have pushed as hard as Suharto and his lieutenants did in Indonesia, but they certainly pushed as hard as the Thais did at the level of advocacy and public policy. They didn't run the program as well as the Thais. The Thai program was magnificent; it was an integrated program; they delivered family planning through the Ministry of Public Health and gave it high priority. But the social conditions in the Philippines could have produced more of a demographic response to the availability of family planning services.

*Q: Was the program countrywide?*

SINDING: There were parts of the south where it couldn't be implemented because of an Islamic rebellion. But for the most part it was in every region and every province. It was certainly throughout Luzon, Sebu, Panay, and large parts of Mindanao and in the smaller islands and provinces. It was pretty much countrywide.

*Q: You said at the beginning that it would have gone better if it had been with the Ministry of Health, but it wasn't but, on the other hand, you implied that that would have been a very slow way to proceed. How did you see that connection?*

SINDING: Let me put it this way. When Ramos came to power many years later and put family planning into the Ministry of Health, he made PopCom strictly a policy and advisory group and gave the Ministry of Health full responsibility for family planning services. The program took off. The health ministry had the capacity, in fact, to do a good job of family planning with appropriate levels of political support. Ramos didn't suffer from the problem that Marcos and other previous presidents has, because he, himself, was not a Catholic, so he was prepared to take the church on on this issues and he did. He was in specific conflict with Cardinal Sin. He didn't worry about being excommunicated. It was in retrospect, I think that it wasn't as stark a problem



as it was in the subcontinent where there really wasn't a rural health system. You couldn't wait to build a rural health system in the subcontinent. In the Philippines there was a rural health system, and Marcos could have used it. It is true that family planning will get a relatively low priority, if it is viewed among one of several health service responsibilities of the Ministry. But, if it isn't, if it's made clear that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and that this is a very high priority, as was the case in Thailand, then being in the health ministry is not necessarily a disadvantage. It can have the great advantages of a delivery system that is already in place. I think that combination of having offered family planning services to the Health Ministry and giving much more responsibility to the private sector than happened after Marcos took over would have produced a much better outcome in the Philippines. Today I think contraceptive use in the Philippines is about 45.5 percent; so it is still not up to the level of Thailand.

*Q: Has the structure of the program changed?*

SINDING: It was advertised a lot, and it worked through the Health Ministry. The two key things that needed to happen, did happen. This was after I left. I can claim no contribution or responsibility for any of the good things that happened in the Philippines.

*Q: You planted a seed; I'll bet?*

SINDING: Well, I talked to people about what I thought; it may be that in a very indirect way I could have had some impact on the next generation of USAID people or even the Filipinos, but I doubt it.

*Q: You also mentioned that under your responsibility you had health and nutrition. You had programs in those areas?*

SINDING: We had two big pilot projects in health. Both were efforts to operationalize what was the big health theme of the day which was primary health care. One was called PUSH Panay Unified Services for Health which was designed by the late Jake Vanderflugt. It operated on the Island of Panay in the four provinces. And the other was BICOL Integrated Health Services; in Bicol province in the southern tip of Luzon. The PUSH project was very successful in large part because USAID and the central Ministry of Health put a lot of time and effort in working with the local political authorities. Everyone of the governors in the four provinces on Panay Island was committed to PUSH and put real effort into it real political support; talked to the mayors and local political authorities and encouraged them. It was a highly integrated activity that included the training of barangay (village) workers who in addition to providing a certain amount of promotive and preventive health services at the household level, also were responsible for implementing community safe water supply. It was a combined health services and safe water project.

I didn't stay long enough to be there when PUSH was evaluated for health impact. But my understanding is that the evaluation was very positive. Years later when Ramos took over the PUSH model it was not adopted but important components of it became part of the national health policy in the Philippines.

*Q: What was our input to the program; what did USAID do?*

SINDING: We basically paid all the cost of the training of the Barangay Health workers. Barangay is the Philippine term for village; the village health worker. The Barangay is the lowest administrative unit; it usually refers to a rural municipality or township.

So we paid for the training of the Barangay Health Workers, the technical assistance that went into the preparation of the curriculum for that training. We provided the first round of medical supplies which became subsequently the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. We paid for the engineering work and the pumps that were involved in the community water supply. That was about it. Existing facilities were used so we did not construct any. We may have paid for the upgrading of some of the facilities, but that was a minor item. It covered the entire island of Panay. I don't recall the dollar level but it was not an inconsequential program. The Bicol program on the other hand didn't work very well because the political authorities were never behind it. I paid less attention to the Bicol project. I went to Panay countless times; I loved the Panay project and paid a lot of attention to it. We had really good people in the Mission; there was a Philippine doctor named "Dodong" Capul that was his nickname; Rosendo Calpul was the primary project manager under the leadership of Joy RiggsPerla I think she is still the Director of the Office of Health in USAID here in Washington.

*Q: These were technical assistance people on the spot?*

SINDING: No, they were technical staff in the Mission in Manila but spent a lot of time in Panay. We didn't have anybody full time on the ground. We monitored the project from Manila, that was in part because the local people were so competent; they were really good. The Governor of Iloilo Province whose name I no longer remember was a real driving force. And then his Director of Planning, Alex Umadhay, were real enthusiasts for the PUSH project. And they really put their heart into it. That's what made the difference.

*Q: And you didn't have that in Bicol?*

SINDING: No the people in Bicol were pretty weak and not really enthusiastic about the project. The Bicol project never really amounted to much.

On the nutrition side, the USAID program in the Philippines was famous. The man who had been there for many, many years was named Butch Engle everybody called him Butch. He was an institution in the Philippines; he had been there for 2030 years. He had been a professor at Penn State; he was a professional nutritionist. He was the inventor of the "NutraBun." the Nutrabun was a concoction of various nutritionally wholesome foods which were first developed as an emergency food supply in typhoon situations where villages were just decimated by typhoons. NutraBuns would be sort of dropped in by helicopters. They provided all of the nutrients that an adult required for a 24 hour period. And they were good; they were very tasty; very dense, sweet. So people really loved NutraBuns; they were sort of famous as an emergency food supply. Out of that came a more serious effort to engage in nutrition planning; to do nutritional surveys; to do

weight and height measurement of infants and young children to try to identify the extent of under and malnutrition and try to come up with strategies to deal with it.

Both on the food production side and the compensatory feeding side. We supported the Nutrition Center of the Philippines, called the National Nutrition Center (NNC), colocated with POPCOM in one of these fancy building that Imelda had had built. Beyond that I don't recall much about our assistance in nutrition.

*Q: The nutrition program had an ebb and flow in the agency; it started before you came and then on an upswing...*

SINDING: Marty Forman was a powerful advocate within the Agency for nutrition. And some Mission Directors in some countries accepted that and started nutrition programs. But nutrition, more than any other subject that the Agency took up, fell between stools. You never knew whether to think of it as part of agriculture or part of health. Some people thought that nutrition really is a subset of the general problem of food availability which, in part, is a production problem and, in part, a distribution and pricing problem. Other people felt that targeted interventions through health systems to deal with cases of severe mal or undernutrition was the right way to go. The Agency never really resolved that problem. So nutrition always was kind of an orphan.

*Q: Let's go back a minute to the health program: was the population/family planning program connected to the health program at all? I'm trying to think about the interaction of the two programs.*

SINDING: I pushed very hard in the three years that I was there was for the people in PUSH to give a high priority to family planning. But always sensed that they were resistant. Filipinos never say no. One of the first things that you learn when you go to Asia is that "yes" has many meanings.

*Q: I learned that in Africa, too.*

SINDING: And learning to distinguish between when "yes" means "yes" and when "yes" means "no" is a real art. If I ever learned it, it was late in the game. I thought the advocacy I was giving to family planning was enthusiastically received when, in fact, they said what I wanted to hear and really didn't do very much. Panay is a religiously conservative area. They were worried that, if they pushed forward on family planning, it would jeopardize other things that they were trying to accomplish with the health program. They weren't hostile to family planning, but they never gave it the priority. And Dr. Vanderflugt, who designed it, with whom all of the preproject negotiations took place, had never pushed family planning particularly in the context of PUSH. Population and health were absolutely divided in the Mission. There was a Population Officer, who worked with POPCOM, and there was a Health Officer, who did whatever he did. When I got there I tried to bring the two together. In fact, I recall, at one point, having a conversation with people at POPCOM saying you know, in the long run, it really doesn't make sense to have parallel delivery systems. We ought to be thinking now about ways in which we can integrate. And maybe we could use PUSH and Bicol as areas in which we could experiment with

integration; let's have the outreach workers work with the Barangay Health Workers, and see if we can come up with a rational approach. The POPCOM people didn't want to hear anything about that; they were adamantly opposed to working with the health people. The tradition of separation was so well established before I got there that there was very little that I could do about. I blame Tom Niblock for that. Tom was the Mission Director when all this was really organized. It was on his watch and the people who worked for him that this rigid separate between population and health happened. It just became very difficult when I was there to undo this; it really didn't happen until the Minister of Health, whose name was Juan Flavio Velez, came into power. Flavio had been the head of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction in Cavite. It had originally been in Taiwan and moved to the Philippines later on. It was an integrated rural development laboratory. Flavio was head of health and later head of IIRR. He was very much a prointegration person as was Capul, the guy who worked for USAID. And so when Flavio became Minister of Health under Ramos, he basically broke this rigid separation between population and health and began to bring it together. By that time, USAID was more than ready to follow; the Ravenholt days and the days of strict separation in USAID were over as well. It was a different environment.

*Q: You mentioned that some of the elements of the work in Panay were picked up in the national policy; what were they?*

SINDING: The Barangay local health workers; having a local health worker who was trained in critical set of preventive and basic curative services. That was a very important part of what was carried over. And in the community water supply, the understanding that to sustain good health you had to have a source of clean water. Those both became part of the national health scheme.

*Q: For community water supply, were you able create desirable sustainable systems?*

SINDING: The engineers always thought it was the maintenance; the communities should take care of the wells. In my experience, we recognized that many of the barangays simply did not have the resources to maintain these system on their own. And so there needed to be a capacity on the part of the health system to repair wells when the pumps broke. That was built into the design of the project. The communities had primary responsibility for the maintenance facilities and had some training in doing that but there was a resource that they could call upon within the health program, within the central health office of PUSH to come and repair wells when things went beyond what they could do themselves. The water supply initiatives of the '80s often fell apart over the maintenance issue, which was, in part, financial and, in part, technical. PUSH was designed by people who recognized that issue. The Philippines was a sufficiently advanced economy so that you really could get the communities - and sufficiently well organized at the community level - so you really could get the communities to take responsibility. The Barangay Health Workers were first and foremost health educators; their responsibility was to help families understand what good health behavior meant. They gave lessons in good nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene and they were able to cope with acute respiratory infections; they gave tetanus toxoid; they did the weightforage charting of children. There were a lot of things that they could do to help families both monitor their own health and take the steps the families could take to ensure their health.

*Q: What was the hierarchy of supervision?*

SINDING: There was a clinic base of nurses and they were the first line of supervisors of the community workers, and there was a referral system up the line.

*Q: Were there community committees for health?*

SINDING: The Barangay Health Workers were selected by the communities through some sort of process of community involvement; they were not just people who were hired.

*Q: Not like the family planning workers?*

SINDING: Just the opposite; they were from the community. They were often young reasonably well educated people but different than family planning; they weren't talking about family planning and contraception. They were talking about things that were not sensitive. Whether there was a health committee to which they were responsible in the classic WHO model I don't recall, I don't think so.

*Q: Well, how about your experience in the Philippines generally. How did you find working there and working with the people?*

SINDING: It was my least favorite post.

*Q: Why was that?*

SINDING: Because of the corruption. James Fallows wrote a book a few years ago in which he called the Philippines a "damaged culture." It was a very controversial book and certainly a controversial term. But there is some truth to what he was saying. The combination of 300 years of Spanish colonialism and 50 years of Hollywood, produced a very strange kind of culture. It was a culture that was not genuinely Asian in some senses. It was heavily influenced by European culture and heavily influenced by North American culture. The Filipinos, in an important sense, didn't know who they were. In addition to that the Marcos regime was so thoroughly corrupt and the U.S. relationship to that regime was so complicated because of our strategic interests that I found it an uncomfortable place to work. I didn't find my counterparts, with some important exceptions, a particularly able or motivated group. I thought that a lot of what we were doing in the Philippines we would not have done had there not been strategic considerations. Certainly the aid levels would not have been as high; the dialogue would have been different. The U.S. was very cosy with Marcos and certainly overlooked human rights abuses and widespread corruption and mismanagement because Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base were so important to us; good relations with the government were important to us. That is not an environment in which it is comfortable to be an aid worker.

*Q: Were we pushing hard on the government and people on what we were trying to get done?*

SINDING: Yes, it had been. Mission Directors before Schwarzwalders were much more willing to be heavy handed; that wasn't Tony's style. He was much more deferential and wanted to have

a genuine dialogue; he didn't want to push the Filipinos around. Also the Ambassador during the time we were there was Dick Murphy, who was a consummate professional and whose style also was a more sophisticated nuanced style. I actually thought that the leadership on the U.S. side was pretty good given the circumstances. But the circumstances were that it was one of the last battle grounds of the Cold War. We desperately wanted to maintain those military bases. There were very powerful indigenous forces in the Philippines that wanted us out. \_Marcos was willing to work with us and to allow us to stay. So we were prepared to do whatever it took to maintain a good relationship with that government to avoid the sort of regime that would have probably kicked us out. Eventually it happened, but we only let it happen when it no longer really mattered to us.

*Q: Did you feel any pressure directly or indirectly from the Embassy in terms of what you were trying to do that might have had a political consequence, that might cause concern pushing family planning, for example?*

SINDING: No, the Embassy was pretty good actually. John Maisto was the head of the political section; I think he is very high up in the State Department; he was a sophisticated guy. The Ambassador was very good and supportive. Murphy was replaced by Michael Armacost who was also good to work with. I do recall that there was one point at which the Embassy asked us to become much more actively involved in reporting on our conversations with counterparts. We refused to do it. Tony communicated in whatever way he did, the unwillingness of the USAID staff to participate in intelligence gathering. That's the only instance that I recall of the Embassy asking us to do anything or behave in a way we regarded as inappropriate.

*Q: Even in the family planning area which was difficult and sensitive?*

SINDING: The people in the Embassy recognized how important the population issue was. They were prepared for USAID to be involved in something controversial because it was an important thing to do.

*Q: Ok; you ended up in the Philippines in what year?*

SINDING: January 1983. Not quite three years; we went out in late summer of 1980 and left in the early part of 1983. Monica stayed on until later in the Spring; she actually worked on the ESF program; she worked very closely with the first lady and her people. Marcos had put Imelda and her people in charge of ESF program. She was the Minister of Local Government and something else. A man named Jolly Benitez was her principal lieutenant, and the main counterpart with the Mission. Dennis Barrett, who was the Deputy Mission Director, was the principal guy on the USAID side working on the ESF program. Monica was working mainly on schools; a big school building program.

**LARRY COLBERT  
Consular Officer  
Manila (1981-1984)**

*Mr. Colbert was born in Ohio in 1940. He attended the Universities of Ohio and Missouri. After a tour in Turkey with the Peace Corps and a year as an assistant on Capital Hill, he entered the Foreign Service and was sent to Viet Nam as Regional Advisor. His subsequent postings, where he served as Consular Officer include: Ankara, Turkey, Oran, Algeria, Dublin, Ireland and Manila, Philippines. At Tijuana, Mexico, Madrid, Spain, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and Paris, France Mr. Colbert served as Consul General. Mr. Colbert was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November, 2006.*

*Q: In '81.*

COLBERT: Then I went to Manila.

*Q: So this was quite a contrast?*

COLBERT: I think the biggest change was dealing with the FSNs. I went from people who saw themselves and held themselves and act as if they were your equals. I mean obviously you were the boss but they weren't obsequies, not timid whereas in Manila everything is yes sir and Mme. and so on.

*Q: Did you find while you were in Dublin because obviously a local employee, a Foreign Service National is a best person to judge if somebody is going to come back and all.*

COLBERT: Much better judges than we ever were.

*Q: What?*

COLBERT: Much better judges than we ever were. They would have been much tougher...

*Q: The point is they have been dealing with this for a long time. They also know the society and...*

COLBERT: They know the accents, the mannerisms, they know everything.

*Q: They can look at somebody and see where they are coming from. Did you find that this was, that they shared this knowledge?*

COLBERT: Oh sure, I think if anything they thought that we were too naïve, too accepting, particularly me. I think had they been allowed to make the yes and no decision on their own we would have been better off. I think one of the great tragedies of post 9/11 era is that we have taken so much responsibility away from people who were in a good position to do good work for us. Obviously there are countries where trust is less but we didn't make any qualitative decisions we just sort of threw the baby out with the wash. We took away influence, we took away process and we lost in my view. But certainly no they were excellent.

Now I would say to go to Manila there the pressures are immense, corruption is endemic and certainly FSNs get involved in that so you have to be more careful. That said the ones that were honest; the ones that were dedicated had the same good judgment that I was talking about in Dublin.

*Q: You were in Manila from when to when?*

COLBERT: From '81 to '84.

*Q: What was your job?*

COLBERT: My first job I was the American Services branch chief. It was a very big job. I had four or five officers, two mid-level and two vice consuls that rotated. I had probably around 20-25 FSNs, a very, very big passport and citizenship unit. We had at that time, well there are lots of Americans of Philippine extraction who live there, there are a lot of Americans, who had decided to live there - retired military and so on. But the biggest single part of the workload was sort of the jetsam of our military presence.

At that time we had a big naval base in Subic and we had a big air force base at Clark. Both of these facilities date from well from the Spanish American era, they have always been bases at the two locations. Clark was a cavalry post long before it became an air base...

*Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1, of Larry Colbert.*

COLBERT: As I was saying, there was a big military presence and then the WESTPAC, the Western Pacific Fleet, was based from Subic Bay so you had a big fleet as well, carrier flotilla. These young men were young men and so consequently they liked young women and young women often became pregnant. So we had lots of babies to deal with. I think we had two categories: conceived-out born-out and conceived-out born-in. We had them by the score.

When I took over the job I inherited a mess that I didn't know about. We were very careful we being the post, about preventing fraudulent documentation of U.S. citizenship and preventing fraudulent IV, immigrant visa, petitions and preventing fraudulent issues of immigrant visas for immediate relatives. You say why am I talking about three things at the same time? They were all tied together and I came to discover in a short period of time that we had perhaps four, perhaps five hundred cases of pending reports of birth, which had never been finished, just pending. They were cases where the mother and the child were still in the Philippines and the punitive father was back in the States; there were cases when the mother and the husband were in the States and the child was still here; and indeed there were cases when the child had been documented but the mother had not been processed to immigrate

So I, as the American services chief, only dealt with the citizen/baby cases. To my way of thinking this was totally wrong. You can't have a pending report of birth case for two, three, four, five years, either the kid is or isn't. If he is, give him a birth certificate, give him a passport and let him go to the States with his father and hopefully with his mother. If he isn't, make that decision and make the father do an IV petition for the child and he (the child) can as a stepchild



or as an adopted child or whatever and get him and his mother to the States. One never questioned whether this was the mother, the question was whether this was the father. It's hard to believe, we had this room and I just spread all these cases on the floor out and I got one vice consul to assist me in one afternoon. I said, "Now we're going to approve or disapprove all of these cases in the next three weeks." He thought I was crazy. I said, "No, we are going to do it. We are going to take the ones that seem to be most approvable and deal with them and then we are going to work our way back. We are going to clean this entire backlog out because these people have been waiting forever, this is inhuman." "Well, we can't do this case because we want to go to some Samar to see if Mrs. Smith had a previous Philippine husband before she married Mr. Smith in which case this may not be valid, blah, blah, blah." "Well why haven't we gone to Samar?" "Well we can't go to Samar because the Communists control it." "How long have the Communists been there?" "Well, six years." "So, and this case has been pending four years?" "We are waiting for the Communists to leave." "Huh?" This is sort of mindless double think. "Well here's the case we have now where the IV petition was approved for the mother, the immigrant visa petition was issued for the mother but the child was left behind." "Well, we're not certain that the father is really the father, it could have been this other GI." I see, "Well, the mothers in the States, the father's in the States and she had the child, right? He was in the Philippines at the time the child was conceived?" "Yes." "So let's just assume if they say that it's their child and it came out of her body it is their child. What do you think?" "Ahhhhhh." So in the end, kicking and screaming I think probably one of the best things I did in my entire Foreign Service, something that probably nobody ever noticed except for some families was that we got rid of the backlog.

We approved most of them. What you are really talking about in essence is whether this child goes as a stepchild on an IV or goes on a passport. But if this is her child and she is married to this GI the child should be with her. So we said we are either going to approve them this way or then we march down and sometimes we find case where we had approved the passport for the child, in essence recognizing the marriage, but the immigration service had not recognized the marriage so they did not approve the petition. Sometimes they had done the petition, we had done the passport but the IV section had not done the IV. So I set upon myself to rectify this and made some enemies in the process particularly the IV chief who was a bit of a twit but we got it done, and I was very proud of that. It seemed to me to be the humane thing to do.

*Q: This is, of course, what consular work is about. You got these Senate regulations which makes sense...the main thing is what does logic say?*

COLBERT: Well the logic...is this her child? Is there any doubt about that and so on? I'm losing a lot in the translation because it was complex and there were a lot of cases. "Well you know there is one-week difference here, well maybe he wasn't at the time of conception." I said, "We are arguing about one week?"

Ah, case in point, this is classic. I had a passport section chief at this time who had been sent from visas to passports before my arrival because they felt that she was much too influential able by the people who liked to influence her. So they moved her from visas to passports. So I inherited her. Very quickly I found out that these determinations of citizenship that she was doing on these military cases were all over the place. I wasn't even seeing them because they

were going straight in. When I started seeing them I said, "This is awful." So I go down to see my boss Vernon McAninch and I said, "We have a problem with X, she is not really doing good work. In fact I think that although she is African-American herself that she is treating African-Americans unfairly, military and she is treating a lot of people unfairly." He didn't want to hear it, didn't want to deal with it because this particular person had come into the Service laterally. She had as I say in Spanish "Enchufe" (political connections) back in Washington; he simply didn't want to deal with it, I couldn't get his attention. Very frustrating. So I was in a situation that I had to watch things I shouldn't be watching constantly.

One day, I am sitting at my desk and this man who probably weighed soaking wet about 145 pounds, maybe less, came dashing past my Philippine secretary into my office and says to me, "So I can't get it up, huh? What do you know about that?" I look up and he said, "How dare you say that I can't get it up." I'm thinking, "What is this?" It turned out that this guy was a veteran of the Second World War who had gone into a restaurant in New York City and had a really nice meal and then asked to see the cook because he thought that food must have been cooked by a Philippina and met this Philippina, who was much younger than he, and married her and they had a child. Then he retired and they came to the Philippines. In due course a second child was born. He came in to document this child, and this lady that I mentioned had told him that he was too old to father a child and he was not capable of fathering...this was not his child. Well, when you think about it he was up there in years, but on the other hand, they already had one child, no question about that. They had been married for a while and this was the second child, the first child was documented. This would be for most of us a ground ball to shortstop and Jeter would have just scooped it up and thrown it to first base, but she had sent him away saying she wasn't going to do this. So, I thought to myself, "Well Mr. Smith, I said, I can fix your problem with a signature, not a problem and give you my sincere apologies. But you see, you are part of a broader problem I'm having now." I said, "The lady you complained about I don't control her; I was given her, I got her, she is in that job and she is doing to other people what she did to you." I said, "Now, if you could forget that you saw me and see that long hall way down there and go down that long hall way. At the end of that hallway is my boss the consul general so if you could work up another head of steam and say to him what you said to me, maybe we could solve this problem for everybody else." My Philippine secretary is looking at me because Vernon McAninch is a pretty wild person and I'd only really started working for this larger than life person who we can talk about more. But this guy is sharp, he picks up on this and he said, "You want me to tell him what I told you?" I said, "With as much drama as you can make." He is gone. His secretary is named Carol something or other and she is very attractive, thirtyish, American, well-put together blond. So he just bursts right past her I love these days before 9/11. And so he goes into Vernon McAninch and says the same drill but he adds, he said, "I'll tell you what Mr. consul general." He says, "Bring that blond bimbo in and put her on the couch. I'll show you what I can do." Of course, the guy is 70 years old and she tells me about it because she finds it very funny and totally McAninch is totally non-plussed, he didn't know what to say. This man is right in his face shouting at him. So maybe an hour or so Vernon McAninch, all 275, 250 pounds of him comes down with his big stomach, walks in my office and says, "Larry, I think we may have a problem in your citizenship unit and we have to manage to transfer the lady in charge someplace else. But I heard the whole thing that took place in the CG's office, because Carol came back later and told me that she was out there just laughing like crazy because this guy was really in the boss's face and telling him what for.

But the American citizenship service thing was interesting. There were lots of interesting cases. One case comes to mind. I got a phone call that Ambassador Armacost was really agitated because he had gotten this very strong Congressional letter on a consular issue some how it had gotten to him directly, how we let that happen I don't know, Congressionals on consular issues should never go directly to ambassadors because they don't know how to deal with them and I think you will probably agree. But this was about an American who disappeared in Mindanao. This Senator was saying not enough had been done and on and on and on. McAninch calls me and says, "What about this?" I'd only been there maybe a year, I'd never heard of this case so I write down the name and go back to my protection people and they say, "Oh, that case." (Blowing sound.)

*Q: Blowing off the dust off the file.*

COLBERT: The dust off the file, yeah. The person had disappeared something like six years ago, six years before. He had gone off on his own from the States and wandered around Japan for a while and then went to Mindanao where there is always, and at that time in particular, was a struggle between the Muslims and the Christians - it is Indian country, and he had disappeared. Well he didn't check in with the embassy, we didn't even know he was in the country until his family asked us to look for him. Well, five years or six years ago we had tried to find him and couldn't find him.

Well in the meantime apparently over time a head of steam built up and this Senator wanted us to do something. So the Ambassador being new in his job as ambassador wanted something done. I go to the meeting in the bubble and everybody is scratching their head or other parts trying to decide what to do. I'm just a fly on the wall; I'm only the branch chief. So they go around the room, around the room everybody was saying this was very serious because he's a very important Senator, we had to do something. I said, "May I make a suggestion?" There was a sort of who asked you to speak sort of look. I said, "Why don't you send me to find him?" They said, "Send him to find him?" I said, "Sure, you send me, I look, you report that I am looking, I come back." I said, "You want to do something? Send me." OK. So they agree and so we call up the NBI, the Philippine version of the FBI, the National Bureau of Investigation. NBI, bring me over to their office and they pull out their file, a little thin file on this disappearance which occurred God knows how many years before, blow the dust off, we look at it. Then the next day an NBI agent and I fly down to Mindanao to Zambawanga where we were met by two more people with an armed escort and we go to their headquarters, look at their file, we drive around the city looking for the man for four or five hours and then we come back and they say now, it is time for lunch. We go to lunch, have a nice lunch and go back to headquarters and they say, "Well, our view is he was either killed by insurgents, Muslim insurgents, he was killed by accident by us, that is to say the government forces, or he was eaten by a crocodile. Our preferred version after study they tell me was that we think he was probably wandering around and got eaten by a crocodile but we have no trace of him." I can say that I did look for him. So I came back and I wrote up my report and said I had gone down and looked at all the files and we had looked in the city of about two million people - "my two to three-hour search was extensive." That the police reported that it was either A, B or C and in their professional view was it was C, which we put in the letter to the Senator which was the last thing the Senator wanted to report to his constituents

that is “your son was likely eaten by a crocodile.” So then it was all done. To think that you are going to find a person who disappeared for six years in the jungles in Mindanao is insane but hey, I was very proud of the fact that I had found a solution to that problem.

*Q: Well then how did you find...you know the Philippines is ripe with corruption? American Services there are a lot of things we do including...did you have federal benefits under you?*

COLBERT: No, that’s the only country in the world where there is a federal benefits office from Baltimore and a veteran’s benefits office from...no, no we didn’t do that. There was passport fraud; surely, people would pretend to be citizens when they weren’t, that was a problem. We had a lot of baby fraud, people coming in saying this was their baby trying to circumvent the immigrant visa process either because they didn’t want to take the time or they could qualify or some reason.

One particular case I remember very well a woman came in and she had given birth in one of the other islands, not Luzon the big island, where I was, but another island. She was a professional woman probably in her early forties this was her first child. She had flown to the States; she told us that she just happened to be there on business when she was nine months pregnant that she was delivered by a mid-wife with no doctor present. The child was the color of caramel and she was the color of ivory. Now there is just a little bit of reason there to be dubious, no? But she was very insistent this was her child so we said, “Well, if you will go to the panel physician and let him examine you to verify that you have given birth then we will talk, or if you would like to nurse the child in the presence of one of my female staff then we will consider that. But, barring that it is not on.” Well you will get the calls from the Senators and Congressmen saying, “Why are you being like this?” But I said, “Madame, this is really not on. Now, if you want to acknowledge that you have adopted this child we can take you down to immigration service and they can start the process and you can probably arrange to take the child back with you in a month or so if you want to prepare three weeks, whatever it is going to take. But no, we are not going to just passport this child.” You just can’t, I mean it’s clearly fraud so we did have cases like that.

There was a lot of fraud. Philippine’s are hard-working, nice warm people but they are also determined to get what they want to get by whatever means are necessary. For me fraud was not as much of a problem on the ACS side. I only did that for a year and I thought that when I had finished my year the operation was working fairly well. I was happy with it, we had redone this and redone that and we had changed things. I am sure that probably I was conned sometimes. I probably made some judgments that were probably wrong you can’t right all the time in this business...it’s like being a surgeon, you are going to make mistakes. But I don’t think the fraud was as omni present as it is on the other side, the visa side.

*Q: What happened to you did you move?*

COLBERT: Aw, that is what I am coming to. I was one year into the job and Vernon McAninch called me and said, “I want you to be the NIV (non-immigrant visa) chief.” I said, “I don’t really want to be the NIV chief; I’m happy where I am”. He let it slide. Then several months later he had promised David Lyon that David Lyon could go from NIVs to IVs but there was a new IV

chief coming in and had been assigned to IVs. Everybody wanted to be the IV chief because it was a 01 job and the others were 02 jobs. I was perfectly happy to stay as the ACS chief, because I didn't want the grief that goes with being the NIV chief. But he found himself in a bind so he got the IV chief designate to agree to be NIV chief for a period of time and then get the IV job so he had to move David somewhere else. So David had to be ACS chief and I had to move.

David said to me once being the NIV chief in Manila is like having a migraine all day long and that's probably true. It is an immense factory, and the refusal rate is probably six-five, seventy-five percent. One friend of mine, Ed Wilkinson once said that, "Probably in most cases you can flip a coin and give a visa to every other person and you'd probably come out about right in terms of what you're doing." Certainly there are qualified applicants who are going here for legitimate reasons and coming back but there are a hell of a lot more who just want to get here. There is tremendous pressure on you, tremendous pressure from every direction, from the political section, from the station chief, from the DCM, from the ambassador from the DAO. When AID stopped giving out money in the Philippines the only thing we had left to give away was visas I think so everybody thought that their way to get what they wanted was to press you to issue visas. So there is a lot of that. There is tremendous fraud, more fraud than you can imagine. There are people who rent watches, they rent clothes, you get professional actors, and you get substitutions.

Our best story is this person who applied many, many times for a visa and was refused each time. These are pre machine-readable fees so you could apply as often as you like, there was no charge, just your time. This person applied many, many times and he was refused appropriately every time. Finally in pure disgust he said, "Mr. vice consul, I bring you more documents each time I come here." He asked, "What would it take, what do I need to get a visa from this place?" The vice consul said, "From you a letter from Jesus Christ." The next day he is back and he's got a letter from Jesus Christ co-signed by God. Didn't get the visa but no we asked for it and we got it.

Talk about fraud. Every immigrant needs to have a form from the police department saying that he is not a criminal, not a felon. There are zillions of felons in the Philippines, their prisons are full of them, walk on the street and you will probably be relieved of your valuables by one of them. There are all kinds of violence so there are criminals. But, every single person who ever brought in a police certified from the Philippine Bureau of Investigation had a clean police record. Why is that? Well, probably for the same reason that Philippine policemen have to get kids through college and put food on the table. We were just giving them a profit center. I don't know whether there was a greater price for a murderer than there was for a kidnapper but I never saw one so I don't know. No, fraud was horrendous.

Pressures were really, really awful. I really, really, really...well I will give you a case in point. I'm in the job perhaps a week and the phone rings and it is the defense attaché an Air Force colonel. "Are you the new NIV chief?" "Yes." "Well there's been some mistake." "What's that?" "Well I sent some visa referrals over and they came back marked PI, what does that mean, PI?" I said, "That means personal interview required." He said, "Oh, you can't do that." I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "You can't do that." I said, "Number one, I didn't do that, the vice consul did that and number two we can do that. That mean these people have to come in and be

interviewed.” He said, “You don’t understand, I am the defense attaché.” I said, “Yes, and?” He said, “Well, I had an agreement with your predecessor, everything I send over would be issued without question.” I said, “Well, I find that hard to believe but I’m not going to question your word but he is gone and I am here. They have to come in.” He said, “Well, I will be calling your boss about that.” I said, “More power to you.” I’m thinking to myself, now if that’s the way it is then I am out of here because I don’t want to leave here in handcuffs. So I go in and tell the consul general the conversation. I’m no more there than the phone rings and it’s this good colonel on the phone and he said, “Yes, yes, well colonel,” he said, “I have this agreement with General Smith at Clark Air Force Base, I don’t tell him when to fly his F-16s and,” he says, “no piss ass colonel is going to tell my staff when to issue visas. Are we clear on that?” That was when I liked working for the man.

There were other times I have to admit when I didn’t like working for the man because those that he could issue easily he issued and those that he couldn’t issue he would bring to me. I dreaded it when I would see the mayor of Manila come with his entourage of people knowing that it was visas, visas and more visas. Visas all the time. I don’t think I ever knowingly issued a visa that I shouldn’t have in those circumstances but it certainly was really draining and very hard work.

In some respect and this sounds like heresy the hardest part of being the NIV chief was the overturns. That’s to say issuing the ones that had been denied because you’ve got eight, ten vice consuls who are lied at constantly or given false documents constantly who are really on the firing line and you are well removed from the firing line. It is such a big place that there is not only an NIV branch chief there is a deputy NIV branch chief and then there are people between you and the vice consular. It is a very big factory. So when it finally gets to you it’s gotten to you because somebody has made a fuss and you have to go over it in some detail.

There was one case I remember in particular. This woman had been refused innumerable times, innumerable times. Finally, the director of the Philippine FBI called me personally on the phone. Now this was a person I have to take a phone call from, it would be like J. Edgar Hoover calling you on the phone. You can’t ignore him and if you did ignore him you are going to get whacked on from above anyway, you’ve got to take the call. So he is calling me about this case so I pull the file. It is thick, God knows how many refused applications but I look at it and I really don’t understand. Here is a woman who is middle class, a wife with two or three kids, husband has a good job, and she knows the director of the Philippine FBI. What is it, what is going on here? But I know if I talk to her and I over turn this refusal I’m going to get a lot of grief from my subordinates who hate it when you over turn an issue on them. So in she comes, she is a nice lady and obviously middle-class, well dressed, well spoken and she wants to go to California to see a relative and do some other thing she wants. So I said, “Well how long do you propose to stay?” She said, “Maybe three weeks, not any longer than three weeks.” I said, “Well look, if I issue this visa to you will you come back here and see me and show me you are back?” She said, “Sure.” I said, “We will pick a date.” So we picked a date, a bit of a copout I agree but I couldn’t understand why we hadn’t issued it to begin with and I was getting a lot of flack so I said OK, I will play God and issue the visa. So I issue it and oh, the flack I get from my staff, I’m cutting their legs off, I’m not being supportive, all that grief that you get from the vice consul’s when you overturn their refusal, one of the reasons I wished I was still in ACS. So two weeks later the woman is back and comes in to see me. I say, “You’re back?” She said, “You know, I missed my

children so..." She said, "You have a pretty country and nice people but," she said, "I missed my husband, I missed my friends." She said, "I spent more money on phone calls back home than I spent on the airline ticket." So I mean there are those cases.

*Q: Did you find that you had a...I think one of the most difficult things would be to get your troops, I'm thinking the vice consuls up and at them and not getting so jaundiced and all and almost acting as a psychiatrist.*

COLBERT: It was a mind-numbing job. They had to do 120 interviews a day. I would image that probably 80 percent of the people were lying to them. We have the saying if a person gave you an income tax return that showed that you earned money enough to qualify it was probably fraudulent and they didn't qualify for a visa. If they gave you an income tax statement that they didn't earn enough money it was probably fraudulent meaning they earned a lot more and didn't pay any taxes and they should get a visa. I mean, it is sort of strange there but nobody in the Philippines who had anything paid any income tax, they all provide false returns. So there was no such thing as a true return. If it showed low income it meant it was fraudulent and if it showed high income it meant it was fraudulent. So, no it was very hard to get them geared up. I think what you could do is write them good reviews, what you could do is get them a break to do something else, what you could do is find reasons to get them away from doing that and be supportive when you could, sometimes you couldn't. I think for me it was a learning process. I think probably I was a better supervisor having done that than I was before.

*Q: I'm sure you were it's the fire in the furnace.*

COLBERT: Basically that is it; I think working for Vernon McAninch was an education in a positive sense, and an education in a negative sense. I think he crossed the line not for money but I think he crossed the line for favors, I think he crossed the line...I think he stayed in the Philippines too long. In terms of organization and getting things done he was a genius. He basically saw what you were capable of doing and put you in a position to make the thing work. I admired the man and disliked the man. I thought he was incredibly insecure, you probably don't know, he started off as a guard, he was in the army at near the end of the Second World War in Rome, and he became a guard in Rome. Then he became a file clerk, literally a file clerk when we had Americans doing that sort of manual stuff, got a degree in Michigan while working at the vice consul or even as a file clerk I don't know in one of those mini-consulates we used to have along the border. From very modest beginnings with a community college education essentially became a minister counselor. But I think he had deep insecurities and you had to be very careful around him because you didn't want to touch on those insecurities.

A friend of mine and I used to go to lunch maybe once a week or once every other week in the Hilton dining room. There was a Hilton Hotel maybe four blocks, three blocks from the embassy; it was a way to get away. We would go over there and have a light lunch in a nice environment, everything being inexpensive in the Philippines you could afford to do that. I think one of the attractions was that the line stewardess was one of the most attractive woman I had ever seen in my life, nothing ever untoward ever happened or we wanted to happen but having been served by this lovely young Philippine who knew us by name and knowing the manager of the hotel would come over it was nice. I got to know the manager of the hotel, he was British and

he gave me a name plaque, Table Reserved Especially for Larry Colbert. So whenever I came there he put this down on my table. That was a small thing, we are talking I don't know five bucks, this was the Philippines everything was cheap, but it was nice. Whenever I was going there my secretary would call and so Ed and I or Dick and I whatever would just go over there and we'd have our little nameplates on it and we'd eat. No visa applicants ate there so we would be alone for an hour or 45 minutes or whatever.

One day I am there with one of my friends, one of my fellow "consular managers" and Vernon McAninch comes in with his entourage and he is there with the movers and shakers, of course, the big cheeses, the people who have lots of money. He comes over to our table and he sees this thing with Table Reserved For Larry Colbert. He was struck, "Why do you have this? Why don't I have one of these? I'm the consul general, you're just a...why do you have this?" I said, "Tom, the manager of the company, would be happy to give you one." "But he gave you one, you didn't have to ask." I'm thinking this is crazy this is juvenile. So I take the general manager aside and say, "Look, if you want to massage this mans feelings, give him one." So he went back several weeks later and there was a Reserved for the Consul General Vernon D. McAninch, Jr. To me it was sort of silly because it meant nothing. The only reason I got it was because I occasionally ate there and they liked me. But I wasn't hobnobbing with these multi-millionaires who did so.

This brings me to another case in point, the famous video. You don't know about the famous video?

*Q: Is this the one in diapers?*

COLBERT: No, no diapers.

*Q: I mean, the one with the baby?*

COLBERT: Shorts. When I was still in ACS a sister-in-law or brother-in-law of Marcos came in to the ACS unit, brought in by the political section or by some section. The son was going to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and could I arrange for a referral so the kid didn't have to stand in line. Well, the father was the most famous architect in the Philippines, the son's going to MIT, they are richer than Cristos, this is a no-brainer, this is not a problem. Now, of course now, post 9/11 you probably couldn't do that but in those days you could, and so I did a referral, no big deal, you get accepted to MIT it tells you something anyway. So the kid didn't have to be interviewed, big deal. I thought nothing of it. That afternoon this giant cake appears. I mean I'm talking maybe four-foot square cake several layers high, this is to me to thank me for doing this. I'm thinking do I need this? You can't send back a cake, you can't, but we do have ravenous FSNs; we had probably 70 FSNs working there so we just took the cake in. And I scribbled off a little note thank you for the cake the staff really enjoyed it. I thought that was done.

So then I go home and my wife says, "What the devil are we going to do with this?" There in the middle of the living room is 110 lbs of cane sugar in a bag. You think sugar? Why sugar? Well, one of Marcos' cronies had gotten control of the sugar market and exported all the sugar, so sugar was not to be had in the Philippines. The country was producer of sugar and it was gone.



So sugar was in great demand, and now I had 110 lbs of sugar which I didn't want, a strange gift wouldn't you say? What to do with the sugar? There was a Vietnamese refugee camp so I called the person who ran refugee service for AID and said, "I have 110 lbs of sugar for you." "Ah, really?" I mean there was no sugar, absolutely none. So they took the sugar away and I wrote a note back to Mrs. whatever her name was and thanked her very much for her donation. I didn't know that she knew that I was collecting sugar for the Vietnamese refugees but I appreciate very much her donation. Those sorts of things are real traps for you and you have to watch them, I don't know.

*Q: You were talking about the video?*

COLBERT: Oh, video. Thank you for bringing me back to the as the French say "retournons à nos moutons" (sic), or get back on subject! The next thing Mrs. Locsin (that was her name I now recall) did for me cake, sugar notwithstanding was she called me up, no she came in to see me and she said she had put me on the Malacañang guest list. Malacañang is the presidential palace in the Philippines and she had put me on the guest list. I said, "Mrs. Locsin, I'd like another favor." Now she is thinking, "Ah, he really is corrupt he's going to ask for money now." I said, "I'd like you to take me off the guest list." She said, "Don't you like the Marcos'?" Actually I didn't but I wasn't going to say so. I said, "Actually no, it's not an issues of like or dislike, I have to run this section here and I have to come to work every morning at 8:00 and I work until 5 o'clock and I am very tired. The parties in the Malacañang, if you get invited to them, you have to go, it's protocol and the parties don't start until 11 or 12 o'clock at night and they are not over until Mrs. Marcos leaves sometimes at 3:00 in the morning." I said, "And they are often several nights a week. My wife and I have small children, I am not a party person so I don't want to be on the guest list." "Oh." So she took me off. I never got invited. I was never in Malacañang in my entire life. When Marcos fell many of my distinguished colleagues in other branches of the government including my late boss Mr. McAninch were seen dancing with Mrs. Marcos and partying and making general, well having generally a good time, I will edit myself here. I avoided that fate and was very happy of it.

*Q: I remember being of the consul profession myself and McAninch was known as one of the big wheelers and dealers but also as you say really a distinguished manager. But he was certainly tainted rather badly by the Philippines, as was another later consul general.*

COLBERT: Actually several.

*Q: Several, I mean because of this...did you feel like you were walking on eggs or were you able to...or were you talking about being tainted by the odor of money?*

COLBERT: Well, it is very, very hard. I think I left there with no taint, I certainly hope so, I was never investigated, never had any reason to be investigated but certainly there is tremendous pressure on you. I think the hard thing is you can go one way, which is react to all this adoration, accept all these favors and obviously there is no free lunch. You can go that direction. You can go the other direction and just say I'm going to stay in my office, I'm going to say no to everybody, everything is rigid and I'm not going to look at anything. Neither one really works because if you are in that job you have to be available – out there. You've got to make sometimes

decisions, which are difficult, which at times make your vice consuls angry because you think they are wrong, which at times make your upper level bosses angry because they think they are right. Despite the pressures, you have to do what you believe is right. What is the best of a bad sort of solution? I feel sympathy for the people running this Iraq policy; they said there are no good answers. I think sometimes when you are NIV chief in a high fraud post there are some decisions that...but I think the key is not doing anything because of other considerations which benefit you. I mean sometimes you have to make a decision, which makes you uncomfortable, but as long as you are doing it for reasons which are not personally benefiting you, if that makes any sense to you, and it's hard. God only knows when David Lyon said it was like having a migraine all the time it is true. You can't go anywhere without being accosted.

My last week or so in the Philippines people were coming out of the woodwork to get their last visa renewal, or get their last problem to my...all the influential people were trying to get at me. Now these are not the people off the street, they can't get to me but these are all the movers and shakers. I mean people were coming to my house and so we had about two weeks to go and our children had been sent off early to stay with their aunt in California. So I am lamenting this problem to the general manager of the Hilton, my friend, he said, "Come stay with us for a week." He said, "Just come, I will comp you a room and you just hide." So my wife and I tell the maid who lives in we are gone. "Where are you going?" "You don't know. We'll come back to get our suitcase. We are out of here." I don't tell the consul general where I am, I don't tell my secretary, we just go to the Hilton. So we stay in the Hilton three or four nights, and the general manager of the Sheraton calls me up who also is my friend. He says, "So what's wrong with the Sheraton that you're staying in the Hilton?" I said, "Well, we had to get away from all these people, I wasn't getting any rest, my wife was being driven crazy people coming to our house." He said, "Well, I talked to Bill and he agreed that you can stay with us for the last three days. So I am sending a car over for you now and you are coming to the Sheraton." So I tell my wife, "We are moving to the Sheraton." She says, "Whatever." So we move to the Sheraton.

Now we are leaving on Sunday right? We are now at the Sheraton. My wife is not a morning person. I get up Saturday morning I go to the barbershop. Nobody knows I'm in the Sheraton except my wife and she is sleeping with me, - to keep everybody from bugging me for the last minute favor, right? In fact, I even told people that I was not allowed to issue visas for the last two weeks to get away from this, but still the calls. So I go down to the barbershop in the Sheraton get all lathered up and am getting the whole nine yards, I am happy. I am leaving the next day; I've done my three years. The phone rings the barber picks up and says, "Are you Larry Colbert?" "Yes." I say on the phone, "Hello dear," thinking the only person who knows I'm in the barbershop in the Sheraton is my wife who is in the Sheraton too. Nope, it was an associate member of the Philippines Supreme Court. He had a really funny nickname Dindon I think or whatever, but it was him. I said, "Mr. Justice, how did you find me?" He said, "What's the use of being in the Supreme Court if I can't find somebody when I want to?" He said, "My wife and I were having a party and we'd like you to come. We are sending a car around in an hour." Now, I mean he didn't want anything and on a Saturday afternoon if I'm leaving on Sunday he isn't getting anything but that tells you how the system works. How in God's name did he find me? A very nice man but...

*Q: Well did you have a concern about bribery with your young officers but also in particularly with the male officers but not necessarily limited to that to the sex angle? Because as I recall, some of the problems of our senior consular people they had liaisons that lead to...anyway there was a sex problem.*

COLBERT: They had loose zippers. I'm not aware of any vice consuls who got in trouble that way. Certainly a few of our senior officers got in trouble and there was always that threat. I think, for example, McAninch, first of all, he stayed five years, which is crazy, I don't think you should stay at that post for more than three years. Second of all, I think you have to bear in mind that all of these people who kowtowed to you and think you are amusing, handsome, wonderful and grand really don't think that at all, they like the fact that you can push a button and create a visa or issue a passport. So you have to bear that in mind that most of these people really aren't your friend. They are just somebody who want to get access to you. These young women who may be throwing themselves at you aren't really attracted to your good looks or other attributes, they may be attracted to your work related attributes. In my case, I was deathly afraid of my wife so I was on the straight and narrow.

*Q: A wife is a handy asset to help you.*

COLBERT: If I had gone there as a single man I almost certainly would have had a girlfriend. I mean it is human nature. I can see assigning me there at 80 years old I would probably be resurrected one way or the other because of the temptations. Luckily I went there married and intending to stay that way.

*Q: One last question. Although you were obviously immersed in your business which was all consuming, what were you picking up though from country team meetings or other things about the Marcos's and all?*

COLBERT: I think that when I arrived the embassy was perhaps with the exception of a couple mid-level officers were living in a fool's paradise. They were living in the same fools paradise that the White House was living in. I arrived at the beginning of the Reagan administration and the policy was then that poor Jimmy Carter and all his human rights agitation didn't understand the Marcos's are our friends and so on and so forth and so leave him alone. The chancery halls had big pictures of Marcos, from a state visit back to the States to see Reagan. The ambassador was often with Marcos and no bad words were said about Marcos. The Philippines were fed up with Marcos, Philippine's hated Marcos. There was clearly a disconnect between upper levels of the embassy and what was going on except for a few people who were trying to report otherwise.

I was there when in fact I was in Taipei visiting my mother-in-law, and we were slated to have dinner with General Ramos's father who was the ambassador to Nationalist China at the time. The son, General Ramos, was the chief of staff of the Army at the time and Ambassador Ramos, who was in his seventies, was very late for dinner. When he arrived he said, "I won't apologize you know why I am late." Well we didn't know why he was late. The reason he was late was that Aquino had been murdered in the airport that same day. I was in Manila at the time of the funeral. I left just after the funeral; it was clear then that Marcos' days were numbered. I think

even Armacost came around in the end. I don't know whether he believed or he was following instructions.

But it's such a big embassy and if you are just a branch chief you don't really... I mean I didn't go to country team, there was a deputy consul general. I was deputy consul general acting some of the time. I worked with some very talented people; David Lyon was very talented. We didn't get along well because I resented the fact that I had been jerked out of ACS to be the NIV chief so he could be the IV chief. But the branch chiefs were good; I think the deputy consul general Ed Wilkinson was very good. He was actually after you in Seoul.

*Q: Yeah, I visited Ed.*

COLBERT: I mean Ed is a very solid guy. From my perspective, a lot of work and nice life style, nice friends, a pleasant three years but it was time to leave after three years.

*Q: Just a couple quick questions. When you were doing citizenship services how did you find the prison system of justice with vis-à-vis Americans in the end?*

COLBERT: Well, like any third-world country there is the process for those that have, and there is the process of those who have not. The Americans who were in jail in the Philippines mostly were on drug charges. I don't think anybody was there who was innocent of anything. I mean I never met a guilty person in prison nor have you but my impression was that those who professed innocence probably were professing falsely.

*Q: Observing, where did the Philippine's head for in the States? Did you see any particular patterns or jobs or...?*

COLBERT: There is a place called Daly City, which is just south of San Francisco near the airport and in the windows it says, "One speaks English here." Tagalog is the preferred language in Daly City. Daly City has more Philippines than any other place in the States. That's sort of where they go to start, just like the Irish would migrate to Boston, they go to Daly City in the San Francisco area.

**ULRICH A. STRAUS**  
**Philippine Country Director**  
**Washington, DC (1982-1984)**

*Ulrich A. Straus was born in Germany in 1926 and, after some time in Japan, his parents settled in the United States. He served in the U.S. Army and attended the University of Michigan. Mr. Straus joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and served in Japan, Germany, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.*

*Q: This was 1982-84 when you were Country Director.*

STRAUS: Right. The situation in the Philippines was a mess. I inherited a mess. It was a mess in the sense that the security situation was bad and getting worse. The NPA, the New Peoples Army, was getting stronger as the government of Marcos was becoming more ruthless. There were some assassinations that were rather gross, human rights violations, the economy was in a tailspin. So things were not happy there.

*Q: When you took over the Desk. Again you were the new boy. What was our attitude at that time towards the Marcos regime that you were getting from the people you were talking to in Washington?*

STRAUS: I think the general attitude was that we weren't very happy with Marcos, we saw a lot of the things he was doing wrong, but we could play ball with him and there didn't seem to be anybody who could topple him from power. There didn't seem to be any organization in the Philippines capable of doing that. This was certainly the feeling among many Filipinos as well. I had the feeling, particularly as we got into 1983, that if reforms were going to be made it was going to have to be Marcos who made them. And this was said by some members of the opposition as well. That was one thing.

I remember talking to Raul Manglapus, who was the Foreign Minister for Mrs. Aquino later on but at that time was in exile in Washington, and his line was essentially this. He said, "Rick, you Americans brought us democracy. Marcos has taken it away from us. It is your responsibility to restore it." It is very typically Filipino to say that and to mean that. My efforts to disabuse him of this and say, particularly after the Aquino assassination, "If you Filipinos took the initiative then I think American sympathy and support would not be lacking." But that was not really the Filipino way. It was on my watch that Aquino was assassination and that came as a real shock.

*Q: Everybody knew about his going back.*

STRAUS: He talked to us. My deputy, John Maisto, knew a great deal about the Philippines. He had served four years at the Embassy there and was the fellow most knowledgeable about domestic affairs in the Philippines. He had known the Aquinos. He had known Mrs. Aquino. So they had talked to him from Boston and he indicated that he wanted to go back. I think he probably wanted to go back because he had heard that Marcos was ill and perhaps more ill than he had been before and he wanted to be there when he died. He wanted our advice as to what might happen to him. We shared, I guess the advice of most people, including many Filipinos, that most likely he would be incarcerated again. And he was willing to take that chance. It really didn't occur to us...

*Q: Well, it wasn't part of the modus operandi of killing people.*

STRAUS: No. And I maintain to this day without any proof whatsoever, that if Marcos hadn't been ill, and apparently quite severely ill, that this would not have happened. This was somebody else's doing.

*Q: This was at the height of the Reagan administration. Did you have the feeling that Reagan was a creature of the American right and the Marcoses had spent a lot of time and effort in cultivating this group. Did you have a feeling that one had to be a bit careful?*

STRAUS: Let me say this. I think the first year of my work on the Desk was concerned with the renegotiation of the base agreement which was due every five years. The previous negotiation had been extraordinarily difficult and the Filipinos had asked for all kinds of things that we were unwilling to provide them. In this case, the Filipinos proved relatively accommodating, although there was a certain amount of quibbling over the price of what we would pay for the use of the bases. So the negotiations, partly because I think we worked reasonably well with the Defense Department, and partly because the negotiations in the Philippines, were conducted very well. It was a very smooth operation.

Marcos had ironclad control, I think, on their side. He wanted, I think, to retain Reagan's goodwill and they were concluded in less time than anyone would have thought possible. Everybody felt very good about it.

Then the next thing that happened was the state visit of Marcos. Now Marcos had been denied a state visit for quite a while, ever since he had declared martial law. He had lifted martial law but this was under the Carter administration, and they felt there were still things Marcos should be doing. But Reagan said yes...this was before my coming on board. The Reagans did this sort of thing with a good deal of grace and charm. Mrs. Marcos really put on the charm. I couldn't stand her, she was a terrible woman. This was the time when we were at the White House and everything was going smoothly. It was a beautiful evening in the spring and we were out in the garden...everything was lovely.

Then came the assassination. In fact, on the Desk, having polished off the Marcos state visit, which both the White House and Marcos were very happy over, and having polished off the negotiations for the base agreement in a way that people were quite happy about...because these base agreements always have an effect on other base agreements around the world, so we had to keep that in mind. We kind of looked at each other and said, "What's left to do?"

Marcos had staged this phony election, but he was going to be in power for quite a long time. There was no real hope on the part of anybody that he could be derailed.

And then everything started changing with the assassination. There was the beginning of some real pressures within the Philippine society. Although, as I said, they really felt that Marcos, who came in as you recall as a reformer and had a sort of Kennedyesque image not only in the Philippines, was the only guy to get them out of their troubles. We did all kinds of contingency papers.

After the Aquino assassination we started distancing ourselves from the administration of Marcos. We wrote some fairly tough human rights reports quite critical of the Marcos government. But at the same time he was the guy in power and there didn't seem to be any alternative.

*Q: This is what you were getting from the Embassy too?*

STRAUS: This is what we were getting from the Embassy too, yes. The Embassy was then run by Mike Armacost, who I must say...some of his cables were models, brilliant. Mike Armacost knows, as probably nobody else that I have encountered in the Foreign Service, how to write from the field a cable that is action oriented and suggests to the bureaucracy where we might do so. So, it was a moderate effort to move Marcos to better human rights.

*Q: Were you feeling under pressure, that public opinion, TV, the newspapers, and all were pushing you into a position where we didn't know where we were going?*

STRAUS: We knew where we were going, it was very clear. We also had pressure from the media. We had pressure from elements in the Congress...Steve Solarz and his staff...and we kept them very closely informed in what we were doing and thinking. We actually worked very closely with Solarz and people in the Congress. We had to because Marcos always thought he really knew American politics and that he could play off his friend, Reagan, against the others. Of course Reagan was way up there somewhere and didn't concern himself with the minutiae of Philippine politics. I think, by and large, we avoided Marcos' maneuverings and his terrible brother-in-law ambassador here, Imelda's brother, a rather slimy individual, if I may use that delicate expression.

*Q: Were there any Congressmen or Senators who were sort of in the Marcos pocket by having been lavishly entertained and all that? Was this a problem? This happened with us I know in dealing with the Dominican Republic under Trujillo for a long time when there were members of the Senate and the House?*

STRAUS: The Philippines retained in the hearts of many Americans an unusual sympathy. I remember going to a farewell for Romulo, the grand old man at the UN. There was a gala dinner at one of the hotels and there were an awful lot of people who had a very warm regard for the Philippines because, I guess, of the historical relationship with us. It was a kind of paternalistic one. One that the Filipinos in a way invited. Yes, I think there were people, who were not in the pocket that I was aware of, who were very sympathetic.

*Q: How did you read Mrs. Marcos.*

STRAUS: I guess we will have to have another session, but let me just say a few words about the Mrs. She was an ignorant operator. She thought she knew things about international relations. She saw herself as a super diplomat. She saw herself as knowing a good deal about economic affairs too. She was shameless in her pursuit of money and power. She was a great flatterer, even somebody as lowly as a country director. I took an almost instantaneous dislike to her, which, I guess I haven't lost. Whereas I wouldn't say that about him. He was a man of some substance who I think went wrong.

*Q: When we start the next time we will talk about the events in the Philippines as they reflected on you after the Aquino assassination and how the situation developed at that time.*

*Today is February 11, 1993. I remember I was with the Immigration and Naturalization Service Liaison Office at the time when they were talking about Aquino going back and what would happen. Did we have any role in his going back or trying to stop him?*

STRAUS: No, we certainly didn't. We shared the conventional wisdom which was very widespread at the time that President Marcos would almost certainly allow Aquino to roam free. That he would be taken into custody and would be given some form of incarceration. Whether that meant prison or house arrest was uncertain. I think this is also what Aquino thought was going to happen. Before he left he called a lot of people to get their advice as to whether he should go back or not. I think he was certainly troubled as to whether he should go back or not. He called my deputy, John Maisto, whom he had known in the Philippines. As I recall John told him just about what I told you. He would probably find himself in custody.

I remain convinced that one of the reasons for the timing of his return was the fact that Marcos had one of his periodic bouts with the medical folks, he had a bad kidney, and was once in a while put on dialysis. Apparently at that particular time that was one of the worst times for Marcos, medically speaking. There was even some talk in the Philippines that he might be near death. I think Aquino was certainly an ambitious politician and wanted to be inside the country, not in exile, when that happened. I don't think he, or anybody else, thought that he was going to be executed the way things happened. I also remain convinced, although I have absolutely no proof, that this would not have happened if Marcos hadn't been in bad shape physically and therefore not in full control of the government.

I was scheduled to go on leave at that time in the middle of the summer, and having completed a successful base negotiations and a state visit by Marcos, we felt there wasn't all that much to do. Certainly there was no better time to take leave.

*Q: Going back again, later when things really got bad in the Philippines and the Marcos regime was on the verge, much was made of the special relationship between the Marcoses and the Reagans. Did you get a feel for this?*

STRAUS: No, if there was such a thing that was way about my grade level, I guess. I thought that the state visit was very graciously handled by the President and Mrs. Reagan. It was Marcos' first state visit and sort of an award for giving up martial law and having a good base relationship. I didn't get the impression that the President involved himself all that much in the conduct of our relations with the Philippines.

*Q: Well, the Marcoses were pulling at everything they possibly could.*

STRAUS: Oh, yes, very much so.

*Q: Were you on leave when the assassination happened?*

STRAUS: I was.

*Q: Did you get any feel when you got back about how the reaction was?*



STRAUS: Yes. I think the effect was rather strong and a real shock because we were, I think, fairly sure that this kind of a thing would not have happened without somebody who was fairly high up having orchestrated it. We thought the Philippines, who were already in some trouble politically and certainly economically, would have some additional problems. And sure enough there was this massive outpouring for Aquino after his death. In fact it was far greater at that time than when he was alive. The whole thing was so dramatic and appealed to the Filipinos. Although there were a lot of dirty tricks that had gone on prior to the assassination, there was a very clear sense, I think, to the Filipino people that this had gone too far. That was easy to pick up.

*Q: What were you getting from the Embassy as the situation unraveled?*

STRAUS: That despite everything Marcos was very much still in control. And that the opposition who obviously sought to capitalize on this event was still weak and very much divided and not all that effective. I got the sense in my travel over there, as well as from some of the reporting, that even people in the opposition felt that real reform in the Philippines could come only with the cooperation and under the leadership of Marcos. That was kind of the weird thing that was going on.

*Q: Were there any leaders in the opposition that were sort of bandied about?*

STRAUS: Oh, sure. One was Raul Manglapus, for example, who was in exile in the US and whom I used to see. Later he became the Foreign Minister for Mrs. Aquino. I guess that what I recall most about Manglapus, when I met him on one or two occasions and discussed changes in the Philippines, was that he was want to say, "Rick, the United States brought democracy to the Philippines. Marcos has taken it away. Consequently it is your responsibility to restore it." I tried to disabuse him of that and said, "If the Philippine people would take some required action to move towards democracy, he would find the United States in support of that."

But there was, to my taste any way, too much of an overwhelming feeling in the Philippines that nothing happened there without the United States having willed it. Not a leaf fell from a tree without usually the CIA having orchestrated that. I found that rather discouraging. I thought it required a fundamental change in our relationship to bring that about, although I didn't see how that was going to happen anytime soon.

*Q: Did poor Corazón Aquino raise any blips on your radar at all?*

STRAUS: No, she did not.

*Q: Just the grieving widow.*

STRAUS: Yes. And in the beginning that certainly was what she was.

*Q: Can we talk about how events develops, particularly as you saw them from the Desk, and how you felt the Embassy was responding to these events?*

STRAUS: Yes. Well, it was clear both politically and economically that the Philippines were in a growing malaise. The one, of course, was feeding on the other. The Philippines, say in the 1960s, in most respects was the leading country in Southeast Asia, and had become by the middle 1980s probably at the bottom of the heap. And that had been through an accumulation of Marcos policies. There was widespread corruption. This is all quite aside from the assassination, which just added another dimension to it.

So, how to get out of this mess? There were all kinds of scenarios that were being written back here to which the Embassy contributed. Mike Armacost was the ambassador at the time and I don't think I have ever seen an ambassador write messages which were as adept in understanding how to get from point A to point B in the bureaucracy. Absolutely superb. Extremely intelligent, goal oriented. He had some excellent meetings with Marcos where he tried to move Marcos to a better position on human rights, which, of course, was a great concern of ours. But it wasn't easy because Marcos' main goal by that point was to remain in power at all cost. And he still had most of the levers of power.

*Q: Were you feeling greater heat after the Aquino assassination from Congress and the media?*

STRAUS: Oh, yes. I think there ensued after that what I thought was rather a remarkable coincidence really, or unity, of both Democrats and Republicans, of the bureaucracy and Congress, of State and Defense. There were hardly any serious arguments with the view that we really should try to move Marcos into a more politically acceptable position...acceptable both here in the US as well as in the Philippines. We spent a good deal of time, particularly with Solarz who chaired the Asian subcommittee in the House and took the greatest interest in this matter...Solarz, himself, had spent a good deal of time in the Philippines and was personally acquainted with Aquino, so was personally affected by his loss. I thought that there wasn't any real gap between us, which was important because, of course, the Marcos forces were attempting to exploit any gaps in the American front at that time.

*Q: Were you getting any feel from the White House on this?*

STRAUS: Not particularly. I do recall that the NSC staff was represented at these strategy sessions that we had periodically. They were also brought in on testimony that we were required to give from time to time on the Hill. We were all in accord really. But it was difficult to know what to do. There were so many scenarios that were written, but not one, of course, anticipated what would happen.

*Q: What did develop? How did Mrs. Aquino end up going to the Philippines? Did we play any role?*

STRAUS: Much of this happened after my watch there.

*Q: You left in...?*

STRAUS: I left in the summer of 1984.

*Q: When did Mrs. Aquino go back? Do you remember?*

STRAUS: I don't remember that. I think she went back when I was still there, but it wasn't a major event.

*Q: So, as you left we were pulling every lever we could think of to get Marcos to do something, not getting rid of Marcos particularly.*

STRAUS: He still had the power. The opposition forces didn't impress us that much. They certainly were divided. There was a problem, of course, that there was a major Communist insurgency in the Philippines. The military felt a continued need for the bases, particularly for Subic which was seen as a counterweight to the increase of the Soviet presence in Vietnam. Nobody really wanted us to leave in the Philippines, not even the Philippines neighbors in southeast Asia, who were also unhappy with Marcos.

*Q: Did you get any feel that the Philippines were sort of unique in not being part of any other group? They were part of ASEAN, but yet they weren't.*

STRAUS: They were and they weren't. Formally, yes they were. But one always had the feeling with the Philippines that far more important than the relationship to ASEAN was their relationship with the United States. That in the last analysis it was always going to be the United States that would bail them out. And there was, of course, a special relationship. I recall a testimonial dinner I went to when Marcos was around and Ramuelo was around, he was president of the UNGA and was tremendously beloved by all manner of Americans. He was most impressive. There were scores of American businessmen, media people, stars, etc. who attended the event.

*Q: When you left that job you left it with sort of...?*

STRAUS: Well, things were not going well and we knew it. There didn't seem to be a very clear way out of it.

*Q: Who took your place?*

STRAUS: My deputy, John Maisto, who had spent a lot of time in the Philippines.

**EDWARD H. WILKINSON**  
**Deputy Consul General**  
**Manila (1982-1985)**

*Edward Wilkinson was born in Indiana in 1936. Mr. Wilkinson received his bachelor's degree at Purdue University and served in the army from 1957-1959. His career included positions in Philippines, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina,*

*Taiwan, Ecuador, Korea, Thailand, and Germany. Mr. Wilkinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 2002.*

*Q: I'm surprised personnel let you get away with going away to Manila, because they have this fifteen-year rule.*

WILKINSON: The rule didn't actually apply to me until I became an FSO. I was a staff officer during a good bit of the time I was overseas at the beginning of my career.

Anyway, by the time I returned to the U.S., Lisa had packed us up, so after exactly eleven days back in the U.S., we left for Manila.

*Q: Basically we're talking about '81 still?*

WILKINSON: No, I got back to the States from Guayaquil in the fall of 1981, went to Argentina in late April of '82 and returned to the States after ten weeks. We then left for Manila.

*Q: So '82 to when?*

WILKINSON: '85; I was three years in Manila as deputy consul general under Vernon McAninch.

*Q: This is an interesting period of time. Could you talk about the situation and talk about McAninch?*

WILKINSON: Vernon McAninch, known far and wide as "Mac," was extremely popular and rightly so. I am a great fan of the late Mr. McAninch. He had his faults, as we all do, but I will say from the very beginning that overall I thought the world of him. During my later career in more senior positions, when something came up and I wasn't sure what to do, I would try to stand back a little bit and say to myself, "Now how would Mac have handled this?" And I could very often come up with an answer trying somehow to use Mac's thinking.

Mac was larger than life. He charmed almost everybody. My wife, as I have mentioned, is Filipino. During our tour in the Philippines, my wife said something that may tell you a little something about Mac. One evening, we were at a rather large social gathering. Mac was there, too. After we came home that evening, my wife looked out the window for a few seconds, then with a smile on her face said, "You know, Mac must've been a Filipino in a former life. He knows just how to get along with Filipinos." Mac was very friendly, warm and approachable.

As you know, we had a big consular operation in Manila. One of the things Mac taught me there, which I have religiously followed in the years since, was this. He said, "Look, if you don't go out into the waiting room, once a week at a minimum, and spend a little time to see what is going on, you're not doing your job right."

As I understand the story, soon after he arrived in Manila, Mac went out and spent some time in the visa waiting area. He discovered that there were some guards selling visa applications. They were blanks only, but the guards were making a little money on the side doing that.

Well, I think Mac's dictum was good advice. To any consular officer who might read this I say, take this advice: Get out there and see what's going on.

Mac was a controversial figure. He was, as I said, larger than life, and I learned a lot from him.

If I were consular chief in Manila, I would have a long talk with newly arrived officers, especially those who were new to the Service. I would emphasize the various means many Filipinos use to obtain visas, either for themselves, or for others, for financial or material gain. It is important that everyone understands from the very beginning what goes on.

*Q: He was renowned for going into consular sections and really changing everything around for the better. He was considered to be a very good person for putting together an effective organization.*

WILKINSON: I think you're right and one of the reasons for that simply is this: people wanted to do the right thing because he was the one who asked you to do it, pure and simple. He had good ideas and good common sense. Let me give you an example of that.

Mac virtually always invited one or two, or more, junior officers to every function he gave, and he gave a lot of functions. Now he didn't expect these junior officers to serve drinks or something. Rather, they were just expected to be there, meet the public, join the evening and see what went on. Mac regularly tried to include junior officers in social gatherings, long before "best practices" was the vogue.

*Q: Ed, what about the pressure, which I understand is just about worse than anywhere that one can be, on consular officers for visas?*

WILKINSON: This is an important aspect, and I have sort of a unique view on this because of my Filipino wife, Lisa. She was, I think, able to give me good guidance and perhaps an Asian point of view on this subject, a point of view that personally I otherwise wouldn't have had.

The Philippines, certainly in the '60s when I first went there, but even today, is a country where the vast majority of the population knows English pretty well. We Americans have been associated with the Philippines in one way or another for more than a hundred years, so Americans are well known and Filipinos understand Americans very well.

The number of Filipinos who would like very much to come to the U.S. and get a job is quite high. It just seems like everybody wants to come here, many simply to better their life, economically speaking. We have a huge consular section there, and a lot of our people deal on a daily basis with non-immigrant visa applications because of the large number of people who apply. Of course, we know that there are many Filipinos who ought to have a visa, and we want to give those people visas without delay. But we are obliged to sort through a huge quantity of

applicants every day to find those who do qualify. So it's a big, difficult job for our officers there.

All sorts of things are used to try to obtain visas. I'm talking about everything from using illegal documents, to buttering up somebody at a restaurant or wherever it may be when someone encounters a U.S. visa officer or anyone else connected with the embassy.?

It is a major problem and it is something that American officers need to understand from the very beginning. The Filipino will try to see what can be worked out. However, you should say something like, "No, I have moral standards that do not allow me to discuss this now. Please understand I would like to be your friend, but if you want a visa you should get an appointment for an interview and apply." Most Filipinos will understand that and basically that will be that. You can make a case in a way that will turn it off, but if you don't, it will never stop.

It's difficult. Once you've given a favor to a friend (and I'm tempted to put the word "friend" in quotes), that person will not be able to keep what has happened quiet despite assurances otherwise. This is because: (1) that person will want to show off that he or she is "well-connected" to a visa officer, hence he or she has now attained some clout or social status, and/or (2) he or she will want the word to get around so he or she can use this connection or "friendship" for financial or material gain by asking special favors from this embassy "friend."

One incident that is relevant happened at Manila International Airport to my wife. She accompanied her nephew, who was returning to New York's St. John's University, right up to the immigration gate. A young immigration officer called her nephew in and asked him to sit down at his desk. My wife went in with her nephew and sat with him while the immigration officer asked him questions. The conversation went like this, almost verbatim:

Filipino Immigration officer: Why are you going to the States?

Nephew: To study at St. John's University.

Officer: Who gave you your visa and how were you able to get it?

Nephew: Well, I just applied for it.

Officer: Oh, I know So-and-So (he gave the name of our one of our vice consuls) at the embassy. Do you know him?

Nephew: No, I don't know him.

Officer: He's a very good friend of mine. Do you know any consul at the embassy?

Nephew: I know Mr. Wilkinson.

Officer: Well, I know Mr. So-and-So, and he is one of the high-ranking officers there. (Not exactly true, as the named officer was a first-tour vice consul.)

After a bit more of this, the Immigration officer let the nephew go. All the while, my wife was very quiet and pretended not to understand what was happening. She just said "thank you" when the "interview" was finished. She returned back to the main terminal and her nephew went on into the departure lounge.

So what was the purpose of selecting a 19-year-old student for such an interview? My wife suggests that the whole idea was for the Immigration officer to make as clear as he could to the

aunt of the young student that he – the Immigration officer – was available in case the aunt needed a U.S. visa. Or perhaps he was just trying to boost his “social standing” by proclaiming that he was well plugged into the U.S. Embassy.

Whatever it was, it was anything but innocuous.

I have many Filipino friends, and I think the world of the country and the people. But what I’ve described is a fact of life, and consular officers, certainly visa officers, need to understand that.

*Q: I’ve never served or been to the Philippines. On hearing the stories when I went to Seoul, which was really taking off as a place for immigrant and non-immigrant visas about the time I got there in 1976 or so, one of my major concerns was of consular officers getting caught in two ways. One was sex; usually young ladies were thrown at the officers, and the other...*

WILKINSON: Or they threw themselves.

*Q: Or the other one was getting favors; special deals on people going out and buying antiques. I remember having a deputy who left shortly after I got there, but had an in with all sorts of firms that all sold things and all this. We never caught anything, but it made me very nervous. Luckily, I was married and I don’t like to buy things, but these were the two things and nothing ever turned up. It was a concern. It must’ve been a real concern for you because everything was multiplied by a certain number.*

WILKINSON: As I mentioned before, what you have described is something more difficult to deal with in Manila because of the fact that so many people in the Philippines speak and understand English so well, which means that a lot more people can get to you more easily. I don’t mean to imply that the Philippines is the only place where this goes on, however.

*Q: Oh, no. It’s just that the problem was compounded there. Hong Kong has always been a problem. How did you deal with this? We’re talking about young officers coming in, for the most part relatively naive because it’s not the sort of thing you got exposed to in the United States.*

WILKINSON: Well, that’s all true. On the other hand, there were some senior officers who got themselves into some pickles as well. But, you’re right. A junior officer is probably the most vulnerable.

*Q: The senior officers; that’s their problem, but as a supervisor, you’re problem is the junior officers.*

WILKINSON: The first thing you need to do is to have the kind of conversation that you and I are having. For example, a senior officer should sit down one-on-one or something pretty close to that, describe this situation, then say, “Look, we are watching this closely because this is a serious issue.”

*Q: Did you find yourself playing the role of elderly psychiatrist, counsel, all that, with your officers?*

WILKINSON: I tried to, and I think my best guide in this regard was my wife. She made it very clear from the very beginning to everybody from her sisters and brother to her friends and acquaintances and everybody else, that once you give one person a “favor,” you open yourself up to many, many more such requests. She never allowed this to happen in Manila or anywhere else, hence no one bothered her, at least not after a first try.

*Q: Did you have any officer problems while you were there?*

WILKINSON: In this regard? Yes.

*Q: How were those found out and how were they handled?*

WILKINSON: I don't believe while I was there that there was anybody who was booted out. The problems were less serious. But sometimes you had to call people on the carpet.

*Q: One of the criticisms I heard about McAninch, you heard these things because he was bigger than life, in a way, was at a time when things were getting a little shaky in the administration of President Marcos. You were there when Aquino was killed, weren't you?*

WILKINSON: Well, we were assigned to Manila, but in fact my wife and I were in the States when Ninoy Aquino was assassinated. I think it was around September of 1983.

*Q: There was the charge, it's not a real charge, but I mean the saying that the embassy, many of the senior officers were too damn close to the Marcos'; they were throwing parties and all this and McAninch name came up in some of this, being the party giver and all of this. Was this a problem or not?*

WILKINSON: Yes. I'm sorry to say that it was. Mac was very close to several senior government people. There was a video that was spread all over the world of Vernon McAninch and Imelda Marcos, the president's wife, dancing at Malacanang Palace. The picture hit the airwaves around the time the Marcoses left the Philippines rather in a hurry. Of course, being close with high government officials is just fine, in a certain sense. One of your jobs as an embassy officer, at least among senior officers, is to get as close as you can to important people. But I think Mac got far too close.

*Q: When you came back after the time in the States, was there sort of the word, "Let's draw back a bit from our relationship to the government and power," i.e. the Marcos government?*

WILKINSON: Well, I guess I would have to answer that question by saying, we in the consular section were pretty far from other than consular thinking at the time. I can't believe that the answer to that is other than, “Yes, that's exactly what happened,” but I can't honestly say that I remember that.

*Q: How did you find dealing with police officials and people who issued passports, in other words, government officials with whom you'd be dealing as the consular officer?*



WILKINSON: Some were very, very nice and reasonable and helpful and there were others who were largely on the take. At one point, there was a foreign minister whose brother, a disbarred judge, set up shop out in the Foreign Ministry's passport office to organize a little help if you needed it. I would say that was pretty egregious, but over all this sort of thing was not too unusual.

Policemen, like far too many places in Latin America, for example, don't make very much money. So they have to figure out a way that supplements their income. I'm sorry to say that that was standard business there.

*Q: Were visa brokers a major problem?*

WILKINSON: Yes, of course. One variation on this problem was this: everybody, it would seem, was absolutely convinced that it was impossible to get a U.S. tourist visa without some sort of help. Therefore, many people who didn't need any particular push went to visa brokers. So, for example, visa officers would accept an application for a visa from a man or a woman who made \$1000 a week (I am making up some numbers here). But fearing that they would not be able to get a visa, they would go to a visa broker and get "proof" that they made \$3000 a week. Now, they've lied to you. Such a lie would not be "material," perhaps, but the whole thing seriously complicated the visa processing. Unfortunately, variations on this theme were the kind of things that were going on all the time.

**STAN IFSHIN**  
**Principal Officer**  
**Cebu (1983-1985)**

*Mr. Ifshin was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1942 and graduated from John Hopkins University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1967. He has served in numerous posts including Saigon, Taiwan, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Philippines. He was interviewed by David Reuther in 2001.*

*Q: Now, it's open bidding, so you'd put in your bid for Cebu, you've written your career development officer and said, 'I'm burning incense out here'... [laughter]*

IFSHIN: [laughter] Yes, I'd been bidding on jobs in the Philippines ever since we had open bidding, and ever since I'd entered the Foreign Service I'd always wanted to serve in the Philippines. While I don't know whether Cebu was necessarily always my first choice, it was certainly high on my screen at that point and I was very pleased to get that job. Now my wife felt very isolated. I think were the only foreign diplomatic mission in Cebu, or we were then, at least, the post has long since been closed now. There were about five or six honorary consuls.

*Q: So you were the diplomatic community in Cebu. Now just for background, which island is Cebu on?*

IFSHIN: Cebu is on the island of Cebu. It's smack dab in the middle of the Philippines, I'm going to point to it on the map that you have, although it won't show up on your audio tape [laughter]

*Q: [laughter]*

IFSHIN: It's right there, that skinny one.

*Q: Okay, that one behind Leyte, to the east of Leyte.*

IFSHIN: West of Leyte. That's Negros there, and that's Panay off further to the west. And Cebu in the middle. That's Leyte Samar to the east there.

*Q: Now, why is there an American consulate in Cebu?*

IFSHIN: Cebu is the very center of the Philippines and is the big shipping center and all the shipping lines tended to be out of Cebu to Luzon to the north and Mindanau to the south, and Negros and Panay in the west, and Leyte Samar in the east.

*Q: Now that's internal shipping.*

IFSHIN: Yes, I'm talking about internal. It's kind of a transportation hub for the Archipelago. And in fact, Tagalog has become the national language of the Philippines because it's the language of the people around Manila and central Luzon. But Cebuano probably has more native speakers than any other language group in the Philippines. In fact the languages that are spoken on many of the other Visayan islands, the islands in the center, are supposedly dialects of Cebuano and may not be separate languages. The linguists would have to figure that out. I'm not in a position to establish that out. In any case, Cebuano is quite important in the Philippines and in fact, Cebuano settled much of Mindanau, much of the Christian population of Mindanau is Cebuano. So the Cebuanos are an important part of the island.

*Q: Now, is there a fair amount of American expatriate presence in that part of the Philippines?*

IFSHIN: Traditionally, there has always been an American presence, although, no we didn't have the military bases that they have on Luzon, the Clark and the Subic, so we didn't have that kind of extensive presence. The second president of the Philippines, Sergio Osmena, many of his descendants were dual nationals, or had American nationality, including the person who was the governor of Cebu during much of the time I was there, Emelito Osmena, was a grandson - his mother was an American citizen, so he was an American citizen by birth. But at various times he renounced his American citizenship and did other things for political purposes as he was ascending the political ladder in the Philippines. But throughout the Philippines there is an important American connection. Being the U.S. consul in Cebu, as minor as the job is in terms of American bureaucracy, in the Philippines, or at least in that part of the Philippines, it's a big deal. I remember when we returned to the U.S., my then five year old daughter was quizzing me on how come I'm never on television any more? [laughter]

*Q: [laughter]*

IFSHIN: We used to be regularly on television in Cebu.

*Q: Let's follow that up a little bit. Why would you be on television in Cebu? Moving around the island.*

IFSHIN: Typically there would be a news coverage of some sort where they're doing a report and they'd ask for a comment from the American consul, or they're covering the opening of something and among the people in the crowd or the honored guests is the American consul, this that or the other thing. I wouldn't say I was on television all that often, but enough to impress my five year old daughter.

*Q: What was then the main focus of that mission?*

IFSHIN: From the U.S. government's point of view, it was political reporting. It was a listening post for the southern Philippines, we had a consular responsibility for the Visayas and Mindanao, where the embassy was responsible for Luzon. But it was basically a political listening post.

*Q: Does this mean that you are meeting people who are later who are later going to be important personalities in Manila, or political trends that start in that part of the country that are going to spread...?*

IFSHIN: No, I think it was just simply what's going on in that part of the Philippines. It's a significant, I think half the population lives in the Visayas and Mindanao, and as in so many countries, politics tends to be what happens in the capital city. There are things that are happening outside of the capital and what's happening is not unimportant, and I was able to get into the grass roots and hear them there and listen to them. This is a country where, it's not a democracy, it's more of an oligarchy than anything else. It's not a democracy in American terms, but it has democratic trappings and what happens outside of the metropole outside of Manila, is important, does count in shaping developments and shaping trends in the country. I was there when Aquino was assassinated, and of course there was a strong reaction throughout the country, including in Cebu and there were demonstrations and a growing movement against President Marcos. I was reporting on that and how people were reacting throughout the country. And Imelda Marcos was from Samar Leyte, which was part of the consular district as well. In fact, what year would it have been... I was there from '83 to '85, in any case it was the off year... the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Leyte landing, I ended up being the senior American representative at the anniversary celebrations, which was interesting of course because of course the Japanese sent a big delegation there... [laughter]

*Q: [laughter]*

IFSHIN: And President Marcos was there and Madam Imelda, and as I say I was there as the senior American. The following year, which was a ten year anniversary celebration, there was a much larger American delegation, and I was a relatively junior member of the American group.

*Q: Now did your consular district also include the south, the Muslim area?*

IFSHIN: Yes, in fact that was from my point of view an interesting aspect but unfortunate aspect of my whole experience there. Two persons were “kidnaped” during the time I was in Cebu, and it turned out that one of them was a dual German-American national. The German embassy paid a quick visit, found out there was nothing they could do and left. But the American embassy sent the intrepid consul from Cebu down, and I ended up spending months, literally months, in the area, doing very little on the ground so I could report back to the embassy as to the lack of progress during this period.

*Q: And who were you talking to?*

IFSHIN: I was talking to the Philippine military and the Philippines constabulary, and occasionally to political leaders, including Muslim leaders in the area about what was happening and the various ransom demands which everyone was of course saying we are not going to meet. And this was dragged on and on. Fortunately when I first arrived, I went to Jolo, an island off of Mindanao, which is the capital of a Muslim area and the military command center there, and I was supposed to use Philippines military channels to patch back in to the embassy and I say fortunately they were unable to do it and our communications failed. So I went back to Zamboanga, which is a moderately nice city on the southern coast there, and was able to establish communications with the embassy. So I made Zamboanga my headquarters, which was a hell of a much nicer place to be than Jolo for the next few months as I fulfilled this function.

*Q: Now this is not continuous for the next few months, this is coming down for a day or two...*

IFSHIN: No, it was largely continuous for months and going back for a day or two.

*Q: Goodness.*

IFSHIN: It was ridiculous, it went on much too long, a big waste of time.

*Q: Is this a decision on your part, that your personal attention...*

IFSHIN: No, it was a decision on the part of the embassy that they wanted me there. Maybe toward the end it got kind of, “Oh, is he still there? Maybe we ought to let him leave.”

*Q: Who were you reporting to then?*

IFSHIN: The DCM, Bob Rich.

*Q: Yes.*

IFSHIN: We were pretty much in constant contact. Oh occasionally I would call the political consular, Scott Halperin, but mostly it was Bob. One thing that happened, I was feeling very isolated and upset and lonely there, and my wife got in touch with some of our friends in Cebu

and said that they should have their relatives take care of me, so after that I had my [caretakers] down there. [laughter] I had a whole bunch of people who sort of adopted me.

*Q: But if the embassy is putting you up in a hotel or a guest house, that's costing money in addition to your time and talent.*

IFSHIN: Right.

*Q: What was so attractive about these two kidnapes?*

IFSHIN: Well, it was a somewhat new situation at that time. Now, subsequently, I see people get kidnaped all the time, but at that time it was a relatively new phenomenon, especially for the Philippines it was a relatively new phenomenon. They were "hostages."

*Q: Well, this is not that far after Tehran, so probably Americans are very sensitive.*

IFSHIN: Right, there were all kinds of sensitivities involved. But even whether they were really hostages was a question mark, you know, exactly how they had been taken and whether they had more or less walked into this knowingly. It was a bad situation that went on for much too long, and unfortunately my role in it was an unwilling and unhappy one.

*Q: Now how many consulates are there in the Philippines at this time?*

IFSHIN: Just Cebu, there's Manila and Cebu

*Q: But that's a small consulate, it's just you and one other.*

IFSHIN: At that time, one other officer. During the time that I was there we moved our facilities. Our plan was to add another officer who would bring with him secure communications and a secretary, an American secretary. Obviously not a State Department secretary. But that happened subsequent to my departure.

*Q: So that means that when you wanted to send classified information to the embassy, how are you... are you having to pouch it up?*

IFSHIN: Yes, we had a one-time pad, which we never used during the time I was there. Basically I sent unclassified messages. Nothing much has to be classified if you don't want to classify it. You know, we would forward it as an OI, and they would put it in classified form and pass it on to Washington if they wanted to.

*Q: So you have your long-going kidnaping saga going on. That really does cut into reporting on what the politics are or the impact of Aquino's assassination.*

IFSHIN: Right. I don't remember exactly when I got involved in that but it went on for a long, long time. Literally for months.

*Q: Saigon fell ten years earlier, but at one point there was a fairly large boat people presence in the Philippines. Was any of that in your consulate district?*

IFSHIN: I don't think so. I was not involved in that.

**JAMES R. MEENAN**  
**Project Manager, USAID**  
**Manila (1983-1987)**

*Mr. Meenan was born in Rhode Island and raised in California. After graduating from Woodbury College he entered government service. Joining USAID in 1965, Mr. Meenan had a distinguished career with that Agency, serving as Mission and Program Auditor in USAID Missions throughout the world. His foreign postings include Liberia, Vietnam, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Sri Lanka and Philippines. Among his Washington assignments was Committee Staff Member in the Office of Senator Max Baucus. Mr. Meenan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

*Q: What was your next assignment?*

MEENAN: We were pleased to next be assigned to the USAID program in Manila, Philippines from 1983 through 1987.

A couple of days after our arrival at Post in 1983, Mr. Benigno S. Aquino was killed and the remaining years to 1987 saw the collapse of the economy and the downfall of the Marcos government. We lived in Magallanes Village on the outskirts of Makati, that was the focal point for the "people's power revolution", with the international airport to the rear of the compound. At one point the rear wall of the compound fell and for some time we had the problem of flooding in the houses during heavy rain storms.

I worked closely with Philippine governors and mayors on the design/management of over 3,000 economic development projects with a value of \$210 million. These projects accounted for the funds the U.S. was providing the country to pay for the use of Clark Airbase and Subic Naval operations.

*Q: Which experiences stand out most?*

MEENAN: One mayor in particular proved most active in promoting his city's development, Mayor Richard Gordon of Olongapo City that bordered the U.S. Subic Naval Base. With the city facing electrical problems, I arranged to have a U.S. senior technician spend a few months in the city. He lived in the humble residence of the mayor and proved most helpful in introducing new efficiencies to the system.

During the height of the revolt against the Marcos Administration, Mayor Gordon showed up one evening at my home with his bodyguards and invited me to join him for a short trip. He took me to a gathering place for the rebels and presented me with an arm patch that was used to identify those forces and it was signed by some of the rebel leaders, including “Gringo” Honasan.

That relationship with the Mayor has continued. When I was with Geo Research, we introduced their unique digital mapping technology to the Mayor, who was now leading the conversion and privatization of the old Subic Naval Base into a free trade zone. We learned that the old plans left by the Navy were not accurate, so we documented the proper alignment for the runway so FedEx could better make use of the facility for its new Asia Hub. When I was with U.S. Sen. Baucus, the Mayor visited Washington and I had the pleasure to bring him to the floor of the U.S. Senate and House, during a recess. When we got to the House floor, he turned to me and said one day he would return for a Joint Session of Congress, meaning when he became President of the Philippines. He did unsuccessfully run for that post, but now is one of the few nationally elected Philippine Senators.

After the Marcos downfall, there were many accusations that the base funding was misused. So I took a USAID investigator with me on a field inspection of a school and road built in Bataan, on the back side of the Subic Naval Base. While the projects were fine, the local mayor offered to radio ahead to clear our travel on the road which ran up to the closed back gate of the base. In driving the road in our armored vehicle, we kept seeing the dense brush along the road being parted so someone could observe our movements. When we arrived at the closed gate, the investigator declined to exit the vehicle with me to hail the U.S. Marine guard, who was stationed about 100 yards from the locked gate. We did gain access, but were promptly debriefed by the Munitions Dump Commander and the Admiral of the Base. We asked if the Mayor’s radio message had been received and they advised that they had no radio contact with her. Also, they were involved in a current sweep and destroy action by the Philippine Marines against the New Peoples Army, which was active in the area. We advised we did not see any action. We do believe the Mayor’s radio clearance was arranged with the New Peoples Army and that investigator never traveled with me again.

Our two sons attended the International School in Makati where Mrs. Ramos taught. Her husband was one of the rebel leaders and we later learned that Marcos attempted to send his loyal troops to capture her and the students, but failed when the rebel forces got there first.

After a major portion of the Philippine helicopter forces, stationed behind our residential compound, joined the rebels, they flew back down our street at rooftop level waiving to us as they fired upon the few helicopters that did not join them.

*Q: How was the economy during these times?*

MEENAN: Much like Chile during its turmoil, we had the unpleasant experience of watching the national economy collapse to the point that only the informal (black market) sector was functioning. An interesting thing for the Philippines is their shadow economy, the informal structure literally kept the country somewhat functioning until some semblance of order could be

restored. That literally—those informal structures and little shops—kept that economy alive, and people were able to eat and shop even when the national economy collapsed on them.

*Q: How was the bases funding managed?*

MEENAN: The U.S. bases funding was used to construct local infrastructure projects that would improve the wellbeing of the population. The U.S. would generate local currency with the dollars provided going directly to the national treasury. The local currency, in turn, would be used for mutually agreed upon and completed projects: roads, schools, hospitals, public markets, and similar infrastructure activities. While we would initially review and approve proposed projects—we had a good staff of engineers at the mission, local and American—we would not transfer any funds until the projects were completed, inspected, and met acceptable construction standards. Often enough there were a lot of games being played in the awarding of the contracts and the construction. The USAID engineers would inspect during the construction process as well as completing a final inspection before the project was accepted. Many projects were required to be reworked and some even disapproved, so the Philippine government would not be reimbursed in those cases.

In the end, there were a lot of good infrastructure projects completed, including schools. Old ramshackle dumpy schools were turned into very functional institutions with a common design that was tailored for the local environment. The Philippine government staff was comprised of very dedicated people who wanted to gain the most benefits for the country from the base “rental” funding.

*Q: How did Marcos exit the country?*

MEENAN: When the Marcos administration did fall, he was escorted from the Presidential Palace to the U.S. Embassy grounds on his small boat, whose mast had to be chopped to fit under a low bridge. Later some USAID staff was called to the Embassy to assist with loading Marcos’ heavy bags so he could be transported by helicopters to Clark Air Base.

Related to Marcos’ departure was the work of a regional USAID staffer in the Clark Airbase area, who had good Philippine contacts. One of Marcos’s colleagues, Eduardo Cojuangco, Jr. then head of San Miguel Corp., also needed to be matched up with the departing flight. This staffer knew Cojuangco, so he made contact, drove him, hiding in the rear of his vehicle, past the Philippine guards and onto Clark Airbase in time to make the exit flight with Marcos.

**G. EUGENE MARTIN**  
**Special Assistant, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1984-1985)**

*A Specialist in Chinese Affairs and a speaker of Chinese, Mr. Martin spent the major part of his career dealing with matters relating to China, both in Washington and abroad. His overseas assignments included Hong Kong, Taipei,*



*Huangzhou (formerly Canton), Beijing, Manila and Rangoon. His Washington assignments also concerned China and the Far East. Mr. Martin was born in Indiana of Missionary parents and was raised in the US and India. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo College and Syracuse University. Mr. Martin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: How about the Philippine situation? I mean here you had a problem of Marcos getting worse and worse, and his wife had what was considered a fairly close relationship with the president or the first lady. I'm talking about Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan. But the handwriting was on the wall, so how do you prepare the president for this?*

MARTIN: That was a long and arduous effort, and a fascinating one to be involved in, to watch. I didn't have any Philippine experience, so I couldn't be directly involved, but I was included in all the discussions that were going on. I give a lot of credit to first, John Maisto, who was the country director for Philippine Affairs. He had served in the Philippines, was married to a Filipina, and, in my perspective, he was the one that realized that there had to be a change of policy toward Marcos. And so he began working quietly, but effectively, within the bureau -- first persuading the front office of this, including Paul Wolfowitz, who then escalated it (with John's help) up the ranks of the State Department, to the secretary, and finally to convince Shultz of the need for a change; and then they all went to work on the president. I think that was very effective, very well done. Everybody was included -- the CIA, DOD. The Monday afternoon informal, the EAP informal, was a very good mechanism for discussing these problems. There were a lot of differences. There was a lot of feeling that we couldn't just let Marcos go. The military, the security side of the house, naturally was concerned about the bases if we cut off Marcos. Marcos played this beautifully of course saying "You have support me, or we'll kick you out of the bases." So Clark (AFB) and Subic (Naval Base) became hostages to Marcos, in keeping the U.S. behind him. It went right up to the very end. I think it was finally Shultz and the NSC, going to Senator Laxalt, and getting Laxalt finally to push Reagan over the edge. Laxalt was a Senator from Nevada and a close friend of the Reagans who finally persuaded him that Marcos had to go. It was a fascinating time to watch how our policy was slowly, slowly eroded or changed into what turned out to be the right policy.

*Q: But certainly at the working level while you were there, the idea was that Marcos just couldn't keep going.*

MARTIN: Correct. At the desk level, that became very apparent, particularly after Aquino was assassinated. That was sort of the final straw, if you will, that broke the back. People realized that this was only going to get worse, and that the bases could not be held hostages. If we had continued to support Marcos, the bases would have been threatened in any case by an increased Communist insurgency, by the increased division within the country. The political opposition was focusing on our role supporting Marcos, and that became a negative. I think once supporting Marcos became a liability to our longer term, more important interests, people began to argue persuasively that it was time to have a change.

**WILLIAM LENDERKING**  
**Public Affairs Officer, USIA**  
**Washington, DC (1984-1986)**

*A native of New York, Mr. Lenderking graduated from Dartmouth College and served a tour with the US Navy in the Far East before joining the Foreign Service of the US Information Agency in 1959. As Public Affairs, Press and Information Officer, he served in posts throughout the world and in Washington, D.C., where held senior level positions in USIA and the Department of State dealing with Policy, Plans and Research. Mr. Lenderking was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

LENDERKING: And this was the era when the Philippines wanted us out of two huge military bases that were cornerstones of our military presence in East Asia; one was Clark Air Force Base and the other was the Subic Naval Base, where most of the Seventh Fleet came for repairs and maintenance. I'd been there years earlier when I was in the Navy, and it was very impressive, because the base had a highly skilled work force, they were safe and reliable, and doing repairs there saved us gobs of money. Subic had the best naval ship repair facilities and docking in East Asia, but now the Filipinos wanted us out. I expected Paul to be adamant about this and he said you know, if people don't want you in a country, the strongest military power in the world can't make your presence tolerable.

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*Q: Alright. Let's go to the Philippines. You were there when Marcos left?*

LENDERKING: Yes, in Washington. I think you should get Paul Wolfowitz to give some interviews; he could tell you all the things that he did, which were substantial and extremely adroit, insofar as I was familiar with them. I believe he was instrumental in getting Marcos to leave without bloodshed and bringing about a smooth transition. As I said earlier, he was also instrumental in persuading President Reagan that Marcos had to go and that we had to give him a push because otherwise it wouldn't happen.

*Q: How about the Filipino press and the growing discomfort of the Filipino public with our presence in the Philippines?*

LENDERKING: I think the Filipino press is much more hotheaded than some of the other countries we have been talking about, and they were, for the most, very strongly nationalistic and so on the base issue, for example, they wanted us out of there. This was an infringement on Filipino sovereignty and it was a symbol of their being a grown up nation that they didn't want an extensive American military presence on their soil.

The base issue is interesting, because we agonized over it for months and thought losing the bases would do huge and irreparable harm to our interests in East Asia, even though cool heads like Paul Wolfowitz recognized holding onto the bases was really untenable in those circumstances because Filipino nationalism was on the rise and they wanted us out of there. In

the end, we worked it out, and with the bases removed as an issue, our relationship actually improved. Yet we still have issues of bruised nationalism cropping up with the Filipinos, who really feel they have a close relationship with us and want it to continue.

Now, I'm mentioning Paul Wolfowitz a lot because as we speak he is a very controversial person because of his role advocating the Iraq war and some of the huge mistakes attributed to him and Rumsfeld, such as drastically underestimating the insurgency in Iraq and the number of American soldiers required to have a successful occupation and the restoration of responsible government. And then he left DOD for a whole new set of problems at the World Bank, and had to resign under a cloud, and with a damaged reputation. All I'm saying was that when I worked for him, he handled problems like the bases in the Philippines very adeptly. People liked and respected him enormously because he was so smart and, although he could be tough, he was a very decent person and he was fun to work for because he was so talented.

**STEPHEN BOSWORTH**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1984-1987)**

*Ambassador Bosworth was born and raised in Michigan and educated at Dartmouth College and George Washington University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1961 he served abroad in Panama, Madrid and Paris before becoming Ambassador to Tunisia, where he served from 1979 to 1981, to the Philippines (1984-1987) and to the Republic of Korea (1997-2000). The Ambassador also was a member of the Department's Policy Planning Staff, and he played a major role in the US-Japan Foundation and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. In 2009 Ambassador Bosworth was named the President's Special Representative for North Korean Policy. He was interviewed by Michael Mahoney in 2003.*

*Q: How long did you spend in SP?*

BOSWORTH: I was in SP about a year and a half. It was cut short because I was asked to go to the Philippines as ambassador. During the time I was in SP, most of that time I was no longer in the Foreign Service. I was a schedule C employee of the Department of State. You may recall there was a provision of law when the new career Foreign Service was established, the Foreign Service Act, which allowed people with a certain number of years of service to retire early before they were 50 or whatever the limit was. If they decided not to join the new career Foreign Service, it was a safety belt for people who didn't want to go into that. I decided for a variety of reasons that I didn't want to join that in the Foreign Service. So, I basically retired, but then was reappointed as a Schedule C employee and when I was in policy planning and then when I went to the Philippines as ambassador I went as a political appointee.

*Q: A presidential appointee.*

BOSWORTH: A presidential appointee, but a non-career presidential appointee. I don't think it made too much difference because everybody still thought of me as career Foreign Service. I must say I sort of thought of myself as a career Foreign Service Officer.

*Q: How did that appointment come about that since you had no real prior experience with Asia?*

BOSWORTH: Well, basically it was because in the law of unintended consequences, Larry Eagleburger who was Under Secretary of State decided he wanted to leave government and Shultz then needed a new under secretary and he decided he wanted Mike Armacost who was then ambassador to Manila to come back.

*Q: Under Secretary for Political Affairs?*

BOSWORTH: For political affairs. So, Armacost was coming back and then Shultz needed to put somebody in the Philippines. This was of course a very delicate time in the Philippines because these decisions on personnel were all made in January and February of '84 and in August of '83 Benigno Aquino had been assassinated. Our relationship with Marcos was under great pressure both from our own congress and elements in the Philippines. We needed to, I think, there was something of a course correction policy toward the Philippines. So, when Shultz asked me to go out there; the Philippines of course is a very curious place because it is in Asia, but it's not really of Asia in many respects. Someone joked that probably given my experience in Central America I was as well suited to go to the Philippines as anyone could have in terms of background. So, my time in policy planning was relatively brief. I think I was there 16 months, but it was long enough for me to have a flavor of the place and to use that time to get a kind of exposure to the sort of broad sweep of American foreign policy that I had not had the opportunity to do previously.

*Q: So, the Secretary in a sense, you say because of your proximity and presumably your demonstrated confidence, reached out to you and asked you. You didn't expect that, I take it?*

BOSWORTH: No. I didn't expect to go to the Philippines. I didn't expect any of that. I was actually at that point looking around for jobs outside government.

*Q: Your arrival in the Philippines as ambassador was about when?*

BOSWORTH: It was in April of 1984.

*Q: So, set the scene then. You arrive in '84 and what's happening?*

BOSWORTH: Well, the Philippines is getting ready for national assembly elections. This was the first significant political event since Aquino's assassination. The first electoral process of any note that had taken place since Marcos had lifted martial law, which I think, was done in '81 or '82 or something like that.

*Q: Your instructions from the Department going there are what essentially?*

BOSWORTH: Basically to keep the Philippines quiet, don't let it blow up. Some of us saw I think then that Marcos had become a liability.

*Q: Were you told to take a particular attitude to him before you went?*

BOSWORTH: We were distancing ourselves from Marcos and from the Malacañang palace. Marcos himself by this time was not well. We knew that, we didn't know exactly how ill. We weren't sure what was wrong with him, but we knew he was not well. There was a political legal process that had been launched after Aquino's assassination in response largely to pressures from the U.S. Congress to try to ascertain what actually had happened and who was responsible. It was a national commission that was interviewing witnesses and laboring away on this subject. This election was scheduled for May of 1984 and was the first time that members of the democratic opposition were allowed to run for office. They were not very well organized. They were quite fractionated. We were intent on creating and helping them to create enough democratic space so that they could organize themselves, campaign and basically bring out the vote. I had to go out early in fact in order to be there when that occurred. My wife and I were planning to be married sometime later in the year, but we learned I was going to the Philippines, we accelerated that process. We were not able to accelerate it enough so that she could go with me in April. I went out in April. I was there for the national assembly elections. I went back to Washington in early June, we were married and we came back to the Philippines in June.

*Q: Of 1984?*

BOSWORTH: 1984. The Philippines was a very tense place. Marcos had ruled there since 1965. He had imposed martial law in 1972. He had lifted martial law in the early '80s. There was an unbelievable level of corruption in the country. The military was both corrupt and repressive. The communist insurgency known as the New Peoples Army had begun to attract the attention of Washington intelligence analysts because of their growth. The democratic opposition lacked someone to rally around a number of people who had been active politically before martial law, some of them even during martial law. Corazon Aquino, Benigno's widow had gone back to the Philippines after he was killed, she was there. She at that point was not very active politically other than as a symbol. The economy was in terrible difficulty. It had very little if any foreign exchange. Demand was repressed, depressed. The Philippine businesses were unable to obtain the letters of credit. They couldn't do normal commercial business. It was just not a very easy time for the Philippines and for the U.S. it was not an easy time. Many people had begun to accuse us of having propped Marcos up and having kept him in power. We were trying to distance ourselves from him but not to the extent to which we would bring him down. Reagan was president. He and Marcos had what they considered to be a close personal relationship. I couldn't quite understand that because they had never spent all that much time together. Reagan had been elected on a platform, which included among things the need for American support for longstanding friends. This was after the Shah had fallen in Iran and it seemed to happen after that. Somoza and Nicaragua, so there was a belief deeply held in the Reagan administration that we had to stick with our friends and Marcos was a friend.

*Q: This was the substance of the Jeane Kirkpatrick article that we talked about before?*

BOSWORTH: Yes, it was.

*Q: It kind of crystallized.*

BOSWORTH: But Jeane came to the Philippines in the first two months that I was there and we called on Marcos and had a long conversation with him. I got her together with some members of the democratic opposition as well as other people in the Marcos government. I think she came away with a clear understanding of the complexity of what we were facing and just to say that we supported Marcos was not sufficient. We had to also be supportive of a democratic process. That basically was the horse that we rode in the Philippines for the next couple of years.

*Q: This is a riddle that you often find in many countries with which we do business even until today.*

BOSWORTH: Indeed.

*Q: You're there and you're trying to stimulate the democratic process so to speak and how does that develop and what happened?*

BOSWORTH: Well, I think you try to create and put some pressure on the government and that's what we were doing in the Philippines.

*Q: How do you do that?*

BOSWORTH: You go in and talk to them. Without being too blatant about it you make it clear that some elements of the American relationship are dependent on their beginning and in this case Marcos beginning to allow more space to the democratic opposition and express concern over the gross extremism on the left. You push for economic reform and end the corruption, etc. All of this of course gave Marcos very much the impression that we were pushing him, we were putting him in a stressful situation which we were indeed doing.

*Q: Was it still a view that the military bases were central to our?*

BOSWORTH: Oh, that was what basically over everything, that the bases at Clark and Subic, remember this was the height of the Cold War and the early years of the Reagan administration. We needed those bases we thought and I think we did to offset a growing Soviet presence in Vietnam. Those were always seen as being very important to us.

*Q: You wanted to keep the American interests intact with the bases?*

BOSWORTH: Right.

*Q: At the same time, so give me a little bit of a chronology then of how this went. How many years were you ambassador?*

BOSWORTH: I was there three years.

*Q: So from '84 to?*

BOSWORTH: From May of '84 through that rest of that year. Then we had the national assembly elections, a conclusion of the first phase of the investigation of the Aquino assassination which produced the result that sent it further into the legal morass. Marcos continuing not to be healthy. He was suffering from various things including we now know a kidney malfunction. He was on dialysis and had a kidney transplant in 1985, which did not work. Anyway, '84 was relatively calm after the national assembly elections. Then we went into '85 and we were putting more and more pressure on Marcos at my recommendation. We were encouraging the political opposition to organize themselves more effectively.

*Q: Washington was backing you up?*

BOSWORTH: Washington was more or less backing us on that. Shultz was backing us very heavily. He saw very clearly that the long term relationship with Marcos had been changed here. Marcos had to change or our relationship had to change, otherwise we were placing our longer term interests in the Philippines at risk because it was not in our interest as having propped Marcos up beyond the time which his own national constituency didn't any longer want him.

*Q: How did the Pentagon feel about this?*

BOSWORTH: By and large they understood. They of course were always very conscious of the need for the bases, but we were fortunate at that point in having some people in the Pentagon who I think were quite clear thinking. One of them was Rich Armitage. He was the principal kind of Pentagon guy in the Philippine account. More and more pressure was mounting on Marcos in '84 and '85. Finally in November of '85 we had had a number of people over there. Bill \_\_\_\_\_ had come and then Paul \_\_\_\_\_ came out as a special emissary from the president, to basically push Marcos to try to get him to make some economic and political reforms. Marcos didn't really ever evidence much desire to do that. What he did do was to prove that he wasn't well understood so he hired a top-notch republican public relations firm in Washington to present his case.

*Q: Is that Hill and Knowlton?*

BOSWORTH: No, it was Black, Manafort and Stone. I kept telling Marcos that his problem was not how the message was being transmitted, it was what was in the message. He was not too fond of hearing that. I got along with him during all of that time pretty well. I rather admired him in some ways. I mean he was a man of enormous intellect. The only man in the Philippines I ever found I could sit down and have a kind of global conversation with. He reached a point where his moral compass had gone badly astray. He had no vision of his own life beyond being president of the Philippines. He was not in good health. He was under pressure from his wife and various cronies around him to just keep plunging around him because they knew if he left or if he reformed to any significant extent that they were, their status was very much at risk.

*Q: Do you think the wife was very influential?*

BOSWORTH: Oh, very much so, but she was always subservient to his decision. The notion of Imelda is a kind of an independent presence; presence, yes, but independent decision making. I've always found difficult that to accept. For example there were those who thought that she was the one responsible for the assassination of Aquino. She and the chief of staff of the armed forces. I never was able to agree with that because it seemed to me neither of them would have dared do that without Marcos' informed consent.

*Q: For somebody who was pretty intelligent, that decision to kill Aquino right out in public as he gets off an airplane seems to be somebody's incredible decision.*

BOSWORTH: I think the problem that Marcos had by this time he had convinced himself that they could get away with almost anything in the Philippines. I think he honestly thought that he would blame it on the communists and everybody would accept that. They didn't and it was botched. It was not well done.

*Q: So, you're going along through the middle '80s and this is '85 and '86 and how is the attempt to?*

BOSWORTH: Finally in the fall of '85 the pressure on Marcos had become quite severe. Casey having been there, [inaudible] having been there, messages from the president all of which I was orchestrating from the embassy. I was continuing to tell him very strongly that he had to allow more space for the opposition, he had to do something about bringing those who most people thought had been responsible for Aquino's assassination, at least have been the agent of that, he had to bring them to justice in incredible fashion. He really couldn't bring them to justice in incredible fashion because that would have cost him all of his support or much of his support that he had within the senior ranks of the military. So, in November of '85, while being interviewed on one of the Sunday morning talk shows on American television, suddenly said, well, I'm tired of you guys pressing me and I'm going to have an election and then I'll show you who really deserves to run the Philippines. He called an election, the so-called snap election. This was in November. The election was scheduled for early February. Corazon Aquino was persuaded by some people in the opposition that she should be a candidate. She and a fellow named Salvador Laurel fought it out as to who would be the presidential candidate. She won and Laurel became vice president. He was constantly besieging me to try to get me an interview with her and persuade her that they should be reversed. The ranking should be reversed and he should be the presidential candidate. The U.S. position in the Philippines was really in a way kind of unique. We were on the one hand in the minds of many Filipinos seen as the great Satan of the West. On the other hand we were seen as the *dues ex machina* from whom all solutions would come if only we decided that's what we wanted to do. Most of the Filipinos were saying two thoughts in their minds simultaneously. There was a degree of dependence if you will on the U.S. that was very much exaggerated in many respects. People really thought that Marcos was still there because we wanted him to still be. December and January were given to campaigning. The campaign had developed fairly rapidly and was quite vigorous. Marcos himself was not in good health, but he had a tremendous will of his, he was out there on the campaign trail, making speeches and shaking hands. I think from the beginning he thought, he basically thought he was going to win easily. He was out of touch with popular sentiment. I think his fall back was he thought, well, if I



don't win I can always cheat enough to win. What he didn't anticipate was that the level of international interest would be as great as it was and the presence of the American journalists, foreign journalists and the various election inspection observation teams that came from the congress and from the civil societies in the country and elsewhere around would be as great as they were. So, his ability to win it by cheating became very constrained. To this day no one really knows who won that election. My belief has always been that she won it probably not by as wide a margin as some people thought, but nevertheless she won it. He, however, then within the week after the elections sort of seized the process and managed through his minions and the national assembly predictably to introduce the vote saying that he had won. Well, that wasn't the end of it contrary to what I think he had assumed to be the case because then the public antipathy began to rise. They didn't just shut up and go back to being a housewife. The opposition became even more vigorous. Because of pressures in our own congress and in our own public, we remained very engaged. We came to the position of pushing away from Marcos in that week or two after the election. There was one, I remember, one statement out of the White House that Reagan was quoted as saying, well, there was probably some cheating on both sides, at which point the Filipinos went nuts. I fired back a message to Shultz and to the White House saying that we couldn't stay on that position. Fortunately over the next three or four days with a lot of heavy lifting from George Shultz the White House issued another statement that said the government had not run a fair election.

*Q: What would have led Reagan to say that? Were there partisans of Marcos in the NSC or elsewhere in the White House?*

BOSWORTH: There were partisans of a view that we should not abandon our friends and Corey Aquino was a non-entity, unknown and untested and that the democratic opposition in the Philippines was dangerously left and that our presence at the bases would be at risk and that we should continue to back Marcos. Phil Habib who was then retired from the Foreign Service came out as an envoy from the president about a week after the elections when all of this was boiling away; he came out basically to gain us some time. I mean there was nothing he could do other than go around and see a lot of people, which he and I did including Marcos and Aquino. Phil came away from that week convinced that Marcos had lost the capacity to govern and was no longer capable of governing because he didn't have the support of the Filipino people anymore. He went back to Washington to expound that point of view which was the point of view that I was expounding from the embassy. The day he left to go back to Washington was the day that there was this so-called people power revolution in the Philippines that began. Ironically it began because a group of young military officers who were opposed to Marcos had become opposed to it and to their chief of staff had been plotting as we now know Juan Ponce Enrile, the minister of defense and to some extent with Fidel Ramos, the acting chief of staff until Marcos just before the election basically found their innocent.

Marcos' forces basically knew that these guys were plotting a coup. We knew it in the embassy as well. I had been sending word back to the coup plotters to stop it, not to do it because as much as I thought Marcos should go, I thought it would be in some ways be totally disastrous to have him replaced by a military government particularly. To arrest these coup plotters. They also knew that Juan Enrile, the minister of defense, was involved. That was of course quite a shocker because he really had been a long time supporter of Marcos. This group of colonels and young

officers took refuge in one of the military camps out on the outskirts of Manila and [inaudible] called me. This was the first that we knew that this was happening. I was in the residence in my office writing a cable reporting on Habib's and my last conversations with Marcos and others.

*Q: This was about what date now?*

BOSWORTH: This was I think the 21st or 22nd of February, 1986.

*Q: 1986.*

BOSWORTH: Yes. Then [inaudible] called me and said, we are surrounded. We're holed up and you've got to help us. Well, it wasn't clear to me at that point exactly what we were dealing with. Still I thought it might be at that time was just a military coup. Of course we let Washington know. By this time it was on the airwaves. CNN finally, the first time, had the capability to telecast directly via satellite and they had a cameraman and a reporter in the camp where the military people were holed up. So, I alerted Washington, it was early morning back there. They were watching it on CNN. They knew more about what was happening on the ground there than I did in the embassy because I didn't have access to CNN. That evening I was in contact with Mrs. Aquino's camp and her directly. She had been down in the central Philippines. We were very concerned about her safety and I offered her refuge on a U.S. naval vessel that happened to be in the vicinity.

*Q: That was on your own initiative?*

BOSWORTH: Yes. I told Washington afterwards that I was quite confident that they would approve. I had been in contact with her brother who was one of her principal advisors during the political campaign because they were very concerned that Marcos would try to knock her out by basically assassinating her which was not by any means unthinkable. Washington had given its approval with the notion that if at all, if everything else failed I could invite her to come to the embassy residence. I couldn't do that because she was not in Manila, but I did offer her refuge on the ship. She wisely concluded that she didn't want to do that. She didn't want to appear to be under U.S. sponsorship, so she took refuge for the night in a convent and then early the next day came back to Manila. In the meantime Cardinal Jaime Sin had gone on Radio Veritas which was a very small transmitter sponsored by the Catholic church when he learned that Enrile and Ramos and their supporters were in the military camp and he said to the Philippine public that you've got to go help them, take them food. Of course at that point people began to pour out into the streets and once that happened it became clear that this may have started as a military coup, but was much more than that now. She came back the next morning and she sort of took visible control.

*Q: This is Aquino?*

BOSWORTH: This is Aquino. Which was very important because I was very conscious of the need not to be seen as to be putting the U.S. behind a military coup attempt. Since we had by this time pretty much concluded publicly that she had basically won the election, there was nothing wrong with putting our support behind her. For the next two days my role consisted primarily of

1) keeping Washington fully informed and 2) warning Marcos directly on the phone that he should not move by force against Enrile and Ramos in a military camp. He should not do anything that would jeopardize the safety of hundreds of thousands of Filipino civilians who were out in the streets supporting Mrs. Aquino and demanding Marcos' resignation. Finally, over the next couple of days the situation played out so that we issued a statement, the U.S. from Washington, which I then transmitted, to Marcos and others saying in effect the time has come you should leave.

*Q: Now that statement, did you in effect compose that yourself and send it back to them for approval or did that come up?*

BOSWORTH: I don't remember where it came from. It was a judgment that we reached pretty much simultaneously. I think I was probably out ahead of official Washington in making that judgment.

*Q: Were you able to talk in those days by secure phone to Washington or did you have to keep doing it by cable?*

BOSWORTH: The secure phone connections were very bad. In the end we had to do a lot of talking on the unclassified open line because there was no other way to manage communications.

*Q: It is interesting as you say that CNN at that point really begins in effect this new sort of revolution.*

BOSWORTH: This was the first one.

*Q: Yes. So, you get a statement then that basically says that the position of the U.S. government that Marcos should go.*

BOSWORTH: Right. The time has come. With that we had removed the sign of heaven from him, the mandate of heaven. He was done. Then it was a question of how to get him out safely.

*Q: How did that? I mean did he immediately say, okay, I'm leaving?*

BOSWORTH: No, he didn't say, okay. His first words to me were I'm terribly disappointed. You don't understand. Your government doesn't understand. This is a military coup and I have to resist it. I said, well, we don't agree that it's a military coup any longer. We think that it is something bigger than that. Anyway, these are my instructions. I then got back to him the next day. He was in the palace with his family and his grandchildren. We offered him three alternative routes out. Basically by land and by sea and by air. He opted for the air route and he sent some of his minions and his baggage out by boat. We took him out by helicopter. We took him to Clark where he spent a few hours and then we put him on a plane and he went out first to Guam and then to Hawaii. Of course, he died in exile.

*Q: That's the idea of going to Hawaii. It sort of evolved from a discussion process?*

BOSWORTH: Yes. There is a big Filipino presence in Hawaii. He knew Hawaii. It was very important to us and to President Reagan in particular that we not allow him to be harassed, that we would give him safe haven basically in the United States, but we wouldn't let him go back to the Philippines. Well, he never really had a complete safe haven because the legal people began coming after him very quickly. Eventually, even after his death they continued to go after the estate. He never went back to the Philippines until after his death.

*Q: He leaves and Mrs. Aquino comes to power.*

BOSWORTH: Mrs. Aquino comes to power and a great upsurge of national spirit and good feeling. The U.S. for a time at least was, we were heroes, because we had taken him out. I remember going down to call on her the day after Marcos had left. She was not yet living in the palace. She was in her office in her family's building. As I came out having exchanged statements of good feeling with her and her principal aides, a big crowd of people on the outside all started cheering for the U.S. and me. It was really kind of an extraordinary experience since I previously used to go into my office at the embassy driving through large crowds of demonstrators all saying, Bosworth go home. Some of them had little clips underneath that Bosworth go home saying and take me with you. Filipinos had a sense of humor if nothing else.

*Q: How would you characterize your relationship with Mrs. Aquino in a policy sense and what did you make of her?*

BOSWORTH: I had a very close relationship with Mrs. Aquino in many ways personally of course. It was incumbent upon me just because of circumstances to try to interpret her to Washington and interpret Washington to her. This was of course the normal role of an ambassador, but in this case it was more demanding because she had so little experience. She was a woman of tremendous integrity and great courage and I liked her generally and personally. She liked me and she liked my wife. Her great supporter turned out to be George Shultz. Others in the Reagan administration were less enthusiastic about her and many questioned her ability to run the country effectively. I always considered that she was sort of the mother of the Philippines. Her role essentially was to oversee the reestablishment of democratic institutions. There were missed opportunities. The government was not very coherent. It was torn from the right and from the left. There were great divisions within the government so that particularly in terms of economic policy, there were opportunities that were lost that were not regained until she finished her presidency and Fidel Ramos became president. That was a time of considerable consolidation and forward movement economically. Under her the Philippines became a democracy again with all of its imperfections. She endured numerous military coups because Juan Enrile who had been frustrated by her having taken over the revolution in effect, he never accepted the legitimacy of her presidency and even when he was minister of defense was supporting coup activity against her. She overcame all of that again with strong support from the U.S. That was after I had left. I think the U.S. relationship with her was on the whole very positive. There were things that we did that she didn't like. She did not like to receive what she called gratuitous advice. You had to have a relationship with her in which she would ask for your advice, but just to go down there and tell her what we thought she ought to do, didn't work. Of course Washington's sensitivity to that was not always too well defined. We didn't like the fellow who was then her chief of staff because we thought he was not doing well by her, and we

were suspicious of his longer term motives about us. I remember one time I received an instruction in effect to go down and tell her we didn't like her chief of staff and we thought she should get a new one. I simply refused to do that feeling that there were many people around the world who probably didn't like Ronald Reagan's chief of staff, but we would not continuance them telling us to get rid of him. There was a patronizing attitude on the part of some in Washington.

The President himself, Reagan, never developed much of a relationship with her largely I think because Nancy Reagan had this close relationship with Imelda Marcos and she was never willing to set that aside.

*Q: Mrs. Aquino becomes president in 1986 then and how much longer did you remain in the Philippines?*

BOSWORTH: Right. That was February of '86. I left in April of '87.

*Q: April of '87. The base structure agreements and so forth were still in force when you left?*

BOSWORTH: They were still in force. We began a renegotiation in '89. I had suggested to Washington that we accelerate the schedule for the renegotiation because in my judgment we were never going to be in a better position to do that than we were right after the revolution. But Washington didn't want to do that for various reasons none of which I ever quite understood. By the time we began to renegotiate the rose had faded a bit from the times of the revolution and our support and it proved to be very difficult and in the end the possible negotiation was blocked by a nationalist minority in the senate. She never really sort of leaned in forcibly enough in support of a new agreement at least in the view of those in Washington. That was by that time it was the Bush administration.

*Q: Talk a little bit about your relationships with the rest of the embassy. Did you feel that you mentioned a little bit about the military attaches, they must have been a significant presence in the embassy I presume?*

BOSWORTH: The attaches were a significant presence, but not as significant as they might have been because we had these huge military establishments there, Clark and Subic. The American commanders there were deputy commanders. Deputies to Filipinos. That was the way it was set up under the previous base agreement. We had extensive connections into the Philippines military and some of them who are defense attaches and one or two of those were quite productive. In fact that's how we learned of the impending coup plotting. In managing the relationship between the two governments I found it much more important to work with the commanders of Clark and Subic. It was always, the lines of responsibility were always quite clearly defined. I was responsible for overall relations with the government that included their relationships with their military counterparts. It worked well. During the crisis it worked particularly well because their presence, the military's presence, their transport and logistical instruments we would never have had otherwise. We had helicopters right there to take Marcos out when it came time to take him out. We had a transport plane to send him to Guam, all of those things. Civil military relations in the embassy and within the American country team were

excellent. In fact my wife and I were just two weeks ago down in South Carolina and spent three days with the guy and his wife who worked as the commanding admiral at Subic Bay when we were there. So, we've retained those friendships and I think we trusted one another so we were able to operate in times of crisis with great effectiveness and a minimum of ego involved.

*Q: Did you feel you had a good working relationship with the agency people there?*

BOSWORTH: The agency people were superb. The agency's relationship with the Philippines was very longstanding. They used to joke that their real problem in the Philippines was that if they recruited somebody within a week that person could not pass a lie detector test because one of the questions on the lie detector test was have you told anyone about your relationship with the agency. They of course as soon as they had a relationship went out and told all of their family and friends because it was an asset socially for them. The agency was quite well informed and worked very effectively with the other constituencies of the American presence there. I had a very close personal relationship with the station chief.

*Q: Talk a little bit about this communist insurgency thing because it seems as if there was a kind of endless insurgency problem in part of the country and is that because without too much of a historical thing on it, but is that because the Philippines themselves cannot figure out a way to solve that problem and what attitude did you take towards it when you were there for example?*

BOSWORTH: There were two kinds of insurgencies. One was the Islamic insurgency.

*Q: Right. Was that noticeable when you were there?*

BOSWORTH: Well, it had faded a bit by the time I was there. It had been strongest in the '70s and of course, now in the last few years has risen again. That was an insurgency that came primarily out of Luzon and it had its roots and the demands for Philippine Muslims for autonomy. At one time back in the '50s during the Huk insurgency, the government had taken many people from an area which was very overpopulated, and it relocated them where there was lots of land. That was good in one respect, but the problem with it was that it intermingled Christians with Muslims so that it was very hard if not almost impossible to segregate the two communities so that you could give the Muslims much autonomy other than a kind of token autonomy. This had been a dispute that had gone on for a long, long time. Islamic insurgency or Muslim insurrections in the Philippines date back to the arrival of the Spanish in 1523. The other kind of insurgency was much more of a kind of traditional communist insurgency. The so-called New Peoples Army. It was very similar to the way that the Viet Cong had operated in Vietnam. Local organization, building networks themselves throughout the country. Building a military capacity that was basically a guerrilla capacity. Very much targeted against the government as well against the United States, but primarily against the government. Immediately after Marcos left and Mrs. Aquino began to assert herself and do certain things we concluded that Marcos himself had been the best recruiter for the New Peoples Army. Now, it's still there. It's never disappeared entirely in fact I think within the last year or two it may have actually gained a little momentum. There is a long history of rural insurgency, rural violence in the Philippines that goes back well into the Spanish period. It has its roots in poverty, its sense of national injustice and also in the way that the Philippines is organized I think my own personal view socially and

politically. There are very few organizations in the Philippines that are organized on a horizontal basis. Loyalties in the Philippines go up and down. They don't go horizontally. The labor movement in the Philippines is not very impressive for example for that reason. Political parties are not ideological parties for the most part for that same reason. Everything is done on the basis of personal relationship.

*Q: It's a client relationship.*

BOSWORTH: It is. There's a Filipino phrase for this and it means that you protect people underneath you and people above you protect you and the chain of obligation runs up and down. It does not extend horizontally. I think that that's a reason for the fact that the rule for the Philippines is still not the kind of public order and rule of law that one would like to see.

*Q: So, you're there until, well, is there anything else in particular that you want to talk about in your period there? Any issues?*

BOSWORTH: I think just managing the new relationship with her. I remember the embassy country team the morning after she had been inaugurated and sworn in as president. I said, you know, we're all going to look back on yesterday as the end of a fairly easy era in U.S. Philippines relations because one of the positive things about dealing with a dictatorship is that if it is an effective dictatorship it can run the relationship quite effectively. You may not like what it costs, but when we have a problem we can work it out fairly efficiently. Of course, with a sprawling newborn democracy, that was not possible and the relationship was frequently quite messy.

*Q: Were you surprised, I mean this isn't strictly in your credo, but were you surprised in effect at how fast in the end the bases went out and that we seemed to have survived their closure? In retrospect how do you think about that?*

BOSWORTH: Yes. I think, well, I was surprised, but it was not necessarily only because it was the decision that the Filipinos made or we made, there were decisions and circumstances change. By 1989 it became apparent that the former Soviet Union was going to become a former Soviet Union fairly soon. That meant that the Cold War was effectively coming to an end and that the need for us to maintain bases as part of a chain of containment was diminished. Also, Mount Pinatubo erupted and God played some role in this and that eruption made Clark Air Base simply unusable. Then of course the Philippine senate made it impossible for us to save Subic. I think if you would ask the U.S. navy today if they would still rather have something at Subic the answer would be of course. It was a great harbor, very efficiently located, but clearly we've learned to operate without it and there are many Filipinos in fact who still lament the fact that we left.

*Q: So, you were there for three years? So, your tenure came to an end in the summer of '87 more or less?*

BOSWORTH: In May of '87.

*Q: Okay. Is that because the three years were up?*

BOSWORTH: No. It was mostly driven by personal considerations. Our children, our blended family of children were back in the States. They were then most of them in the university. Financially I was strapped. My wife wanted to go back. She'd enjoyed the Philippines enormously, but she wanted to be closer to our families and she wanted to go back to school. It was just a sense that three years was enough. In fact, George Shultz didn't want me to leave. As it turned out, he put somebody in there who was very effective, Nick Platt, who was my successor. He tried to persuade me to stay and I stayed for a few more months, but that was enough.

**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: '85, and then where did you go?*

PIEZ: Back to Washington. Ronald Reagan was the president and Paul Wolfowitz was the assistant secretary for East Asia. I replaced an officer who had been in the job for four years and was coming to the end of his tour. Wolfowitz went through the prospective list of foreign service officers and he asked for me, and I went.

*Q: To do what?*

PIEZ: In 1985.

*Q: And what was your job?*

PIEZ: DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) for economics in the East Asia bureau. I was the bureau's senior economic officer.

*Q: You were there from '85 to when?*

PIEZ: Until '89. In 1988 George Bush the elder was elected and inaugurated in January 1989. At that time (1989) the new Secretary of State was James Baker who had come over from treasury.



He had a treasury officer that had he thought would be very good for my job. I had been in it for four years, after all, so Bob Fauver replaced me coming from treasury.

*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.

*Q: How stood things with the Philippines because by the time you came back in the Philippines Marcos had been ousted. Were you seeing a change in the economic thing or were the same people still stealing?*

PIEZ: Oh no. When Marcos left his set of cronies were pretty promptly pushed aside. Cory Aquino was the president. I remember Secretary Schultz went out there for talks with her and the leading ministers in the Philippines, and I went along as part of the delegation.

*Q: Were we seeing a revival of good business in the Philippines?*

PIEZ: I think that was slow going. Marcos had left some severe problems. During the time I had lived in the Philippines much earlier, one completely reliable utility was electricity. It was owned and operated by a private company with connections with one of the old Spanish families, the Lopez family. They were not particularly supporters of Marcos, but they got along. They had succeeded in getting some credits from the World Bank and in putting in some new hydropower facilities. When I served there one thing you could rely on was the electricity. You couldn't rely on the water. Your water would just stop. Maybe 20 hours a day there was no water supply. But the electricity was good. By the end of the Marcos period it wasn't anymore, because he had taken over the electric utilities and in Manila there were brownouts continuously. Marcos cronies running the electric company had failed to build additional capacity to serve the fast growing population. After Marcos was gone even Mrs. Aquino as President was having a very hard time getting electricity production up and running.

**ANTHONY C. ZINNI**  
**Commander, 9<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment; Commanding Officer, 35<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit**  
**Okinawa (1987-1989)**

*General Zinni was born and raised in Pennsylvania. After graduating from Vallanova College he joined the Marines, which became his lifelong career. His distinguish career took him to Vietnam, Okinawa, Philippines and Germany, where he served in senior level positions. Attaining the rank of General, Zinni served as Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM, where he was deeply involved in worldwide missions including Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. General Zinni was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

*Q: Let's talk a bit about the Philippines. When was this?*

ZINNI: This was in the late '80s, mid to late '80s. I was based in on Okinawa, commander of the regiment in the marine expeditionary unit and there were all sorts of problems in the Philippines with the NPA (New People's Army) and the Communist guerrillas and other things and they had threatened an attack and killed some airmen at Clark Air Force Base. They killed the attaché, Colonel Rove, who had been a prisoner of war for a long time in Vietnam and so we went down and reacted to a lot of that on security missions, spent a lot of time down there, conducted humanitarian operations when typhoons came through and other things and so that tended to be where we were for most of the crisis that we faced.

*Q: What was your impression of, you had obviously faced, developed pretty good antennae for the foreign troops and the foreign government; what was your impression of the Philippine army and other units and of how it was working?*

ZINNI: We tended to work with the Philippine marines a lot and again, in comparison to the other organizations within their military, it tended to be maybe the more elite. And at the same time I was out there we were worked with South Koreans, the South Korean marines which were again, very tough, an elite force. So, the Marine units we operated with, in a relative sense, the others, seemed to be and where they have the most problems is where they put the Marines in terms of the Philippines. They tended to deploy them in the parts of the Philippine Islands where they had the biggest problems.

*Q: That goes back to the Philippine war that we had at the turn of the century.*

ZINNI: That was the tradition in the Marine Corps. If you served on Samar, everyone had to stand when you entered the room. You know, they'd say, "Stand, Gentlemen. He served at Samar," because it was such a bloody, brutal battle.

*Q: Did you see or were you there long enough to see the Philippine government with its military force doing some of the things you sort of learned in Vietnam?*

ZINNI: You know, I didn't understand the insurgency that much. We tended to be out operating on a military to military level. Obviously, your exposure to the Philippines at that time, Marcos of course was president, there seemed to be from what I could detect a strong difference between the government and the people's reaction to it, the government, in my mind. I don't want to overstate this but it seemed to be headed for bigger problems in terms of its people feeling that the government wasn't serving it. And, obviously, what happened to Marcos later on.

Much later in life I was to go back to the Philippines and do peace mediation work with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the government of President Arroyo.

**G. EUGENE MARTIN**  
**Political/Military Officer**  
**Manila (1987-1990)**

*A Specialist in Chinese Affairs and a speaker of Chinese, Mr. Martin spent the major part of his career dealing with matters relating to China, both in Washington and abroad. His overseas assignments included Hong Kong, Taipei, Huangzhou (formerly Canton), Beijing, Manila and Rangoon. His Washington assignments also concerned China and the Far East. Mr. Martin was born in Indiana of Missionary parents and was raised in the US. and India. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo College and Syracuse University. Mr. Martin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: So you were in Manila from?*

MARTIN: I was in Manila from 1987 to 1990.

*Q: Well, this was a fascinating period!*

MARTIN: It was a fascinating period, indeed!

*Q: What was the situation '87, when you arrived there?*

MARTIN: Well, I missed all the fun with Marcos. That was '86. The election the end of '85, the people power effort in 1986, and the election of Cory (Corazon) Aquino and assumption of power in February of '86, and Marcos's departure for Hawaii. So I missed all that. I was there for a whole different kind of turbulent period.

*Q: Had you had previous Philippine experience?*

MARTIN: No. No experience in the Philippines at all. In fact, most of my career had been on China, Chinese language study, and so forth, except for my second tour, which was in Rangoon.

That was really my only Southeast Asian experience. In many ways, I was happy to add to my portfolio, to be able to have some additional Philippine experience.

*Q: Before you went out, what were you picking up about what was going on in the Philippines after the fall of Marco? What was your picture of the Philippines?*

MARTIN: I had been involved, as Paul Wolfowitz's special assistant in EAP in '84 – 85, in the beginnings of the change in policy in the Reagan administration toward Marcos. I knew John Mike Maisto, who was the director of the Philippine desk at the time, and we worked closely with him trying to influence the policy. It really started with John Maisto and the desk. John had been in the Philippines at least once, if not twice, I think; married to a Filipina; and really was the one who had come to the conclusion that policy had to change in the Philippines. By '83 – 84 the situation had gotten desperate, particularly with Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino's assassination. So he began to work, first within the bureau, and then within the department, and finally on an interagency basis to influence the NSC, and then ultimately the president, that it was time to begin to push Marcos for some changes. I think he realized at that point that changes were not going to be possible under Marcos or Imelda, and so it was a time to shift our support from the Marcoses to the opposition.

So when I arrived in the Philippines, even though I had subsequently been dealing with China for two years from the desk, I still was fairly up to date with what was happening in the Philippines.

*Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?*

MARTIN: At that time, the ambassador was just changing. It had been Steve Bosworth, who had been there through the coup of 1986, the change in government, Marcos evacuation to Honolulu, Cory Aquino's coming to power, and so forth. When I arrived, he had just left, and Phil Kaplan was the chargé d'Affaires. But he was there two or three weeks before he left. Ken Quinn, formerly of the Secretariat in the Department, came as DCM and Nicholas Platt arrived as the ambassador. We all arrived about the same time, in July or August 1987. I was the politico-military officer within the political section. The position was, in a sense, somewhat separate from the straight political hierarchy in the section. While there was a political counselor and a deputy, my position was somewhat coequal with the deputy and I reported primarily to the political counselor, and through him to the ambassador.

*Q: Who was the political counselor?*

MARTIN: The political counselor was John Yates, who was an African, not an Asian hand, but had been assigned to the Philippines for family reasons. He was a very competent officer; he had been an ambassador in Cape Verde previously and went back, subsequently, to be an ambassador in Africa.

*Q: I would think that sometimes the politico-military position is interesting but I would imagine the whole politico-military connection with the Philippines was really our driving force, wasn't it?*

MARTIN: It was. I often used to say I had the best job in the embassy, except perhaps DCM and ambassador, and maybe even better than theirs in the sense that I didn't have all the responsibilities they had. It was also the job that I think everybody else wanted a piece of. I really enjoyed the job, mainly because it gave me an opportunity to get involved in so many aspects of a bilateral relationship. It was the dominant aspect, dominant factor in our relationship. In fact, it was the overwhelming relationship, and the one that I think really tilted the relationship totally out of balance. The security relationship, with the bases in the Philippines, which I was responsible for, really was the key operative aspect of our relationship with the Philippines, with all the benefits and most of the problems.

*Q: The name of the game was bases, wasn't it?*

MARTIN: Correct.

*Q: What was the atmosphere regarding the bases -- within the new Aquino government, the legislature, in the military, and the public in general?*

MARTIN: Well, it was the most active political issue within the Philippine body politic. And it was the issue which constantly came up in all our discussions. Whether it was the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) program, whether it was the USIS Public Diplomacy (which was not yet called that) programs in those days, whether it was the economic or trade aspects of our relationship, somehow or another, the discussion was always related back to the bases, particularly by the Philippine pundits, the opinion makers, and the public.

The bases were very controversial issues. As you know, the bases had changed after independence in 1945. We had, frankly, twisted arms to the point where the Filipinos, having lost everything in World War II, were forced to allow us to maintain our military presence there. Over the years, the military *raison d'être* for our being in the Philippines changed with the political climate. Initially, of course, the bases were there to maintain our presence in the region. Subsequently, the bases became part of the circle of containment around China which we established after the Korean War began. Subsequently, our military forces became important in efforts to assist the Philippines put down their internal subversion, the insurrection by the Communists. Then when Vietnam picked up, the Philippines became a critical base of support for the war effort. And so over the years, the importance of the bases changed depending on what our policies and our strategic interests were in the region, which is natural and not surprising.

The Filipinos began to feel more and more concerned that 1) the bases were not in their interests because it didn't really provide much to them. 2) they were concerned the bases were going to bring the Philippines into a conflict of which they were not a part, Vietnam being one of the major ones. Marcos, of course, played this very adeptly. Politically he used the bases as hostage, in a sense as ransom, to be able to get further aid and support by the U.S. government. The U.S. was unwilling to really confront Marcos on human rights or his domestic policies, mainly because of the bases.

When Aquino took power, she was somewhat ambivalent because her husband, Ninoy Aquino, had come out of the political world of the Philippines, and had made some statements over the

years that the bases were not really beneficial to the Philippines, that the U.S. needed to really pay more for the bases, and be able to use them more to the Philippine benefit. The Aquino administration initially criticized the bases, but she realized quickly that she depended heavily on U.S. support, and so did not say very much when she came into power.

The status of the bases, of course, had changed over the years. Initially they had been U.S. bases on Philippine soil. By the mid '50s, this had become untenable; and so, I think, in '57 or '58 the new base treaty, under the Mutual Defense Agreement, changed the bases to Philippine bases in name, that the Philippines were the sovereign commanders of the bases, and the U.S. was there at their behest, subordinate to the Philippine base commander. In reality, of course, this was all a fiction. Nobody was really fooled by this in any way.

*Q: When you arrived there, what did you see? I mean what were you doing?*

MARTIN: My job was liaison between the embassy and the bases. I dealt with the base commanders. I dealt with the politico-military officers on the base. I was the co-chair of the joint US-RP Criminal Justice Implementation Committee (CJIC) dealing with cases involving the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement). It was a joint committee between the Philippine Justice Department, the embassy, the local prosecutors (called fiscals) and the bases' politico-military officers and others who were responsible for the behavior of personnel.

This was a very controversial issue because Philippines opponents of the bases criticized them as places where Americans service personnel could get away with criminal acts. Soldiers could escape to the bases after committing rape, murder, mayhem, what have you, in town and the U.S. would always protect them from any Philippine jurisdiction over them. This was a constant controversy. There were in some cases bad troops who did terrible things within the community. On the other hand, there were also a number of Filipinos who were more than willing to take advantage and claim robbery, chaos, breaking up bars, attacks on women, and so forth, which I think were based upon a desire to get money. So we had a steady stream of cases to consider at our monthly CJIC meetings.

Secondly, I was responsible for maintaining a close liaison between the bases and the embassy, particularly the ambassador. The admiral in command of the Subic Naval Base was considered the representative of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Forces (CINCPAC) and maintained a small office and a representative, in the embassy. The commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force at Clark Air Base was also base commander. The Defense Attaché Office was involved in base and pol-mil issues as, more tangentially, was the commanding general of the JUSMAG. I was the one to coordinate with these offices and various other people who were interested in aspects of our security relationship, to make sure that we tried to keep on top of it, and that the policy was coordinated.

*Q: Of the bases at that time, one thinks of Clark being an air force base, a major air force base. Subic Bay was more than just a port*

MARTIN: Subic had many parts. There was the Subic Bay Naval Base, Cubi Point Naval Air Station, the Marine Corps detachment, the ship repair facility, the logistics facility, the munitions

depot, and others. In addition there was San Miguel, which was a naval communications station a few miles north of Subic, a separate base.

Clark was the air force base in which the Thirteenth Air Force was based. The 13th Air Force was affiliated with air bases across the Pacific - in Japan, Korea and Alaska.

In addition, Camp John Hay was the MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) recreational facility in the hill station of Baguio, which was run by the air force, but for all the service personnel.

*Q: How about the army? Did they have much of a presence there?*

MARTIN: Army had almost no presence. The Army had a small unit detachment as liaison at Clark working on training exercises. The Philippines was used extensively for training -- marines from Okinawa and the Special Forces from Korea and Okinawa, live fire naval exercises near Subic and Special Operations training flights. There were large training areas attached to the bases. Camp Magsaysay, a Philippine Army base, was used for joint training with Philippine troops. A major annual joint exercise was "Balikatan," which sometimes included 2,000 to 3,000 U.S. troops plus Philippine counterparts.

In addition to that, attached to Clark was the Crow Valley Bombing Range, which did exercises almost on the scale that you had out in Nevada. There was an air force red flag exercise called "Cope Thunder" that would involve U.S. aircraft from Japan, Korea, and the continental U.S. itself, as well as allies from Singapore and Thailand, Australia, sometimes New Zealand, all to practice on the bombing range. It was really very sophisticated and quite a well-developed program, the only one in the region at that time that allowed for allied cooperation and allied joint use.

That was facilitated by Camp O'Donnell, north of Clark, which was another training area, but they ran the software programs for the bombing range. They set up the programs, the running tracks, and monitored each plane's performance.

There was Wallace Air Station near San Fernando on the Lingayen Gulf, which was where U.S. troops landed on Luzon Island after Leyte in 1944, to recapture Manila. Wallace was an air force radar station, as well as a Voice of America (VOA) antenna field. So all together there were six different premises, different locations, in which we had American military personnel.

*Q: What was your impression at that time of the Air Force and Navy view of the political-military situation in the Philippines?*

MARTIN: It was really quite a different response between the two services, mainly because of the different communities in which they were located. CINCPAC REP PHIL (Representative of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Command, in the Philippines), was the Navy admiral at Subic. Subic and its neighboring town, Olongapo, had a very different relationship than Clark and its host community of Angeles.

Subic was on the coast and surrounded by mountains. The city of Olongapo, which was just outside the gates, had a rather disreputable reputation. The ribald opening scene from the movie An Officer and a Gentleman was very realistic. Originally Olongapo was part of the base and the whole area within the bowl of the mountains on the coast, was run by the U.S. Navy base commander. Subsequently, the town of Olongapo was separated from the base, which in turn became (in name) a Philippine naval base when we turned it over to Philippine government control. Subic was quite isolated, because of the mountains and the coast. The Navy also had a better relationship with the local community, in part because Olongapo was firmly under the control of the Gordon family who held the mayorship for many decades..

Angeles and Clark was a totally different situation! Angeles, in the province of Pampanga, was the crossroads of Luzon. It was located in the middle of the broad plain that ran north and south, from Manila to Lingayen Gulf, between the mountain ranges. Being the crossroads, there was constant movement of people - north, south, east, west. Pampanga was also the area where the Huk Rebellion started after World War II. These were guerillas who had fought the Japanese, often with U.S. support; and when the Philippines gained its independence, the Huks rebelled. They felt that both the Americans and the Filipinos had betrayed promises of land reform. So it was the hotbed, or the heartland if you will, of insurgency, of rebellion, of leftist activity. Therefore, there was a confrontational relationship between the base commander at Clark and the community. The local government officials were under public pressures to try to squeeze everything they could out of the base while not restricting political activists demonstrating against the US presence. In addition, the base had a serious problem of pilfering and theft by people in the community, everything from diversion of PX and commissary goods to robbery of homes and vehicles. So it became a lot more "us against them, circle the wagons, build the wall higher, they're coming over the wall" mentality at Clark. While I was there, an eight-foot rebar and cinder block wall replaced the old mesh fence, which had essentially been stolen. And still the townspeople came over, or under.

Previous incarnations of military bases in Asia were similar, I think. After World War II, the bases in Japan often fought to keep the local people out from scavenging on the base. Korea was the same way after the Korean War. The bases often had a confrontational relationship with communities whose level of economic development was lower. I understand in recent years it's reversed in many places, Japan and perhaps Korea, where the American personnel are poorer than people in neighboring communities.

The rip off factor at Subic was not so much of a problem. But they had a much better perimeter of defense, and a much better guard force. They used the Negritos, diminutive aboriginal people, as part of the jungle defense force. Most of the remaining jungle in the Philippines was, at that time, around Subic. Average Filipinos from neighboring communities were afraid to penetrate the base through the jungle because of their fear of the Negritos who knew how to live and fight in the jungle. So Subic was able to protect themselves on the three sides that did not face the sea.

In general, living was much less pleasant in Clark than it was in Subic.

*Q: How did you find your role? I mean would you try to mollify, or what would you do?*



MARTIN: I worked with the base commanders and their staff to try to find ways in which they could maintain a dialogue with the local community, with the leaders, with the mayors, with others in the community around them; worked with the civil affairs people on the staff to try to develop civil affairs programs. I went on a couple exercises that included a civil action component, usually free medical or dental treatment of civilians in the villages around the province or near the exercise area.

The civil affairs units also had a fairly lively outreach program of holding discussions in the schools and in community organizations to find ways the community and the bases could work together. They were fairly effective, and I think that that did help the situation. Not surprisingly, they had a more difficult time in Clark and Angeles than they did in Subic.

*Q: Well were you sort of continually on call when there was an alleged rape, or a shooting, or something like that? Would that bring you into the action?*

MARTIN: I would hear about that, yes, particularly if there was any kind of a dustup like that in town. Part of the problem when I was there was security was bad. The Communist Party's military wing, the New People's Army (NPA) was very much at a high point. They had built up considerably in the latter Marcos years, and when Cory came in, they laid back for a while; but by the '88-89 timeframe, they had gone back on the offensive. Security around the bases was increasingly a concern, as it was in Manila for the embassy. We also had reports that base personnel were being targeted, that the NPA was going to take action in the neighborhood, and so forth.

I dealt a lot with the base security people, with NCIS (U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service) at the navy side, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). They were responsible for base security and personnel security, a constant problem. At the same time, I dealt with a lot of the people in the embassy who had the similar concerns. Our own security personnel, Diplomatic Security, had liaison with the base security people. The intelligence agencies had their own liaison. The Defense attaché felt that he had a role as well, being part of the intelligence agencies, and so forth.

We had country team meetings, which was usually a very full room when everyone came. The embassy in Manila was one of the few, that I've been in at least, that had a helicopter pad on the grounds (somewhat like Saigon, I guess, in a different sort of way). The base commanders, the Air Force general, and the Navy admiral would fly in every Tuesday morning, I think it was, for country team meeting on their helicopters. They would jockey to arrive first to get on the cement pad rather than have to land on the lawn. The JUSMAG commander, an Army Major General during my tour drove in since he lived in Manila. So we had three flag-rank officers sitting at the table, plus their staff sitting in back benches, at least some of them, and then all the country team members. Once, as we went around the table, I counted 13 agency heads or section heads who spoke about various aspects of their work. And I was involved in 11 of the 13 subjects that were raised at that table. In a sense, I had a handle, I had a role in almost everything that was going on in that embassy, which made the job fun. I often said, "Everybody wants to get involved in the bases issue, no matter what they do, what they're all responsible for, they all want to have a piece of the action with the bases, because this was the one issue that got the attention."

*Q: Did you have much contact on the Philippine side with the military or the civilian officials?*

MARTIN: My primary contacts were with the Philippine military, the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), the National Security Agency, their intelligence agency as well as the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). I also dealt with Presidential Assistants at the palace, Malacañang.

Again, as I say, it was a great job because I was involved in so many aspects of our bilateral relationship, and I had good contacts, I remember. It was particularly nice, because when I was there, Fidel “Eddie” Ramos was the Secretary of Defense, having just retired from the Philippine Constabulary. Actually, he was still the AFP Chief of Staff when I first knew him, and then became Secretary of National Defense (SND) while I was there. When I returned for my second tour six years later, I walked in, and Ramos said, “Gene! Welcome back! Nice to have you back!” At that point, he was the president. So it was kind of fun. I was delighted to have had the Pol-Mil job during my first tour as when I came back as DCM for my second tour, I had contacts and entree all across the government, from the president all the way through.

*Q: Was there a significant political group within the Philippine political spectrum, that made their money by attacking the American bases and American presence?*

MARTIN: I’m not sure they made their money, but they certainly made their political reputation. Their “raison d’être” was to criticize the bases. The leftist, or at least the so-called leftists, the nationalist politicians, the Tañadas, the Tolentinos, and others were well known for their nationalistic stances, and spent much of their time criticizing the U.S., U.S. policy, and specifically, the bases.

Part of the problem was that the security relationship and the bases had unbalanced our bilateral relations. We have a love-hate relationship with the Philippines given our history over the last hundred years. We had come in initially to liberate the country from Spanish colonialism, then essentially kidnapped their independence movement, betrayed it, took it over, and became the new colonial master. We fought a very bloody, insurgent war for three years - a rebellion between people who wanted independence and those of us who wanted to make the Philippines a colony - and this legacy continues. So there are nationalists who don’t particularly appreciate the U.S. role either as a colonialist, or subsequently as an ally. After the war, they felt we had preserved our influence, preserved our positions of control in the Philippines economically, politically, militarily in such a way that the Philippines really was not very independent. I tend to agree with much of what they said, but obviously, not to the extent that they did, mainly because I think they were using this as a means to heighten their own political stature and be able to help themselves politically and to hold onto power. Many had been in or still had relatives, property, bank accounts and doctors in the U.S. which they didn’t have a problem maintaining.

There was also the Communist movement, which during the Marcos years had co-opted much of the nationalists’ rhetoric. Many of the nationalists appeared to be affiliated with or at least work in parallel with the communists who were still engaged in an active insurgency against the

government. In the sense that they were able to feed off of each other, and many of the nationalists felt that the NPA attacks against U.S. interests were in their own interests.

*Q: How serious did we consider the NPA?*

MARTIN: At that time, we considered it very seriously because, while estimates of NPA strength varied anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 or more, there were large areas of the country where we could not go or where the civil government in the Philippines really did not maintain control. The military was not very effective in terms of being able to handle the insurgency. The Philippine Constabulary (PC), a paramilitary national police force, was a U.S. colonial successor to the "Guardia Civil" (the Civil Guard) of the Spanish era. The PC was responsible for local security, but they too were unable to maintain the government presence in many areas. Corruption was rife; poverty was widespread; education was deteriorating; so government services were not effective or evident. Corruption was perhaps the biggest problem since the lack of justice or of legal recourse for people who had problems forced them to turn to alternative means of redress. And the NPA was all too willing to provide revolutionary justice to abusive landlords or local officials. It all fit the traditional pattern in which insurgencies and the Communists were able to benefit.

*Q: Was there the feeling, when you were there at that point, that the clock was ticking; that these bases wouldn't be there much longer, or not?*

MARTIN: I thought so. I thought, initially, that it was just a matter of time. Many people felt that we could continue to renew the base agreement and keep it going, that this was something that was in our vital interest to keep. The navy always swore that without Subic, they might as well fold their tents and go back to San Diego - well, maybe Pearl Harbor; that they wouldn't really be able to maintain a forward deployed presence in the region. The air force said that they wouldn't be able to continue to provide security throughout the region; that our presence both in the Philippines and Taiwan (or around Taiwan), Korea and Japan would be affected if they didn't have Clark. They used Clark for throughput to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and on to the Middle East. So it was a critical base. It was a very important base that had a lot of traffic going through it, even after Vietnam was over. I think basically no one was willing, or forced, to consider alternatives. Most insisted that we had to keep what we had, and couldn't change. Subsequently, of course, we learned that we could!

*Q: Was the embassy seen by the military commanders as being a little too soft, or seen not as the enemy...but not that effective, or not?*

MARTIN: There's always a little bit of that, I think, in any chain of command. The bases, of course, reported back to Honolulu to the CINCPAC, the Air Force to PACAF (Pacific Air Forces), the Navy to CINCPACFLEET. The embassy leadership - I give the ambassador and the DCM great credit for this - worked closely with the base commanders. We kept in close touch. The military commanders were always included in decision-making. The phone lines were used regularly. Yes, there were differences of opinion, of course, but I think generally we hashed it out pretty well, and despite different perspectives, I don't recall major disagreements. One way

to judge this is to look at the '89 coup attempt, seven days in December. Good Embassy-base relations proved themselves on that occasion.

The other side of the job, of course, was managing the political relationship with the Philippines. The Philippines was in a period of great political instability at the time. We used to joke that the Philippines had a "coup-of-the-month" problem. During the three years that I was there, there were seven coup attempts. Some of them were farcical. It was almost like Bill Sullivan's comments about Laotian coups at one point, in which he described Laos as a Gilbert and Sullivan opera which was yet to be written. But the Philippine coup attempts were in some ways humorous, in other cases, very serious.

The first one happened in early September 1987 a few weeks after I arrived. It was the so-called Manila hotel coup attempt. In fact, Ambassador (Nicholas) Platt had been there all of about two weeks, and had not established many contacts in the government. The military, which felt they had been the main factor in the overthrow of Marcos, resented that they did not get better treatment after the Aquino administration took power. They felt that they had been short changed on benefits). The Young Officers' Union (YOU) and the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa – Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM)) as they call themselves – were dissident groups of young officers in the Philippine Armed Forces who felt that they should have gotten political power; that they should have been able to establish a junta, or at least a military controlled government after Marcos was overthrown. So they began a series of disturbances, a series of actions, which destabilized the government. That of course made the problem even worse. The government couldn't rule effectively because of constantly watching over its shoulder for what the military was thinking or doing. None of the coup attempts succeeded because the majority of the AFP refused to go along with the rebels, but the instability persisted throughout Cory Aquino's administration.

The first attempt was within a couple weeks after the ambassador, DCM Ken Quinn and I arrived, and we had to sort out what we could do, who to call, what our relationships were. The initial attempt ended within a couple of days so was not a serious threat. We were not directly involved other than making public statements, supporting the Aquino administration, and also working with the Defense Department, Chief of Staff Ramos at that time, to make sure the coup did not spread to other AFP units.

Subsequently, there were a number of other coup attempts by politicians in league with the dissident military officers. The Manila Hotel coup involved former (Marcos') prime minister, Tolentino, who barricaded himself up in the Manila Hotel with a small group of armed men, proclaimed that he was going to take over the government, and that he was going to be the new prime minister. The farce faded within a matter of hours, further reducing the reputation of former Marcos cronies. But the instability, political and economic, that this caused continued to reverberate through this society. At the same time, we had the NPA active around the country and the Moro Islamic insurgency in Mindanao. So it was quite an unstable period for the whole Philippines.

The most serious coup attempt and the one that affected us almost directly was in December '89. The same group of young officers who opposed the Aquino government started this again. This

became very serious because they were better organized than in previous attempts, had broader support in various branches of the AFP and seemed more determined to actually fight instead of the usual bluster. Air Force rebels seized Villamor Air Base in Manila; Army units took control of Camp Emilio Aguinaldo, the General Headquarters of the AFP and DND in Manila; and dissidents took over Mactan Air Base in Cebu. The plotters had units positioned around the city preparing to move against the palace and other government buildings. Dissident pilots flew a couple of airplanes on what looked like bombing runs on the palace, albeit without serious damage. That was one of the main reasons the U.S. decided to intervene by having phantoms from Clark Air Base fly over the city at low altitude to buzz the air field, and make it clear that any of the Philippine air force planes that tried to get off the ground to bomb the palace or any place else would be attacked. They never had to fire but their presence over the city and threat that they would take action was a turning point, allowing the president, loyal forces, and Secretary of Defense Ramos to put the cork back in the bottle.

*Q: Were you involved in the group that was making the decision to put the Phantoms -*

MARTIN: I was. We were all in it. The coup lasted about seven days as I recall, 1 December through 7 December 1989. Most of the section chiefs of the mission – political, economic, security, military, intelligence, consular -- were all in the embassy working in the front office. After the original '87 coup attempt, we had established a small crisis center attached to the front office. It was like a Task Force Center in the Operations Center at the department, where you had phone banks, maps, radios, and so forth, so that we could maintain good communications with other embassy personnel around the city. The set up proved to be very effective. We also had a military team with a satellite phone so we could keep in direct touch with the bases, CINCPAC and Washington.

One issue we had not anticipated was the need to work out ways in which senior leaders in the embassy spelled each other; that they all didn't have to stay the whole time. Certain senior members of the staff felt they were indispensable, and of course, had to stay there 24 hours a day for five or seven days. After while they became obstacles to getting things done, to clear thinking. Fortunately, the ambassador and the DCM made the decision that they themselves would spell each other - the ambassador and DCM would rotate and not be there both at the same time - so we were able to get lower ranking people to go home and sleep. The spouses worked with the ambassador's wife in bringing food to the embassy so that we could eat.

But it got a bit hairy around town because we didn't know where the rebellious troops were. They took over apartment buildings and the Hotel Inter-Continental in the Makati business district. There were many American and other tourists in the hotel, and we were concerned about getting them out. There was firing from tall buildings within Makati. The Canadian embassy in Makati kept us informed of what was happening.

Many of us lived in the villages in the vicinity of Makati. Getting to and from work became increasingly a problem. We took armored vehicles to go to work, and I remember coming up the highway, and there was a rebel machine gun nest up the road. We never knew quite where it was, and so we tried to come over the bridge without lights, and then duck into the gate of the community there without being seen. Fortunately we did.

Anyway, the coup went on and on over several days. The government initiated plans to retake the Makati business district. We got word of that early in the morning. I had gone home to sleep, and was called at five o'clock saying that "You need to evacuate to the embassy compound along the water front by five-thirty because the Philippine marines are going to attack the business district from inside your village. They expected heavy artillery fire from the rebels across the highway between the business district and the community.

We woke our two daughters and said we had to leave in thirty minutes. One was ready in about ten minutes, but the other said, "Oh, I have to wash my hair! I need to get my clothes! I want to get all my things together!"

We said, "You can take one small suitcase. You decide what you're going to need."

"Well, I can't decide. I have to take all my clothes!"

Different personality! But we all left, not knowing whether or not we'd come back to a house, or to a burnt out shell. As it turned out, the battle did not develop. There was some firing, but nothing major.

The flight by the Phantoms was useful but came after a long discussion. We weren't sure whether we needed the planes or whether loyal Philippine air force (PAF) commanders could prevent rebel pilots from flying. A couple of PAF planes had taken off. One tried to do a run on the palace, not very effectively. One of them crashed at the Sangley Air Base, on the south side of Manila Bay. There was no indication that the U.S. shot it down, although there were rumors that we had. It turned out that it had been shot down by one of the airplanes from the Philippine Air Force. The debate on whether or not we'd fly the Phantoms was done over the phone with the base commanders, backed with Washington with then General Colin Powell at the White House at the time. President Bush was in the air on his way to Europe on a plane so Vice President Quayle was the one who, in consultation with Bush on Air Force 1, actually gave the instruction, "Go ahead and have the planes fly."

*Q: How did that coup end?*

MARTIN: The coup ended when the rebellious soldiers gave up. One of the leaders of the coup attempt was then Colonel Gregorio Honasan, who had been one of the Young Turks that helped overthrow Marcos. He then became a leader of the RAM group in the military contesting the Aquino administration's hold on power.

It's kind of funny. He went missing after one of the earlier coups, and, in a Philippine sense, nobody knew where he was. In reality, our military attachés seemed to have a pretty easy time meeting with him in safe houses, all within the same village that I lived in, in one of the gated communities. So Honasan was in hiding, on the run, but for some reason the Philippine military or the police were unable to find him - a typical Philippine operation in many ways.

He was directly involved in the '89 coup. He was captured when it ended and imprisoned on a navy ship half a mile out in Manila Bay. He was there for, I guess, about a week or so before he escaped one night. A boat came alongside, he was able to get in the boat, and disappeared again. The farcical nature of the situation continued.

The coup attempt, however had been fairly serious. Nearly 100 people were killed. There actually were some street battles between the rebellious troops and the loyalist troops. They moved tanks. They set up machine gun nests, as I mentioned. Nevertheless, despite all the fireworks and all the maneuvering, the fighting was what the Filipinos called "acoustical" warfare. In the midst of all the smoke and noise, the idea was that if you had to shoot, you shot up in the air rather than shooting at somebody. The soldiers on both sides knew each other so did not want to kill their fellows. So the number of fatalities was probably lower than it might have been in other places.

*Q: Did we have connections with the coup and the loyalist forces?*

MARTIN: I think we had a pretty good line on most of them. The Defense attachés tended to have good connections with some of the rebellious troops, or at least sympathizers so had information on their thinking if not plans. This helped us understand where they were coming from, but it didn't help us a great deal in being able to persuade them to put down their arms.

*Q: What were they after?*

MARTIN: Essentially, they wanted to overthrow the Aquino administration because they felt that she was not doing a good job, that the country was unstable, economically the nation was not doing well, and a change in government was needed. What they would have done if they had won really was not clear at all. It was very vague.

*Q: What was your impression of the Aquino government?*

MARTIN: My impression was that it was well intentioned. President Aquino was a charismatic person, eager to reestablish democracy in the Philippines, to eliminate the bad influences that the Marcos had engendered - the crony capitalism, human rights abuses, corruption and politicalization of the military. I'm not sure she had the vision or the ability to do that. She said that she was just an ordinary housewife, which she had been. She was certainly smart, she had good leadership qualities, but she didn't really have the support of the people who after overthrowing Marcos, returned to their usual fractious selves and refused to compromise their interests for the greater, national good.. She was unable to overcome her "class background," if I can use that term. She came from an oligarchic family - landowners in Pampanga and Tarlac where her family had a large hacienda estate. I felt that when she first came to power, the way she did come to power with overwhelming support, what was called People's Power, that she could have had carte blanche to make major changes. She could have done just about anything. If she had been able to rise above her origins, and been able to initiate effective land reform, to mandate the breaking up of the large land estates, she could have made a much more successful start than she did. She couldn't do that. She was unwilling or unable to do it. I think more unable to do that. Part was her family's pressure on her; part was her determination not to rule by decree

as Marcos had. Rather, she turned to the Congress which was both parochial and controlled by oligarchic interests

She was also very conservative in her views, with a strong Catholic background. The church had been critical in overthrowing the Marcoses; and I think that Cory was beholden to the church, which, of course, is one of the most conservative Catholic churches in the world. She did not touch population control, which was desperately needed in the Philippines, and a number of other issues which I think would have been helpful.

*Q: Were there any other developments that we should cover?*

MARTIN: The assassination of Nick Rowe was a major event in which I was involved. James "Nick" Rowe was an army hero who had been a POW (Prisoner of War) in Vietnam something like six or seven years. Having survived that in remarkably good mental shape, he was assigned as the head of the ground forces unit in the army section of JUSMAG in the Philippines.

I worked closely with JUSMAG, basically on the training and the foreign military sales program, handling our support program to the Philippine Armed Forces. JUSMAG was on the other side of Metropolitan Manila, in Quezon City. They had quite a presence when I was there initially. A two-star general was the commander of about 25 or so military personnel from all services, including the Coast Guard, which managed the military support programs to the Philippine Armed Forces. They were in a Dodge City-like base, or compound in Quezon City, just down the road from a Philippine TV (television) station - I think it was Channel Five. In the first coup I experienced back in '87, I happened to be visiting JUSMAG with Karl Jackson, who was the deputy in ISA at that time, when the rebel soldiers tried to get into the TV station so as to capture the airwaves and broadcast their demands. In typical third world coup attempts, you try to control the media by taking over the TV and radio stations to get your message out to the populace, saying, "We're in charge!" So we were in the JUSMAG compound; and the rebel troops came down the street with their armored personnel carriers while loyal troops were in the TV compound across the street firing at the armored personnel carriers, shooting at their tires, and so forth. One of the rebel APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) fired a RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) at the gate of the TV station so they could get in. Unfortunately, the shell landed about 50 feet from where we were in a JUSMAG office! Karl and I still laugh that we both got rug burns on our noses as we dove under the desks. We call each other "foxhole buddies" because it really felt like the front lines. The whole building shook as the round went off. That was probably the closest I had come to an actual battle situation at that point!

JUSMAG was in Quezon City because, like some many other US agencies, wanted to be separated from the embassy. You asked earlier about difference of opinion, difference in outlook in the US mission. JUSMAG did have a different outlook from the embassy. They wanted to be considered a separate military command, just like the two bases with a stovepipe reporting system back to DOD. They felt they had a different mission and approach to the AFP and so a better "feel" for the country. They lived on the economy in the Quezon City area, had their own JUSMAG Club where they entertained and met with their Philippine military counterparts, many of whom were members of the club which gave them access to commissary and PX food and drink. They preferred to operate on their own with minimal coordination with the embassy. It



took the general a long time to drive across the city to and from the embassy for country team meetings since he did not have the helicopters the base commanders used. So I used to spend a great deal of time on the road traveling back and forth between the embassy and JUSMAG because I wanted to keep close contact with them. I was out at their headquarters probably at least a couple times a week, keeping in touch.

One of the officers I liked best and worked closely with was Nick Rowe, the ground forces unit chief. The Philippine army has a lion's share of the troops, the numbers, and the influence. Most of the supplies and arms we provided under the Philippine assistance program was for the ground forces. Our support included APCs, trucks, firearms of various types, ammunition, etc. We gave the navy and the air force much less. The Philippine Constabulary (PC) was a paramilitary ground force so received equipment similar to that of the army.

So Nick Rowe and I worked closely together. I was terribly shocked one morning, after having met with him the previous afternoon, when I came to work and found that he'd been assassinated on his way to work! He was security conscious very careful. He had been in Vietnam, was a POW for many years and survived, had written a good, well-selling book about his experiences in Vietnam and as a POW; and he knew how to take care of himself. He changed his commuting route and times, he would sit on the left side of the car instead of the right side in the back seat, and was attentive to what was going on around him.

We had had recent incidences of NPA threats against American personnel, so we had "armor plated" the cars. We didn't have the money or the capability to be able to get fully armored cars imported right away, so they'd put in about three-quarters of an inch to an inch thick Plexiglas all around the car. Then they put it on the vehicles' side windows, the back window, everything, including a windshield. But when they put it on, they couldn't seal it tightly; and between the side window and the back window, there was a gap of about no more than an inch between the plates.

As Nick's car came down the road and entered the traffic circle before turning down the road to the JUSMAG compound, the assassins were waiting for him. As he came around the circle, he had to slow down. The assassins pulled up in a car beside him, and three or four people opened up with automatic weapons on the side of the car. Almost all the bullets hit the Plexiglas, so nothing happened. One bullet, however, got through that little space between the Plexiglas, ricocheted around and hit Nick in the head, killing him.

The driver was shook and wounded, but not killed so able to drive to the compound. Nick was quickly taken to the hospital, but died, I think, on the way to the hospital. What a tremendous shock within the embassy. There was a great deal of turmoil, as to what this meant, whether it was the beginning of an onslaught against the rest of us. I volunteered to organize a memorial service the next day for him, which we did in the ballroom of the embassy. It was a difficult task, but a worthwhile effort on my part to do this since we worked closely together.

We all took a great deal of care as to where we traveled during those days. We were nervous. And I did a lot of traveling because I was going out to JUSMAG regularly. I was going to the bases, to Clark and Subic; and much of the area was, as we used to say, sort of like going

through Indian country. My wife Joyce and I usually would go with our family, with our daughters. Joyce would drive with one of the daughters in the front seat and I would hunker down in the back seat with the darkened windows on the car. We figured, maybe rationalizing, that Filipinos, being somewhat macho, probably wouldn't shoot a woman, as readily at least as they would a man. So I would slouch down in the back seat, and she would drive all the way to Subic and up to Clark. It made life a little bit tense.

*Q: Was that the only attack on Americans, you know, per se?*

MARTIN: No! A few months later there were, I think, three air force personnel in Clark killed one evening as they came back from town. They had been out to a restaurant or a bar and when they came out, they were gunned down. That got everybody's attention. Clark was closed off for a long time and Americans were prohibited from going into town. That of course caused great unhappiness in Angeles because the economy was hurt because there wasn't any spending. Subic also closed its base. There were all sorts of intelligence reports or rumors that there were what they called NPA "sparrow squads" (death squads, so called for their small size and great mobility) out and about in both Angeles and Olongapo, looking for American airmen and sailors to hit. There were a couple of incidents where people were fired on, around Subic, but nobody was killed. In the base towns as well as Manila, it was very touchy. We were careful as to where we went.

*Q: Was it difficult? I mean I would think when you'd get a naval vessel, particularly an air craft carrier task force coming in, you're talking about 5,000 people or so, young men, poured into the town who've been out for a long time. I mean did the navy have a pretty good absorption system?*

MARTIN: They improved radically the time I was there, briefing the troops before they docked, before they got off the ship. They went through chapter and verse, and these guys were pretty much on their toes. Many of them still pursued the usual pursuits in town, but I think that they covered the town pretty well. And Olongapo leaders were pretty good, or better I think in many ways, because they realized that this was their lifeblood. The local officials, the local government, and the local security forces spent a lot of time patrolling the town. And NCIS, the MPs (Military Policemen), and the base security people were all over the town, working side by side with the local officials to try to maintain security. But it was tough. It's a difficult area.

*Q: Knowing the Philippines is pretty much "the" prime producer of visas, did you find yourself deluged on the visa front?*

MARTIN: The visa front was a constant battle. Everybody who works in the embassy and even any American who works in the Philippines, is asked, "Do you know a visa officer?" or "Can you introduce me?" It's the usual, "Who do you know?" and "How can you get me in." and "Will you give me a recommendation?" The DAO (Defense Attaché Office) was terribly oppressed by their contacts in the military, and not only their military contacts, but their wives, daughters, sisters, uncles, aunts, mistresses, girlfriends, and nearly everybody with whom they had a relationship. I was often asked too. You get used to it. You can never get away from it. When I was back on my second tour in the front office, we were constantly inveigled for visas by

contacts at the highest levels. The palace itself became a real problem in terms of referring people over for visas, expecting for us to just stamp the visas. The Philippines is one of the worst in the world for visa pressure. The consular section is a real factory.

*Q: Did you have any presidential or vice presidential visits while you were there?*

MARTIN: Dan Quayle came to town. That was an interesting experience. He was there only a brief time, made some calls on the president, did not make a big impression, I think, on a lot of people, came and went within about 24 hours. The only real impression I have is accompanying him on a short visit to Subic. We were standing around waiting for him to arrive at the embassy helicopter pad, and I was talking to his Secret Service detail. I can't remember what his handle, the code name the detail used for him, but it was not complimentary. They said, "The guy's never on time. He is always keeping us waiting, whether it's 30 below zero or 97 in the shade!" I thought to myself, if I had to depend on people to throw their body in front of me to take a bullet, I think I would try to be as nice to them as possible.

That was my only real impression of him. His wife Marilyn seemed like a very intense person who seemed to basically be the one who ran the show.

We didn't have a lot of visitors. The Philippines is never very high on the hit parade for CODELS or official visits, which was nice in some ways but resulted in the Philippines not getting high-level attention in Washington. Congressman Steve Solarz came regularly as he was the chairman of the Asia sub-committee of the House International Relations Committee and had a deep interest in the Philippines. He was a fireball during his visits, constantly on the move. He would start the day by playing tennis at six or six-thirty in the morning and end up with a discussion with academics at midnight, and be going constantly in between, wearing everybody out. We always made Bob Fritz, later one of my successors as DCM in Manila and then ambassador to PNG, Solarz' control officer because Steve liked him and Bob did a good job. Bob would say, "Oh no! Not another visit!" And Steve almost always came at Christmas time or New Year's, during their recess or the break. He was much involved in the Philippines because he had been instrumental in building congressional pressure during the Reagan administration against Marcos. He had known Cory Aquino's husband when he was alive, was in touch with Cory Aquino after Ninoy's assassination, and saw her regularly when he came to town. He was helpful if we needed Congress to pay attention to Philippine issues.

Senator Richard Lugar from Indiana was also interested in the Philippines and came, I think, once or twice. He had been very instrumental in helping during the transition of our policy on the Marcos era, getting President Reagan to move away from total support.

While we didn't get a lot of CODELS, CINCPAC came from time to time; and a number of State Department people came to visit. Secretary Shultz came a couple of times. He had a good feel for the Philippines.

*Q: How did you find the social life there, because certainly under the Marcos regime, and even earlier, the charge has been laid that the embassy got too involved with the upper class? I mean*

*they're a very friendly people, they have a lot of money, and they can overwhelm you. And it had a pernicious effect.*

MARTIN: I found it absolutely true both times I was there. The oligarchy, upper class, the wealthy are all over you, starting with the ambassador, and then the DCM, and on down. Most have been educated in the States, many have kids who are American citizens or have citizenship themselves. They're very friendly, pleasant to be with, and it's a narcotic. It's difficult to avoid. Those of us, on my first tour, who were lower ranking had a better chance to get to know a wider group of people. I met a number of the military police officers at the colonel, lieutenant colonel level, which helped broaden my perspectives as these were obviously not the wealthy Makati crowd. I knew quite a few business people, many of them from the same elite class but with a different perspective. In my politico-military role, I worked with quite a few of the local officials in the Olongapo and Angeles communities, as well as in Baguio. So I felt that I had a fairly wide range of contacts with whom I dealt, and perhaps had a better appreciation of opinions and events outside Manila. Even so, the number of people we knew who were really the average Joe Filipino – the Juan de la Cruz of the Philippines - was quite limited. There were two reasons for this limited circle of contacts. One was the security situation which made it difficult to move around and meet the proverbial man in the street because you'd never quite know if it was safe or not. And we did stand out, at least I felt my pol-mil job made me more visible. Secondly, academics were somewhat difficult to cultivate because so many of them, at least the ones that spoke out, were hostile. They were nationalists (my term; others would use leftists or Communists). Campuses seemed to be strong anti-bases, anti-US policies centers so not easy places to visit. The media was okay and I knew quite a few journalists because of the base talks and our public relations (now called public diplomacy) efforts to explain our position on the bases

*Q: How did you view the church? One thinks of Cardinal Sin.*

MARTIN: Cardinal Sin, who used to welcome visitors to his residence in "The House of Sin," was an engaging, influential, political and conservative person. He personally was a key figure in the peaceful overthrow of Marcos. The leadership of the church was conservative socially (family planning, economic reform, political change although many of the younger or lower ranked priests and nuns were into liberation theology. Having strongly opposed Marcos, they generally took the leftist line against the US bases and the economic control by the oligarchs.

The nuns were very effective. You recall the picture of the nuns on EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos - a ring road around Manila that was the site of 1986-87 confrontation between pro-Marcos and anti- Marcos forces) during the Marcos attempt to put down the People's Power, kneeling in prayer in front of tanks or putting flowers in the barrels of the guns. The nuns were a dramatic force. The church has its beneficial and good points, but it also has been a problem in some ways.

*Q: How did your family find living there?*

MARTIN: Living was comfortable. We lived in one of the Makati villages, gated and guarded communities for expatriates and rich Filipinos. During my first tour, housing was better than

during my second tour for mid-level embassy personnel. The embassy had had to downgrade the housing because of greatly increased prices so people were staying in less desirable villages and houses. Housing quality goes in cycles; more recently people are living better, albeit more often in apartments rather than separate houses.

Foreign Service transfers for families can be difficult. Our daughters were at a bad age when we moved to Manila in 1987. They were in middle school, a hard age to pick up and leave a tight circle of friends. Our elder daughter was most unhappy, but our elder son fortunately came out at Christmas and told her she could make herself and everybody else miserable for another two and a half years, or she could get involved in something. Why didn't she learn to play tennis? We had been able to join the Polo Club in Manila, "the" elite club, although it was rather run down and getting shabby around the edges. Fortunately, it was the best tennis club, so she took up tennis. She ended up nearly spending her whole life on the tennis courts.

There was one humorous incident related to the polo club during the '89 coup attempt which we remember. We lived a mile from the club which was on the road to the Fort Boniface military base. Since the International School was closed because of the coup (they had coup days rather than snow days), the third day of the coup my wife drove our daughters to the polo club to play tennis. As they drove up the road, they passed two columns of troops marching down the street. The soldiers all had a white bandana tied on their arms. My wife said, "Oh, that's okay. Those are the loyal troops with the white bandana."

When she turned into the gate of the polo club, the guard said, "No! Not open. Closed! Coup! Coup! Go home!"

So she turned around and went back through the troops armed with machine guns, bazookas, ammunition bandoliers across their chests and M16s.. As she drove by with our blond daughters in the car, the troops waved, smiled and called, "Hello," "How are you?" and "Have a good time."

On the way home, she dropped off something at the ambassador's house just on the other side of the road. When she drove in, the staff was very nervous, saying, "What are you doing out? Don't you know there's a coup?"

She said, "Yes, we drove through some troops on the road, but they all have the white bandanas. They're the loyalists."

They said, "No! No! Those are the rebels!"

She had driven right through them, not once, but twice, up and down the road. But, as I said, women were not targets in the macho society. But that was fine. Having to evacuate the house at five-thirty in the morning was difficult for my daughters but they were able to use their coup experiences for their college entry essays.

*Q: Were you involved in negotiations over the future of the U.S. bases in the Philippines?*

MARTIN: In 1957 or 1958 when we passed the revised Mutual Security Treaty, we agreed that every five years the US-RP base agreements would be reviewed to ensure they represented current bilateral relationships and issues. 1988 was one of the five years. We assembled a negotiating team to discuss the status and functioning of the bases, which turned out to be a long process.

The review was not over whether or not the bases would continue. The 25 year basing agreement term did not end until 1992 but the five year reviews gave both sides a chance to evaluate changes in the situation. The focus was on whether the bases were still useful, if they needed to be modified, whether political, strategic or economic changes required different approaches to the relationship. It was a useful exercise, which the Filipinos, of course, looked forward to in great interest because they were mainly interested in obtaining greater compensation for the use of the bases by the American forces. So in early 1988 we began to talk with the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on initiating discussions.

*Q: Was it just money, or had we been seeing a change? I mean were the Filipinos getting tired of having the bases there?*

MARTIN: Oh, I think there certainly were major changes over the years. The bases never were very popular with Filipino nationalists. They were seen as a residue of our colonial involvement in the Philippines. The nationalists felt we had twisted their arms to maintain our military bases when we gave them independence in 1946 as the country lay in shambles after the war. The bases were a bone of contention throughout our relationship. By the late 1980s, after the Marcos era was over, and after Marcos had used the bases to blackmail us into continuing to support him, a lot of people felt that it was time for the bases to go. That was my view as well.

*Q: What was attitude of the U.S. military you were talking to? Did you find it divided between those who understood the political situation and those who wouldn't give up Fort Apache today if they could keep it going?*

MARTIN: In general, U.S. military stance was a do or die one; that they had to keep the bases because the seventh Fleet could not operate in the Pacific without Subic and Cubi. As subsequent history has shown, they have, in fact, been able to do so with perhaps a little bit more effort and perhaps a little bit more expenditure of funds. It's a little inconvenient, and Subic was a very useful and a very good popular liberty port.

Our military believed they really needed to keep the bases. The 1988 discussions, however, were just a review, not the end of the Military Bases Agreement, whose term ended in 1992. So the talks in '88 were about what the relationship between us would be. There were a few little nitpicks in terms of criminal jurisdiction over minor SOFA problems, relationships with the base communities and discussions about how Philippine base commanders related to the American base commanders, since the bases had at that point legally become Philippine bases. The bottom line really was how much was the "rent" going to be. We refused to call it "rent." We called it assistance to the Philippines as an ally. They continued to call it rent. We said allies don't charge rent to each other. But it was basically how much foreign assistance or military assistance we were going to give to the armed forces of the Philippines in return for being able to continue to

use the bases.

*Q: Really what is the difference, as you see it, between rent and whatever else it is?*

MARTIN: Our objection to rent was that our presence was based upon a Mutual Security Treaty; and as allies, we have a mutual responsibility to work together. They provided the facilities by which we could have the forces in the region to be able to continue to give teeth, if you will, to the Mutual Security Treaty, which was there for the Philippine benefit as well as our own. Obviously, this was part of the effort that we made constantly in '88 - to show the security benefit that the Philippines gets from the American presence, as well as the economic benefits that the bases provided. With USIS' input, we printed a booklet with charts, graphs, and tables showing that the Philippines gained a billion and a half, or two billion dollars a year in economic benefits from the bases. The total included work force wages, spending by the bases and visiting forces in the communities, as well as the benefits that they received from the Americans being there to help protect their security and not having to protect themselves alone.

*Q: As you went into this, did those that were working on the bases help?*

MARTIN: The Filipino workers on the bases obviously supported continuation of the bases and their employment. The ship repair facility at Subic, for instance, was one of the best in the region, with a well-trained work force. There was another shipyard on the north end of Subic Bay, Philseco, a Japanese investment, and it was trying to do basically the same sort of ship repair, ship improvements, refurbishments. But our people were well regarded, and those who earned technical skills at the ship repair facility often left for Saudi Arabia to get jobs as technical overseas professionals. But most of the workers stayed as they thought the working environment in Subic was far better than going overseas. We had people who had worked for two, three generations in the facility.

*Q: What was the ambassador's attitude towards the base talks?*

MARTIN: Ambassador Nicholas Platt was directly involved. He was the head of the negotiating team that we put together. His deputy was Lieutenant General Michael Carns, the deputy CINCPAC in Honolulu who came out and spent several months in the Philippines. We had representatives from the various bases in the Philippines, both Subic and Clark, as well as Jamie Selby from the legal advisor's office at State and from the Defense Department in Washington. So we had quite a good team.

The Philippine side also had an interagency team. Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus was the chair. Department of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Leonardis Caday, Defense Department Assistant Secretary Feliciano Gacis, Justice Department Assistant Secretary Teresita de Castro, and a representative from the Philippine base command as well as support staff from DFA and DND supported him.

So we had interagency teams on both sides dealing with very specific issues. Some were involved with jurisdictional issues; others were involved with legal issues. Overall, Ambassador Platt and Secretary Manglapus were the key people who did most of the negotiation across the

table.

*Q: I'm told that one of the most difficult parts of any base negotiations is dealing with the Pentagon lawyers. How did you find this?*

MARTIN: We didn't have a Pentagon lawyer on our team as a lawyer from CINCPAC was there. We also had an Air Force colonel who was attaché. Jamie Selby from L at State was our legal powerhouse. We obviously dealt a lot with the lawyers back in Washington, including the people who were the keeper of the keys for all base negotiations. There was a whole mantra that had been written or developed over the years telling what we could and could not say. The parameters of the base formulae were really rather strict; and the Defense Department was very severe in terms of what latitude they gave the negotiating panel.

*Q: But at that point, the idea was that we were going to keep the bases; just do everything we can to stay and to keep staying in the foreseeable future?*

MARTIN: We definitely knew we could stay at least until the early '90s, because that's when the basing agreement actually came up for re-negotiation. In '88 it was merely a review, and when I say merely a review, it was a fairly broad review and covered all aspects of the agreement. But it was not a do or die. In other words, if we had not reached any agreement in '88, the bases would have continued under existing conditions, nevertheless, until 1991.

*Q: What were you getting from our people who were monitoring the Filipino Congress? What was happening there?*

MARTIN: The Philippine Congress was all over the place. We had supporters, we had opponents, and we had a lot of people dancing around in the middle who were unwilling to make a commitment one way or the other. Most of them left it to the Executive Branch to do the negotiations. They weighed in, of course, and they all talked to the press, and the press was full of all sorts of articles about the bases on a daily basis. This was "the" topic of the day for a lot of people, in between all the coup attempts launched against Cory Aquino. The base talks were a continuing leitmotif that ran throughout the public discourse during the year.

*Q: Did you feel that opponents of Aquino were using the bases as an instrument?*

MARTIN: In terms of whether or not the congress was using or the opponents were using the base talks against Cory Aquino, yes, of course. They used whatever lever they had to make points against her or for her. She was very careful, but she was also very frustrating to us because she did not make her position clear. Before she ran for presidency, before she became president upon Marcos departure for Hawaii, she had made some comments in the latter days of Marcos' administration, that she didn't think the bases were useful anymore, that perhaps they should be terminated. A lot of people pulled out those comments from previous years and tried to get her to take a position on the bases. But she didn't. It was frustrating in a sense, because we felt if she had come out very strongly, both in '88, as well as, subsequently and more importantly, in '90 or '91, that it could have made a difference. But she was cautious in not taking a position, basically I believe so as not to undercut her negotiating team by taking a stance one way or the other. She



wanted to see what they were able to negotiate.

*Q: Did the White House National Security Council play any role, or at this stage, this wasn't part of the equation?*

MARTIN: Not really. We kept them fully informed about the negotiations, day-by-day or session-by-session. They weighed in occasionally, but basically it was a Defense-State Department effort.

*Q: What sort of relations did you have with your Filipinos counterparts? Did you have times when you all went off and had bourbon and branch water or an equivalent; getting off informally and talking about where things were going?*

MARTIN: There was a good camaraderie, to a degree, although Secretary Manglapus tended to take a fairly straight approach to the talks. He tended occasionally to voice the nationalists' position; marking out an extreme position, which we then worked on moving toward the center. This is typical negotiating stance, of course - each starts out on the edge and then fills in the gap through compromise. We, of course, started out the same way. We said that since the bases were for the Philippine benefit, we didn't think that we needed to talk about money and other crass material things, such as financing and AID money. The Filipinos replied, "We think the U.S. gets all the benefit, and we don't get any so you need to pay us more!" Starting from those positions, we tended to work toward the center.

But there was a good sense of camaraderie. A lot of these people had been involved in the base talks for decades. Several of the people had been involved in the 1950, '52, '53 negotiations, initially on the Mutual Defense Treaty; and so these people were knowledgeable. A lot of us who were in on the talks really had not done this before, and even Ambassador Platt had no experience in the Philippines previously. So we were all doing it for the first time; whereas General Gacis from the Department of National Defense and others from the Department of Foreign Affairs had been doing this for at least 20 or 30 years, and they were very knowledgeable about historical precedence. And of course, one of the things the Philippines has learned from us is to be litigious. They have learned very well the importance of legal precedent, and legal actions. So they continually brought up, "Oh, but back in 1955, you said thus and so, and in 1962 you said this and that, so why is it different now, or how come you're changing position?" . I won't say we had to play catch-up ball, but we had to be on our toes all of the time because they were very good at bringing out the historical record.

*Q: Well, looking at it from your perspective, did you see that these bases, other than the economic impetus, from a defense point of view, were they playing any part in the Filipinos' problem with insurgencies and that sort of thing?*

MARTIN: No, we were very careful at keeping the bases and the U.S. forces out of the insurgency and counterinsurgency effort. Obviously, looking at post World War II history, the Huk Rebellion and the subsequent NPA difficulties, we were involved in terms of providing advice and support; and military assistance was generally focused on internal support for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The AFP's responsibility really was internal security,

whereas the bases and the U.S. forces primarily took over the responsibility for the external security of the Philippines. By using the bases, we were able to project our power and to deploy U.S. Forces into the South China Sea and into the Western Pacific much more effectively.

*Q: At that time, as you were doing it, what was the common wisdom of where the threat came from, the possible threat, or the need for projecting our power?*

MARTIN: Vietnam was still there. The Soviets still had a base in Cam Ranh Bay. So that was the public focus, if you will, the public enemy on which we focused.

China was the hidden one that was never mentioned, because the Philippines had good relations with China, and we were trying to develop good relations as well. Even though China was not mentioned, it was, "Well, you know, the Soviets are in Cam Ranh Bay, and we've got problems there, and..." So nobody said anything. But basically, the rationale was to maintain presence and stability in the region, and to keep the United States as an active participant in East Asian affairs.

*Q: Were the Spratly Islands a point of contention at that time, and was it a concern of ours?*

MARTIN: They were not a point of contention in the late '80s. It's only in the 1990s that the Philippines discovered the Chinese had begun to build "fishing shelters" on the Spratlies. But there was a difference between the claims. There were competing or conflicting claims over the Spratlies and other islands in the South China Sea between China, and the Philippines, and many other ASEAN countries, including Vietnam, at the time. That was considered to be one of the reasons why it was important for the U.S. to be in the area.

At the same time, however, we made it very clear that our Mutual Defense Treaty was limited to what we've called metropolitan Philippines. This was the main islands of the Philippines, not any other so-called Philippine claimed islands beyond the perimeters of what was considered to be the Philippine Islands back in 1898, when we obtained the Philippines from the Spanish.

*Q: Any problems at that time with Indonesia?*

MARTIN: No, not really. There were a lot of Indonesian refugees and citizens living in Mindanao. The Moro insurgency was going on, as it has been for the last 300 years, and that was not a major problem. It was not as bad as it is right now.

*Q: How did this base review come out?*

MARTIN: We finished the review in late 1988. All together we probably spent about six months on this, more or less full-time. There were other things going on at the same time. We would meet for a few days or a week, and then there would be a break, and then we'd come back again, a couple weeks or a month later, and have some more talks. Most of the time it was in panel. Everybody sat at the table facing each other, and the lead negotiators, Secretary Manglapus and Ambassador Platt, did the main negotiation. But on specific issues, the defense people, the legal people discussed their specific issues. Over the period of time, Ambassador Platt and Secretary Manglapus would have pull asides. They would go off in a corner, and talk quietly on their own,

then come back, and try to gain the panels consensus to the informal agreement they had reached on their own.

We started each day of negotiations by drawing up our agenda or the points that we wanted to make, having worked on them overnight . We met maybe two or three hours a day, then we'd go back to the embassy after the session to review where we were, write the reporting cable, and discuss strategy for the next day.

My role really was to be the executive secretary on the panel. I was in charge of trying to make sure that everything was working properly, that we had all the right coordinates. I participated on the panel in a full way, but more on a support level rather than as a substantive level.

*Q: When you left the Philippines, did you think the bases issue would sort out, maybe at a higher price, but that our presence in the Philippines would remain, or not?*

MARTIN: When the '88 negotiations finished, I had two more years of my assignment. Before I left, we had started the next and final round of negotiations, basically to re-negotiate the whole base agreement. At the end of '88, after all this negotiating back and forth and hammering, we had pretty much settled on the terms for assistance levels for the Philippines for the coming year. Its like accounting - it's all there somehow; it's just how you read it. You quantified this, and you quantified that, and we came up with an overall figure that sounded very magnanimous. The Philippines counted it differently, obviously, and they said, "Well, you are not giving us very much, but we have to take it!" And so in the end, we ended up with an agreement, which did not satisfy anyone fully. We felt that it was a good agreement, but that we had been nicked and dined. They felt the same way - that we had thrown in everything but the kitchen sink, saying things like because the embassy was there, it was worth "x" millions of dollars and so they should be happy that we have an embassy there and that we talk to them. In the end it was not totally satisfactory to everybody, but we did finally reach an agreement. It was just a review, so it did not have to go to the congress.

*Q: When you left the Philippines in 1990 were things changing on the ground in the region?*

MARTIN: Yes. Vietnam was over. The Soviet Union was rapidly crumbling and the Soviet threat was disappearing. China was behaving itself although relations were chilly after the 1989 Tiananmen incident. The Philippine domestic insurgencies seemed to be settling down. I think the people began to realize that perhaps everyone needed to have another good look at the bases to decide whether or not they were still important.

My personal view was that the bases had totally unbalanced the US-Philippine bilateral relationship. The security side of it, the base side of it, had tipped the balance totally out of kilter. Filipinos interpreted everything we did in the embassy that whole period was interpreted as being base related. When we released opinion poll results showing that a majority of the Filipinos supported the bases, opponents said we were trying to influence public opinion. When we offered economic assistance, or even typhoon disaster relief, the view was, "Oh, the Americans are doing this to try to influence the base talks." Everything we did - visas; consular affairs, (which is a big business in the Philippines), public diplomacy; economic relationships; visits by

high officials from the U.S. - every time we had a high official, the press always said, "Oh! You brought somebody else here to beat on us or twist our arms over the bases." So no matter what we did, whether totally unrelated to the defense relationship or not, it was seen through that nationalistic lens.

*Q: Was anybody pointing out the problem that you might have with volcanoes?*

MARTIN: Volcanoes are a constant presence and threat to the Philippine nation. But at that point, Mt. Pinatubo had been inactive for 600 years. 600 years is a long time. People used to hike in those mountains, and it was not an issue. Nobody paid any attention to Pinatubo. There were live volcanoes. Mayon, down in Legazpi, was the one that everybody was watching. It had a perfect conical shape to it. It was a beautiful mountain, but was active. It rumbled occasionally, but nothing serious. So when Pinatubo took blew its top in 1991, everybody was shocked.

The overall political relationship, I think, was okay. The domestic politics in the Philippines were difficult, partly because Cory Aquino, who was a wonderful person and a unique personality, had a difficult time running the country. She did not have much of a vision or agenda. There wasn't much of a focus as to where she wanted to go at the end of her administration. It appeared as though her main goal was just to stay in power through that whole period, and what we called "the coup of the month" syndrome continued.

*Q: As you left there in '90, what did you think? What was your prognostication for the Philippines over, you know, a 20-year period or something like that?*

MARTIN: The Philippines has great potential but the implementation is pretty weak. As I left, I felt that the opportunities were good, but I did not see much chance of them turning things around under the Aquino administration. Subsequently, when Eddie Ramos took over as president in 1992, things did turn around. Things got a lot better because he gave them goals which provided a sense that things were improving, and that Ramos had a program for everyone to follow. I think the mental attitude in the country changed considerably.

The December 1989 coup attempt which was a serious and destabilizing event which set the country back. Leaving six months after that, I was somewhat pessimistic that they were going to be able to continue to manage. The economic situation was not getting better. Population continued to grow rapidly. The public sense of optimism was not there. Everybody was pessimistic; they didn't think things were going to change. And so I did have a sense that that they were probably going to muddle through as they have done traditionally, but they were not really going to improve, and that didn't give me much optimism.

I think the 1989 coup was a watershed. During the three years that I was there, from '87 to '90, we had seven coup attempts, a period we called "coup of the month." The first coup was in August of 1987. I had been there about a month and a half. The ambassador arrived in mid August and presented his credentials just the day before the coup attempt broke out. The problem was that nobody really knew anybody, nobody knew where everything was. The procedures were new, there was a new ambassador, there was a new DCM, and we were all trying to find our way around the office, much less knowing how to operate or have contacts around the

country. As it turned out, it was not a very serious coup attempt. There were some people killed, there was some fighting, but basically, the government was able to put it down without too much difficulty.

There were subsequent minor, almost farcical, coup attempts that continued to distract the government and destabilize the political situation in the Philippines. The government was unable to address the problems, because many younger military officers, who had been involved in the overthrow of the Marcos regime, felt that they had been sidelined, that they had not been able to get what was due them after the Aquino administration took over.

In the August of '87 coup attempt, they burned down the general headquarters building at the army headquarters. There was actually fighting on the base itself. There was a great deal of factionalism within the military. Some of the leaders behind the coup attempt went underground, and were either in the jungle, or, more often, hiding in Manila. For some reason, they were not easily found. The leader of the coup, Colonel Honasan, was actually arrested after several weeks, and incarcerated on a navy ship in Manila Bay, from which he escaped after a period of weeks, and went back underground. But that, with the NPA threat, and the Muslim difficulties down south, just made the whole country rather unstable and on edge.

Finally, the most serious coup attempt was in December 1989. The U.S. became directly involved in this one. Part of the problem was, again, that the factional groups in the military felt that they needed to make a last stand to attain their 1986 objectives, and so they launched a coup. Without getting into all the details of it, it was a fairly long, drawn out affair. The coup plotters captured the Manila air base, seized the airplanes, and brought in fighter aircraft from Cebu. They had the city under siege for almost seven days from about the first of December. In an attempt to overthrow the Aquino administration, the coup leaders used their old World War II "Tora Tora" aircraft to try to bomb Malacañang Palace. Aquino was in danger of being overthrown. The U.S. government decided that it would fly what we termed "warning missions" over Manila with phantoms from the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force at Clark Air Base. This was our first real involvement in a domestic coup effort in the Philippines. And it was very successful.

*Q: Do you recall, was there debate about doing this - flying these warning missions?*

MARTIN: There was a considerable amount of debate within the Embassy and with Washington. President George H. W. Bush was on his way to Europe when the decision was made. Vice President Quayle discussed the matter with him on the phone. Joint Chief of Staff Director Colin Powell was involved in the decision. All these people were involved in the final decision - that we would do what we needed to do to try to protect Cory. We did not have to use any weapons. We did not have to shoot anybody. But just flying over the city did provide 1) a challenge that the rebellious Philippine air force could not meet, and 2) the sense of confidence that the administration would survive the coup attempt. But it took awhile, and it took a lot of effort, because the rebels dug into Makati, the major business district. They held one of the major hotels, the Inter-Continental Hotel, which was full of not only tourists, but American official military personnel who were there as an advance team for an upcoming exercise. There were rebels in the lobby holding people hostage and they had a plan to have a knockdown, drag out battle in Makati itself, in this urban district.

The residential area that we lived in was just across the main highway, the EDSA Highway, from Makati. The military planned to come into the residential area and launch an attack across the highway into Makati, where the rebels were holed up. At five o'clock in the morning, we were called, saying everybody was going to evacuate the villages, and we had a half an hour in which to get out. So we evacuated the residential compounds to the Seafront Compound, the embassy's commissary, club, and residential compound. The business community went to the Weston Hotel near Manila Bay. So it was an exciting time. Everybody was trying to get out of Makati.

As it turned out, the battle was not necessary. There was some fighting in the streets of Makati, but the final effort was put down without much fighting.

*Q: Did you get involved, or did anybody else in the embassy get involved? Did the rebels make any overtures to us?*

MARTIN: No they didn't because we made it pretty clear that we were firmly behind the administration, that we would not condone any kind of a military coup or military effort to overthrow Aquino. So there was no dialogue. The defense attachés knew many of the younger officers who were sympathetic with the rebels. The attaches had contact with them but they were putting out the straight scoop - that we were firmly opposed to the coup attempt. I think that helped because they made it clear that the rebels weren't going to get any help from the U.S.

*Q: You were there, I assume, with your family and all?*

MARTIN: We had two daughters who were with us, and this was part of the fun -- trying to get them up at five o'clock in the morning, saying they had half an hour to leave without any idea whether we'd ever come back to a house still standing. If there was to be a serious military engagement in the neighborhood, who knew what would be left! Many of the houses, in fact, did have bullet holes in the roof, and shells in the yard. In the end, there was a good deal of firing but as the Filipinos termed it, most was "acoustically fighting" in which the soldiers fired into the air rather than at their fellow soldiers who just happened to be on the other side. They'd shoot over people's heads so that nobody gets hit. Although people did get injured, few were killed.

I have two memories of that coup attempt. One was evacuating at five o'clock. Our younger daughter got up and was ready to go in 10 minutes with a little bag of things that she wanted to take. The elder daughter said she had to take a shower, do her hair, put on her makeup, and one suitcase was just not big enough for all the things that she had to take. A clear difference in personalities.

The other memory was of how the Embassy coped with the crisis. A lot of us worked at the embassy for almost straight through the whole week. One thing that we did have, however, was a good control center. After the 1987 August coup attempt, right after the ambassador and the DCM had arrived, DCM Ken Quinn, who had been a deputy executive secretary in the Department, set up the executive conference room as an operations center. That turned out to be extremely valuable during the '89 coup attempt because we had all the phone networks lined up, lists of contacts, maps, radio communications, and so forth. We were thereby able to

communicate well with Washington and CINCPAC. CINCPAC sent in a team with satellite communications which served as a stand by communications link in case the phone system was cut. The operations center turned out to be a very useful facility.

We had people out and about around town. Some of us were working long hours. After the first couple of days, the ambassador wisely made the decision that he and the DCM were not totally indispensable, that they didn't need to both be there the whole time, but could spell each other. He then forced others who had decided that they personally were indispensable that it was time to go home to get some sleep. One quickly finds in these situations that some people feel that they have to be there so they don't miss anything. But after 24, 36, or 48 hours, their utility diminishes.

I think we all learned a lot in that event. In the end, our efforts were successful as the coup attempt was put down. But again, this really destabilized the economy, destabilized the political situation, and alienated many of the military. That is how it was when I left, but for one final crisis - a major earthquake.

A severe earthquake struck the hill town of Baguio in July 1990. The Hyatt hotel collapsed with considerable loss of life, communications were cut off, and the only ones able to get in and out of Baguio were the U.S. military by helicopter. US Air Force and Navy helicopters were able to bring aid, medical assistance, water, and food to people isolated on top of the mountains. It was a major natural disaster, but it showed once again the importance of having a military facility available to be able to help. The Filipinos appreciated that. Similar assistance was not so easily available the following year when Mt. Pinatubo exploded.

*Q: Well you left there in '90?*

MARTIN: I left Manila in July 1990 after a three-year tour.

**NICHOLAS PLATT**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1987-1991)**

*Ambassador Nicholas Platt was born in New York, New York in 1936. He attended Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University, and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His career included positions in Hong Kong, Japan, China, Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Zambia, the Philippines, and Pakistan. Ambassador Platt was interviewed by Paul McCusker in 1994.*

*Q: So then off to Manila. I guess you had a particularly big issue there with the bases, which came up in your tenure didn't they?*

PLATT: Yes. There were two major issues. One was the survival of the government and the other was the future of the bases. It made for a very, very complicated and difficult assignment. I

arrived, presented my credentials in three days and two days later there was a major coup attempt. Gringo Honasan tried to overthrow the government. I got to know the members of the government really fast. My job was to try to make sure that Mrs. Aquino held her job without making it look like we were doing very much. And that was very hard to do. There was another big coup attempt in December in which we flew planes from Clark that were essentially a demonstration. But I went through major shell and shot in our efforts to support that government. And at the same time to fashion a bases agreement that would work and develop a constituency in the Philippines that would support it. My feeling was that in the new democracy, if you could fashion a really clear consensus in keeping that basing arrangement throughout the country that the Philippine Senate would have to obey it.

*Q: They were the ones who eventually rejected it.*

PLATT: Right. And I was successful in creating that consensus. We traveled all over the country and opened schools, etc. and I felt like a domestic politician. I was kissing babies and doing all those things. And I liked it. I thought it was interesting. It was dangerous, but interesting. I was on the top of the New Peoples Army hit list, and the Right didn't like me either. So security was always an element of concern. And the government was wobbly and there were a lot of natural disasters. It was a time that Job was born to deal with. So we dealt with it. When I left 3 years and 11 months later, which is the record for an American ambassadorship in the Philippines...I was longer there than anybody, including Hank Byroade who was there for 3 years and 8 months. I am the holder of that record, enviable or not. When I left we did have an agreement, which was subsequently rejected by the Philippine Senate. And I dare say in the context of the Cold War ending and 80 American bases being closed in the United States the following year, our own Senate would have had trouble with it too. But that was then and this is now. I felt that the most important indication that my ambassadorship had meant something...it really didn't occur until after I had been gone for over a year...was when she handed over to a duly elected successor. Then I could say to myself, "This trip was worthwhile."

*Q: Why didn't she want to run again?*

PLATT: She never wanted to run again. She felt that she had an historical duty to lead her country through the transition from a dictatorship to democracy. She felt that she had no choice, that this was the legacy of her husband's assassination, that there was really nobody else who could do it. She had this sense of divine calling as far as that was concerned. She was not good at governing. She was very good at hanging in. She was very brave and tough. She performed best when she was under fire. But when she wasn't under fire and there was this or that particular bill to be gotten through congress or decision to be brokered through the various agencies, it wasn't easy for her. She wasn't able to show the gratitude that one would have expected one to show to a foreign government. You would have expected that her government would have been much less equivocal about bases negotiations, etc., but the fact of the matter was that our help and our support and our being there during earthquakes and volcanoes, etc. just made it harder for them. It put them under more pressure to show that they were not being taken for granted and standing up to the Yankees, etc.



**SARAH HORSEY-BARR**  
**Immigrant Visa Officer**  
**Manila (1989-1990)**

*Mrs. Horsey-Barr was born in Maryland into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in the Washington DC area and abroad and was educated at Georgetown University; and Loyola University in Rome, Italy. Her service with the State Department took her to several posts in Latin America dealing with both consular and political/management affairs. Her last assignments were with the Organization of American States, where she served in various senior capacities with the U.S. Mission. Mrs. Horsey-Barr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.*

HORSEY-BARR: I was on the immigrant visa unit.

*Q: The immigrant visa load in Manila renowned.*

HORSEY-BARR: Right. Well, at that time it was the highest in the world. It's now been surpassed, I think, by the combined Mexico operations, but it was providing \$7,000,000 or \$8,000,000 a year in fees by itself. It was a pretty depressing operation. There were about 10 junior officers in the immigrant visa section or branch or whatever it was called. They only stayed about three or four months, and then they rotated to other parts of the consular section. So from a management perspective, it was a never-ending process of starting from zero and working up. They were a fine bunch of officers that came through, very impressive, the junior officers coming in, but it was hard to keep them motivated and it was hard to keep myself motivated with this unending stream of people that knew nothing about immigration law or the State Department and really didn't care because they had their eyes fixed on their next, whatever, substantive work or something less of a dronish kind of existence. That was a difficult time between the United States and the Soviets. Of course, Marcos was gone, but there was a lot of anti-American feeling and there were several coup attempts during the year. Every month something would happen. There was either a coup or a typhoon or flood or earthquake or volcano exploding. It seemed like every month with some regularity there was some major issue, which was interesting in itself, of course, but, speaking as the manager of this large operation, made it that much more difficult to keep up. I remember one of the constant refrains of Washington was, "You've got to use those numbers. You've got to use those numbers. How come you can't use those numbers?"

*Q: These were numbers allocated to...*

HORSEY-BARR: Number for immigration to the United States. Of course, every time we had one of these events and shut down for a week, it made the process of churning these out with these young folks, who were willing but not terribly able given their status at a new post, that much more difficult. The other thing I found interesting, before we move on to other things, as the manager of that operation was just how many links there are between the Filipino community in the Philippines and folks back here. I have never in my whole life seen as many unification cases. I would have 20 or 30 a day coming in.

*Q: I'm not aware of a Philippine community here in Washington. There may be one.*

HORSEY-BARR: Oh, but there is, and there are a number of restaurants, not that I frequent them. Filipino food is not amongst my choices, but there are, and most of the Filipino community here in Washington, I don't think they live as a community. You have the Latinos or you have Salvadorans, Hondurans, what have you, on Kalorama Road, Adams Morgan; out here in Arlington we have Vietnamese now. I don't think the Filipinos live as a community the way other immigrant groups in the Washington DC area do, but they are here in sufficient numbers to justify or support these various Filipino restaurants that we know of here, particularly in Virginia.

*Q: What about the immigrant visa process? Non-immigrant, one knows about the problem of people trying to circumvent it, but what about the immigrant process? What were your problems there?*

HORSEY-BARR: Documentary problems. You could not trust any document in the Philippines at all. They're great forgers; they were really very good. It happened in so many of these operations where you have fraud. It really extends from a cultural difference or a different cultural perspective than the prevailing United States cultural perspective. Nothing really wrong started it, there's nothing wrong with using whatever means available to one to get into the United States. So you couldn't trust the written document, and you really couldn't trust the verbal document either, the oral document, so you just kind of went on gut feeling or you threw up your hands. If it didn't look that bad, you went ahead. It did raise, particularly on the non-immigrant visa side, the whole question of just how you justify your decision when you're doing it basically on a gut feeling as opposed to anything more tangible, anything you could really point to judge your decision.

*Q: Well, we had our problems with officers in Manila dealing with visa - I'm talking about up to the consul general level up and down - because of favoritism, fraud, sexual favors, what have you.*

HORSEY-BARR: That whole incident that I'm thinking of happened before I was there, just before this, so it was still fresh in people's minds.

*Q: But it happened...*

HORSEY-BARR: Probably more than once, probably twice that I can think of. It may have happened more times, but I can think of two instances. But, you see, I think that comes from one of the real dangers of consular work, which is to take oneself too seriously and one's authority and such. I remember as a junior officer it's very easy to let oneself think that all this attention is because of oneself as opposed to one's position, and that's the difficulty, the danger, for people new to the system. Now, one would think that somebody who'd been around and reached a rank equivalent to consul general in a big place like Manila would have acquired sufficient maturity to recognize that, but that is the same sort of danger. Actually I think it's a bit of a danger with respect to the Foreign Service too. I think a lot of people have difficulty when they retire from

the Foreign Service because of all this attention that they get, especially if you're a consular officer, of course. Then it starts at the very junior levels. But even in other fields, the United States is a big player most places, and if you're representing the embassy, much less if you have visas to dispose of, you are a big fish in a small pond. I think it makes for difficulty when people retire, especially for a lot of people who've been ambassador. When you go off and be an ambassador, maybe, and then after retirement nobody calls and nobody's interested in you because you no longer have whatever it was people thought you had before. The fact that they were interested in you is really perhaps that they plus the sort of the cultural difference and what gets people into trouble in our line of work.

*Q: And the Philippines, of course, is the preeminent case. I was counselor general in Seoul about 10 years before this, and that problem was there almost in the same magnitude. There was lots of fraud. I was always worried about corruption.*

HORSEY-BARR: Good thing to be worried about. You know, when you have such a difference in the standard of living and at least in the case of the Philippines you have a large community in the United States. So, you have enough contact that you have people in the Philippines who have a fairly good idea of what it is like here, what the opportunities are to work and that sort of thing. And so, I suspect until recently there was less of that.

*Q: I take it, it was not with unhappiness that you decided to curtail and go somewhere else.*

HORSEY-BARR: Oh, no, no, no, not unhappiness about that at all. It was, in fact, the worst post that I had, the worse assignment that I had, professionally as well as personally. Manila was a dreadful place to live in those days, and people that were there at the time that had been there in earlier years certainly agreed with that.

*Q: What was the problem?*

HORSEY-BARR: I think it was this unrest, whether it came from acts of God or from the government or acts of the revolutionaries. That was fairly constant, and it was fairly clear that, if you keep the car out, you really kind of worry and you just parked it wherever. You did worry about when you came back was there going to be a bomb stuck under there. That was not an insignificant concern. Manila also as a city, I find, is the most unattractive I've seen, unattractive. It's all concrete. I guess it was just leveled in the war, so there's very little of old historic value, and it has been built up and it's a great example of a concrete jungle, and it's not attractive, whatever light color or different color it's all sort of a gray concrete. Maybe that's the cheapest concrete; I have no idea. There are no trees, no grass - in a couple residential, the upper-class residential areas, yes, but I'm speaking of the city as a city more than the residential areas. And air pollution was a big factor, noise pollution. The bay was totally polluted. And it took hours; traffic was just incredible. I lived about five miles from the embassy; if I left at seven, I could be there in 10 minutes. If I left at 7:15 or 7:20 it would take me an hour; to get out of town it would take easily an hour and half of stop-and-go traffic. There were dreadful fumes. It is just not a very livable city, and to get out of it was very difficult. I spent a lot of time going up to Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base, couple of years before the base negotiations brought about their closure. And that was heavenly. I can remember driving with my husband and we were going to

Subic Bay and we drove through the gates of Subic Bay and he said, "Listen. The birds are singing in English." "The birds, to begin with, the birds, and they're singing! And there's grass and, look, there's a monkey over there." There's a great poverty, how this destroyed everything of beauty that Manila might have had, with the war and then the poverty, that Manila might have had to offer. Well, no, I was quite happy to leave.

**G. PHILIP HUGHES**  
**Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, The White House**  
**Washington, DC (1989-1990)**

*Ambassador Hughes was born and raised in Ohio and educated at the University of Dayton, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard University. His career with the US Government included service at the senior level with the Congressional Budget Office, the Departments of State and Commerce, and the White House, where he served two tours with the National Security Council. In 1990 he was named US Ambassador to Barbados, where he served until 1993. Ambassador Hughes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.*

HUGHES: Along the way the administration faced a series of if you would, crises or opportunities. Probably the first major one was Panama. I am trying to remember the exact sequence of this, whether Panama came first or the Philippines came first. The Philippines imbroglio or crisis as I recall came in August if I am not mistaken. It certainly came at a time when the President was away. It was largely managed by the Deputies Committee involved under Gates, meeting in the White House situation room. We received word that a coup was under way against Cory Aquino. We received a request from the Philippine government to intervene somehow and stop the coup makers. Deliberations were organized very quickly in the White House Situation Room among the deputies. Decisions were recommended to the president that we couldn't intervene directly but what we could do was basically keep the Philippine Air Force on the ground by flying CAP over Manila which would be a demonstration of support for Cory Aquino. It wouldn't be belligerent. It would keep the Philippine Air Force on the ground and therefore kind of confine the resources available to the coup makers. It proved to be an extremely wise decision. The coup failed, Cory Aquino remained in office, and for the remainder of her term was forever, of course, in our debt.

**FRANK G. WISNER**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1991-1992)**

*Ambassador Frank G. Wisner was born in New York in 1938. He graduated from Princeton University in 1961. He was stationed in Saigon, Dinh Tuong Province, Tuyen Duc Province, Tunis, Algiers, and Dacca. He later served as Ambassador*

*to Zambia, Egypt, the Philippines, and India. Ambassador Wisner was interviewed by Richard L. Jackson on March 22, 1998.*

*Q: When you left Egypt, you were called to Manila?*

WISNER: That's right, I was asked to stay a fifth year in Egypt which, as you recall, is unusual these days. I think the Gulf War explains that. Also, the President wanted to find a good next posting for Nick Platt and Pakistan was coming up, and I asked to go to Manila; the fascination of American history, chance to get back to Asia, a large complicated mission. And my wishes, desires, dreams were all rewarded.

*Q: But this was again, as you've said before, maybe a Helms problem that would have come back to haunt you.*

WISNER: Well, Jim Baker told me later that he feared that I was going to have trouble, and I'd actually been told by Mitch McConnell and others that there was some gunning in the conservative side of the Republican party for me. But I was confirmed for Manila and then subsequently for Under Secretary, so whatever the problem was it eventually went away, but it gave Jim Baker some reason for second thoughts on the Middle Eastern and African Assistant Secretaryships. In any case, I'm delighted with what I did with my life and would have been less happy otherwise. I arrived in Manila in the summer of '91, confirmed by the Senate, and was faced with the immediate challenge of taking the base agreement, which Armitage had negotiated on behalf of the United States Government and Nick Platt had seen through in the Philippines, and trying to nudge it over the finish line in the Philippine Senate, where it needed to be ratified in order to take effect. By the time I arrived in Manila, there was a bare four weeks until the Philippine Senate vote was scheduled to be taken. Very quickly, I realized the odds were horrific. For the Philippine Senate, like the United States Senate demands, a two-thirds vote for a treaty. The structure of the Philippine Senate was such that the radicalization of the post-Marcos period produced a number of Senators who had strong positions in opposition to the continuation of the American base presence. Others, for tactical, or less exemplary reasons, had switched sides over the years. The former defense secretary, Juan Ponce Enrile being one of those, and Cory Aquino had been, at best, halfhearted in her desire to see the treaty extended. It was further complicated by the fact that Mount Pinatubo, the great volcanic mountain in central Luzon had blown its lid and effectively destroyed Clark Air Force Base, removing Clark from any consideration, as there was no way we were going to put up the money required to redo Clark, given the overall worldwide defense downsizing. The Navy, on balance, wanted to keep Subic. Well, I have to say that -- though I did about everything I knew how to do, I appeared on television programs, testified, spoke, traveled all over the islands, inaugurated schools, bussed babies, marched in parades -- it wasn't to be, and the base treaty was defeated by the Philippine Senate.

I, then, set my mind on two facts: one, to see if we could work out a three-year-arrangement by which we could get out of Subic and turn it over in an orderly manner and have, in effect, a base compensation agreement play out over those years and, secondly, to begin to plan for the post-base American-Filipino relationship. I ran into the complexities of negotiating a fresh agreement with the Filipinos, an interim agreement -- all the complexities that you would imagine in a

wealth of domestic local political environment -- people thought, well, we'd defeated this, but here a dragon lives on. I came to realize that in Washington I faced an even greater negative lobby in the Pentagon -- those who wanted to swat the Filipinos and those whose calculations ran even deeper, that is that Subic wasn't worth it anymore, and that the real benefits that Subic brought United States forces in global reach and the political presence that Subic gave us, by showing friends in Southeast Asia that we would be near at hand, were outweighed by growing concerns over the budget and just exactly how much we needed. I learned further that the Navy loved Subic because of all those admiral's billets and the gorgeous facilities and quarters the base offered. And so, I found myself in a very stressed atmosphere in Washington -- the assistant secretary having a lot of trouble getting Jim Baker's attention, the Pentagon increasingly reserved about all of this. And the Filipinos being nowhere enthusiastic, with some important exceptions - notably the Filipino military which wasn't at all sure how it was going to continue to have access to American arms and favorable packages of assistance in the absence of any arrangement whatsoever. I came back to Washington toward the end of the year, and I was asked to go over and call on the President and I did and went into the Oval Office, and George Bush really made it very clear to me, "Frank, don't try too hard." Dick Cheney had sent me an equivalent signal, when I called on him in the Pentagon, "don't try too hard." I also saw Deputy Secretary Eagleburger, Larry Eagleburger, and Larry said "Frank, Mr. Baker is going to make some changes, he wants Reggie Bartholomew to go to NATO, and he wants you to come back and be the Under Secretary of State for security affairs, international security affairs." Well, I will do anything the Secretary asks. I hadn't been a full year in the Philippines, I was working very hard on the post-base arrangements, and Larry made it very clear that the Secretary wanted me in Washington. The post-base arrangements would be the job of my successor in Manila, and that would be Dick Solomon, the present assistant secretary himself, who would be replaced. So, I realized that an order was an order, and Christine and I said farewell to the Philippines and left in the late spring to be confirmed for the Under Secretary's position in State by the early part of the summer.

I did, however, very much believe that the Philippine economy was going to come back and that Cory Aquino, who would be leaving the presidency, was not the last word in Philippine economic management; her administration was not effective. In effect, the Philippines had tremendous latent capabilities, and we needed to have access to this strong Filipino market and a platform in which to continue to be competitive in Southeast Asia. Second, I believed that we would, in time, work out some security arrangements with the Filipinos that would give us access to the Philippines and not bases, but places, access -- places that we could stop in, pause in, in the event of another difficulty -- if we could let things settle down. So I was very very keen on moving around the islands, dealing with the political leadership to try to focus on the day after Subic closed. What was the Philippine - American relationship going to be about? We'd been together almost a hundred years, there would be the thin and there would be the thick, and there was no doubt that our two societies and mixings of populations was such that we couldn't escape each other's embrace and that we ought to be working hard to try to come up with ways to make that happen. I argued that case at a general level and tried in a number of ways to promote American business, to get the Philippine economy in a position where we would have a stronger business presence as opposed to a base presence, in the days that followed.

**ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA**  
**Executive Assistant to Special Representative for the Philippines**  
**Washington, DC (1991-1995)**

*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: There is a little preface to this that relates to kind of the life and times of the Department and where we were in terms of personnel and budgetary constraints at the end of the first Bush administration and then going into the early Clinton administration. For most Foreign Service Officers this was a time of fear and loathing. Fear and loathing of getting prematurely kicked out and career terminations when a lot of friends of ours went out of the Service involuntarily for reasons of time in class starting in 1988 and '89. Through 1995 there were unnaturally high rates of officers leaving the Service. There was a determined effort for budgetary reasons to sever people at the senior level or FS-01 threshold to reshape the profile of the Foreign Service by drastically reducing the number of senior officers as well as officers at the threshold level. It was an effort to force the Foreign Service into a pyramid shape, rather than the kind of boxy shaped organism that it had become. What was happening was that a lot of area specialists and a lot of people that had particular language attributes that many of us felt the Service needed were being kicked out. Assignments were increasingly hard to get so, coming out of New Zealand having been a DCM for four years, I lobbied hard for all kinds of assignments in the Department and elsewhere, anywhere else. Now, sometimes the best is not always the worst and that was true in this case in taking a job as executive assistant to Ambassador Elliot Richardson.

Elliot Richardson was a five time cabinet member, he was the attorney general who resigned because he did not reign in the Watergate prosecutor. Elliot had a part-time presidential appointment as special envoy for the Philippines. How did this come about? Beginning in 1998 the Cory Aquino "peoples power" revolution occurred.

Cory Aquino led the popular movement against Ferdinand Marcos. After nearly a year of demonstrations and turmoil, Marcos was ousted. He came to live in Hawaii where he expired after a decent interval and Cory Aquino established a new non-authoritarian government. In '89 President Bush appointed Elliot Richardson to basically become a cheerleader for Philippine economic reform, to give the Cory Aquino administration some encouragement, to marshal development assistance resources from the World Bank, the ADB, IMF and other organizations, and to help coordinate economic reform and vitalization. Richardson worked in the East Asia bureau. He had an office. He had an executive assistant. My predecessor was John Forbes who as it happened was one of those officers who was being retired for time in class. We had a secretary

and basically our job was to work, to the extent that we could, with the Philippine desk, with AID, with the other government agencies, as well as the multinationals and the business community to help bring things together on the economic side. We prepared for donors consultative meetings in which Richardson headed the U.S. delegation and also to stimulate private sector investments to meet some of the Philippines' needs especially in terms of generating new high employment industries. As Elliot's executive assistant, I was his day-to-day link with the bureaucracy, with business organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S.-Philippine Business Council, the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce in New York, the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council and others, including on the Philippine side, the Makati Business Club, the AMCHAM in the Philippines and several other organizations was to basically work with them in two major respects:

1) to prepare for the international multilateral donor consortium meetings. In this regard the meetings were normally once a year, but there was usually a review meeting on a semi-annual basis, so you had two significant meetings each year at which the economic requirements and progress of the Philippines were assessed.

2) to serve as the high profile leader for business leadership delegations. We led about two missions to the Philippines each year. One mission usually was kind of a policy review mission of the most senior leaders of companies having significant investments there.

Elliot led one review mission each year in which we sat down with a whole range of Philippine government officials and looked them in the eye and said, well, what is it that you're doing or how are you doing or what are you not doing? Then one large mission a year was devoted to bringing the corporate presidents, vice presidents, chairmen of the board and other U.S. business leaders in sectors that we felt were appropriate to the Philippines to meet with the top governmental leaders to visit parts of the country to look at some of the interesting and innovative USAID and other projects.

For almost a solo activity, we never fit neatly into a bureaucratic box in the State Department. Although we were supported by the East Asia bureau, we had free reign to roam widely through the government bureaucracy as well as outside it in order to do what Elliot felt was desirable in terms of getting the Philippine situation some attention and to develop programs that were truly supportive of the Philippines' efforts. This was particularly true in working with the finance minister, central bank governor and other key officials under Cory Aquino. Then that transitioned into working with the reformist administration of President Fidel Ramos who was elected in 1992. I stayed in that job from 1991 through until 1995.

*Q: Could we look at the policy and the bureaucracies of Richardson's position? Presidential envoys have been a useful tool since FDR. Special Envoy's are a newer version. Where did the idea for Richardson's assignment arise? Who was the EAP Assistant Secretary at the time and how did they work together?*

LA PORTA: Richardson's position as Special Envoy began when the George H. W. Bush administration wanted to support democratization and reforms in the post-Marcos period. Some viewed his appointment as symbolic (Secretary Baker was the one who proposed him), Elliot



took it seriously, especially the two major functions of promoting business and investment and assistance programs to support government reform. So as not to compete on the policy level, Richardson's office was placed in the East Asia and Pacific Bureau where, because of his stature and sensitivity, Elliot worked easily with the two assistant secretaries, Dick Solomon and later (under Clinton) Winston Lord. Elliot also worked easily with the DASes for Southeast Asia. Elliot had few turf issues in the bureaucracy but the most ticklish problems were with AID where the second – and third – level officials were jealous of his status and resented the White House and 7<sup>th</sup> floor decisions to accredit Elliot as chief of delegation to World Bank and other meetings on the Philippines. A good statesman, Elliot did not “pull rank” on the AID officials but always made sure he shared the podium with them. No one doubted, however, that Elliot had the clout on the U.S. side.

*Q: What was the situation military-wise in the Philippines at that time?*

LA PORTA: From the United States point of view it was pretty dire because the Philippines base negotiations, the U.S. team for which was headed by now Deputy Secretary of State Rich Armitage, had collapsed in 1991. There was certainly a bad taste in most peoples' mouths and especially the defense community in Washington against the Philippines. There was certainly a decided disinclination to do anything for the Philippines. Also, Clark Air Force Base had been closed due to the explosion of Mount Pinatubo that basically rendered parts of it unusable and certainly confounded the runways.

*Q: When did that happen?*

LA PORTA: I've forgotten the exact month, but it was 1990, it might have been the fall of 1990.

*Q: Well, anyway, by the time you got there. I mean with negotiations and Clark rendered essentially unusable, our interests started to disappear.*

LA PORTA: We were in the process by the end of '91 and certainly into '92 in withdrawing from Subic Bay and from various other bits of real estate that we had had. I guess in terms of the U.S. government approach, this made the economic side all the more important in terms of trying to keep some positive relationships with the Filipinos and to be able to demonstrate that the United States at least was supportive of Philippine democracy and governmental reform.

*Q: It's interesting how with the closure of the bases, how the Philippines had disappeared from international view. I mean the American view of the world. It crops up from time to time, but you don't, I mean, this was the beginning of it, or did you feel that way?*

LA PORTA: It was hard, especially in the Clinton administration, to get any profile for other than one or two top issues in the Asia arena. In other words, China was the 900 pound gorilla, as we've discussed before, and China drew the attention only because it was there. The second major issue that attracted largely the energies and attention of the Asia bureau was Cambodia and efforts to kind of patch together a settlement and hold elections and to broker the formation of a government among the rightists, the royalists, the communists headed by Huk Sen and a small group of reformists. That was a very difficult situation. The refugee flow out of Cambodia

occupied a lot of attention as well. Those were the two main issues. It was indeed hard to get space for the Philippines.

Philosophically, the Philippines was in terms of public attitudes in the United States has been considered to be an American appendage, almost another state. Well, after all, the Philippines were ours once, weren't they? And don't they have a government that looks kind of like ours, and gee whiz we have three to four million Filipinos living in the United States. The perception was that the Philippines are out there, somewhere around Hawaii, and that gave them second tier status, if you will. So, not many people were inclined really to look at the Philippines as a foreign relations problem. I think that while the Philippine situation was complex it was not impossible. Certainly the U.S. business community felt that the Philippines had some distinct advantages and possibilities in offshore manufacturing, oil and gas and to some extent in mining. There was interest in making Philippine exports to the United States grow, whether handicraft items, rattan furniture, wood furniture or other kinds of products. Dried fruit is an interesting commodity and the United States today imports significant quantities of dried fruit from the Philippines.

The Philippines, with its legacy of bad government under Marcos, really cried out for attention in trying to convert it into a viable, functioning democracy something that it had not been since the 1960s and very early 1970s. The difficulties have continued because the Ramos administration was replaced by the administration of an actor, Joseph Estrada, that just opened the way to rampant inefficiency, rip-offs and other depredations. There was also a comeback during that period of the New People's Army, the communist rebel movement, and the resurgence of Islamic terrorism in the Southern Philippines. That very checkered record continued through Estrada's eventual deposition again by "people power" and his replacement by Gloria Arroyo. Her first administration was not terribly strong because it lacked a popular base, then most recently in May there was a hard-fought election which Gloria won by a great margin. There are a lot of law and order problems, corruption and inefficiency issues are rampant in the Philippines today.

*Q: What do you do when you've got, I mean we obviously wanted to have strong business ties, keep this place going, close to us and all and yet you've got widespread corruption which means that its not particularly when you've got these other ASEAN countries which have sort of gotten their acts together more.*

LA PORTA: I think Cory Aquino started out on a good path because she had assembled a team of technocrats who themselves were above reproach. The finance minister, Jesus Estanislao, was not only considered an incorruptible person, he was an incorruptible person as well as a person of very great expertise. There were other technocrats or accomplished people who were associated with her administration that I think enabled them to make significant progress on corruption, government reform and to some extent on efficiency issues. The real boon in my view was Fidel Ramos when he assumed the presidency. He was able to give a big lift to government performance across the board. During his two terms there was probably the greatest progress made on the kind of the age-old problems that afflicted the Philippines. I like to think – or Elliot Richardson liked to think – that he contributed in some way to kind of bucking up the Philippines' capacity to do right rather than to do harm or nothing at all.

*Q: I would think there would always be the problem of I mean the Filipinos had shut or gotten rid of these bases we had and it was sort of leftover from colonial days, let's be nationalistic and then having somebody like your office with Richardson and all going around and acting like I suppose like a nanny or something wouldn't sit very well.*

LA PORTA: Well, I think maybe because the security relationship looked so bad in comparison, we were quite well received on all levels in the Philippines but I think that there were things going on that people didn't notice. For example, USAID had several very innovative area development projects. One of them was in Southern Mindanao at General Santos City, not far from Davao, which I think contributed to significant change to the lives of the people in that area which had been one of the focal points of the Muslim secessionists. At the same time I think that there were things that were being done in terms of organizing industrial parks, upgrading the labor supply and making people more employable. I think that there were issues where the United States contributed in terms of rehabilitation of power plants and upgrading the power supply in many areas. It wasn't all negative. Insofar as the bases were concerned, I think there were two relevant factors: Many people felt at the time, this is in the very late '80s and early '90s, that the United States military doctrine of bases, and how we use them, and what they were and what they were not, was just simply a legacy of the Vietnam War. So we didn't change for two decades, therefore, it was a wake-up call for our Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Pacific Command to rethink how we met our military obligations in Asia and how we conducted our business. That may have been a positive byproduct of the Philippine base imbroglio.

The second factor is that, when it came down to it, the anti-base campaign in the Philippines was largely the product of maybe a maximum of 15% leftist activists in the body politic. There were a handful of extremist senators and one or two fellow-traveling cabinet ministers. There was a clack of journalists and street demonstrations characterized as "rent a mob," but they by no means represented the majority of the population. It was a determined minority within and outside the Philippine government that really was energized to put pressure on the bases. It is notable that some of those people survive today into the Gloria Arroyo's second administration. But a couple of her cabinet members from her first administration, who were very leftist, resigned in disgust with her policies. The record of anti-U.S. feeling is very much uneven.

*Q: Did you have, did you feel you had a good working relationship with your counterparts in the Philippines?*

LA PORTA: Yes, I think that there's a certain comfortableness about working with Filipinos whether at the grass roots level, whether in Manila or in big business. We had very close relationships in the business community and we found the government to be welcoming of what we were trying to do with them. It was very clearly a case that Richardson wanted to work with the Philippines, recognizing that reform could not be imposed from the outside, but that it had to be something that had to be generated from within. Within that spirit, I think we had a very good working relationship. In a lot of cases the World Bank, the IMF and the ADB, while laboring under the weight of their bureaucracy in their own kind of mindsets, were also by and large cooperative. Richardson, working with the finance minister and others, was able to kind of have an impact and get them on their side as opposed to having a lot of tension between what the

World Bank believed, what the Philippines believed and what the IMF believed, etc. It was probably for a number of reasons, the unsatisfactory state of security relationship, lingering tensions over the disposition of Marcos' property, and legal issues relating to Imelda Marcos and her family, that the plus was the economic relationship and what we were able to do on the development side.

*Q: Well, during this almost four years, wasn't it?*

LA PORTA: Right.

*Q: How effective, in the first place how did Elliot Richardson operate?*

LA PORTA: Elliot had his full time office in a law firm up on Eye Street and he spent I think about 20% of his total time on Philippines issues during most of the year. He was constantly traveling and at that time was in his mid-70s. He was incredibly hearty and had a tremendous stamina. He always moved at a quick step and always was primed for meetings. He had some personal rules because he traveled so much. One of his rules was always to hit the ground running and then do whatever it was that you scheduled at that time of the day in the place that you'd just flown into and keep going as long as you could and then go to bed. What often comes up in conversations about Elliot was did I see any signs of kind of alcoholism or other things that he might have been afflicted with maybe back in the '70s. I would have to say he was always very measured. We all may have had one or two extra glasses of wine, but by and large, that's all he touched. He certainly showed no signs of what I would call alcoholism. He told me that his slight slurring of speech, especially when he was tired, may have been due to a nervous condition discovered in the early 80's at Harvard University Hospital when he was examined intensively for what might have been a stroke. His brother was head of the hospital's board of visitors at the time and saw that he received every possible test and was treated by the best specialists.

*Q: How did he relate to the Philippines?*

LA PORTA: He had a funny saying and he used to tell the Filipinos as well, that Philippine politics is next to baseball and football as the greatest spectator sport ever invented. I think that he approached Filipinos with a great deal of equanimity. He was a man who just didn't get ruffled by kind of human frailty or shortcomings or whatnot. It was hard for him to be disappointed and he always maintained an optimistic attitude. That really was the hallmark of his association with the Philippines. He was not unrealistic and I think he could take on the hard issues.

*Q: In our bureaucracy were there places that you found easy to work with and ones that were difficult?*

LA PORTA: I think that there were not necessarily overly difficult. I think that there were a few disconnects in our relationship with the Philippine desk. The Philippine desk had a group of extremely busy and talented officers, all of them were good friends of mine but they had a short term interest and really didn't want to be bothered with long term economic development or planning for meetings, multilateral conferences or with delegations that were several months out.

They had near term necessities to deal with and so we weren't quite as well meshed with them as we might have been. That said, there were no points of substantive disagreement.

The other area was our relationship with USAID. Now, USAID in terms of its bureaucracy and right now I'm talking about the senior bureaucracy in USAID, very much jealously regarded their prerogatives in terms of dealing with multinational organizations, the World Bank, IMF, and the ADB, etc. and they considered themselves the kind of the natural repository of wisdom on economic and development policy. In comes this special representative; not only was he supported by the State Department, but he was from totally outside the government. Not that he would tell them what to do, but he certainly twisted arms and we spent a lot of time with the senior AID leadership on the Asia and Near East bureau level and above trying to get them to see things in a broader context. Particularly it was hard to convince them that they had to give higher priority to economic reform instead of purely development objectives. In other words the United States had a stake in seeing the government reform its tax policy, reform its management practices, promote investment and things like that. It was quite hard to get the AID bureaucracy attuned to those larger concerns.

We had a much more constructive relationship with the AID bureaucracy in Manila than we did in Washington and our ambassadors were supportive perhaps even to a fault. The two ambassadors that we dealt with in Manila at that time were Frank Wisner and John Negroponte, both of whom had a keen sense for economic reform and private sector development, as well as economic and development issues. Their DCMs were entirely supportive. We had a strong relationship and Elliot's efforts were always very welcome by the mission in Manila.

*Q: What was your impression of the various international banks, the IMF, Asian Development and all. I mean were they sort of, had their own personalities?*

LA PORTA: Well, we found that the World Bank was far easier to deal with than the Asian Development Bank, and the IMF was kind of somewhere in the middle. The World Bank at that time had a very outward-looking, outward-going person, Callisto Madavo, as the vice president who was covering Asia. He was an African development expert and a brilliant guy. He was a good politician and he and Elliot had a good relationship. I think that relationship pretty much pervaded our relationship with the bank staff in terms not only in economic policy, but also in sectoral areas such as investment promotion. The relationship with the ADB, while it wasn't strained, was just kind of diffident in the sense that the ADB bureaucracy then and to some extent now was dense and very hard to penetrate. It was just the culture of that organization, maybe, and I only say this in jest, because they've had a Japanese as president of the bank throughout its history.

The key to the IMF was our and Elliot's relationship with the U.S. executive director's office and it took a little bit of work to get those people on side because their interests were to prosecute whatever issues came before the IMF board. If the Philippines was not on the board agenda that month; it was hard to get their attention. We had to work hard on the staff level making sure that we kept in touch with them, kept them involved in our consultative process, made sure they showed up at meetings, made sure they read the papers and did what we thought they were supposed to do.

I also had a couple of other diversions during this period. I didn't work 100% full time for Elliot Richardson. In 1993 I was asked by EAP, because people in the bureau knew that I had worked closely with the ADB, to pick up another officer had started on an economic review of U.S. relations with the Pacific Islands. That's the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau, part of the Compact of Free Association. It seemed we were always getting ready for a renegotiation of the Compact and this required doing a compendium of all U.S. government programs targeted at the Pacific Islands by agreement or otherwise. That was a big job of work. I had to coordinate with a whole roster of U.S. agencies, including the Department of Interior which had the primary responsibility for implementing the Compact of Free Association. Also, the Education Department, the Justice Department, Labor Department and many other domestic agencies had programs in the Pacific Islands. Basically I was conducting the due diligence review to find out what these agencies were doing in the islands, how much they were spending, how many people they had in these countries, what were the statutory base of their programs and so forth.

I did this work in conjunction with the Pacific Island Affairs Office of the East Asia Bureau. Trading on a lot of the relationships I had with ADB in particular and to some extent with the World Bank, we proceeded to set up donor's consultative organizations for all external assistance to the Pacific Islands countries. This effort was modeled consciously on the consultative group for the Philippines. I went to the ADB and persuaded them that they should lead this consultative process instead of the World Bank, which was the leader of the Philippine group, because the ADB had the larger programs in the Pacific Islands and besides I felt that they needed to exercise greater leadership in the region.

We worked in the bureau to get the ADB to assume this leadership for the Pacific Islands. This policy was really pressed by the East Asia Bureau to diversify the economic burden instead of having the Pacific Islanders look solely at Washington and say what are you going to give me today. We found a way to say no, you have international rights and obligations as well as aid conduits of other donors, especially the Japanese and the Asian Development Bank. I worked on this for about two years in addition to what I was doing on the Philippines.

**RICHARD H. SOLOMON**  
**Ambassador**  
**Philippines (1992-1993)**

*Dr. Richard H. Solomon was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended MIT, Harvard and Yale and held a number of academic posts before joining the National Security Council in 1971. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.*

*Q: Then turning back to other subjects you mentioned. You said we might talk a bit about the Philippine development assistant plan.*

SOLOMON: We haven't talked any about the Philippines.

*Q: No, we haven't talked about the Philippines at all during the time you were there.*

SOLOMON: The major issue in the Philippines when I was Assistant Secretary, of course, was the renegotiation of the base agreement. I had been dealing with Philippine issues, although not at the center of my agenda, when I was running Policy Planning. In 1986, Corazon Aquino came triumphantly to Washington to give a speech to a joint session of Congress. Secretary of State Shultz made a public statement that he was "bullish on the Philippines," so we got behind the successor regime to Marcos led by Corazon Aquino. Things seemed to stabilize at that point. Then the issue became expiration of our base leases for Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. That issue was heavily freighted with Philippine nationalism -- particularly in the wake of the Corazon Aquino "people power" revolution. The Philippine Senate became very hostile to the American bases. They looked at them as a holdover from the colonial era. Also, Marcos had used the bases as an excuse to gouge Americans for rental money, and it was evident that some of that money was used to line his own pockets. So there was real hostility on both sides.

At the same time, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines at that time under Corazon Aquino was Raul Manglapus. Manglapus had political ambitions, and at one point he thought he might run for UN Secretary General. At another point he was thinking of running for the Philippine Senate. When Corazon Aquino asked him to renegotiate the military base agreements with the Americans, he was pulled between his responsibilities as Foreign Minister and the forces of Philippine nationalism. He pursued a very ambivalent negotiating posture. On the one hand, he was instructed by Aquino to get a deal on the bases. But on the other hand, his own political agenda and other inclinations led him to want to take a very nationalistic stand. Richard Armitage was our lead negotiator on the Philippine bases. He spent the better part of a year trying to get the Filipinos, who do not run a very well-structured, disciplined bureaucracy anyway, to create a negotiating position. And Manglapus, the Foreign Minister, basically failed to exercise leadership because he was split down the middle himself on what to do on this issue.

The outcome, which was determined by a vote of the Philippine Senate in 1991, rejected the renewal of a base agreement with the United States. So for the first time in almost a century, the U.S. was going to leave the Philippines. The mood between the U.S. and the Philippines was really not very good. Secretary of Defense Cheney had visited the Philippines, I believe in 1990, and Corazon Aquino had refused to see him because of domestic political factors. That really put everybody's teeth on edge, and there was an attitude of, "Well, if they're not interested in treating us in an appropriate way, the hell with them. If they want us to go, we'll go. Goodbye." There was a lot of bad blood in that situation.

So when the Philippine Senate voted -- it voted one short of even a tie vote on the bases agreement -- the attitude in Washington was "Fine. They don't want us there, we'll go."

*Q: What was the Pentagon saying, the military, because its one of these things that we've always been told we have to have both Clark Field and Subic Bay. Was there a turn around?*

SOLOMON: The initial turn around was an act of nature. In 1990, totally out of the blue, there was a major volcanic explosion in the Philippines. A mountain no one ever really paid much

attention to -- Mount Pinatubo, which was part of a range of volcanic mountains just to the north of Clark Air Base -- suddenly erupted and spewed enormous amounts of ash, and generated major lava flows that destroyed Clark Field. It has since been reopened, but at the time it looked as if it was finished as a facility. Subic Bay remained, so the negotiations really ended up focusing on the future of Subic Bay, plus a couple of smaller facilities. That was the situation at the end of 1990.

*Q: Did you find that the people dealing with the Philippines in the State Department and your bureau were somewhat happy to see Baker getting rid of this base business? This being a military thing and it complicated relations. Did you get any of that feeling?*

SOLOMON: The opposition to renewing the bases agreement came largely from the Pentagon, where people had had increasing difficulty working with the Filipinos. They didn't want to be there if they weren't welcome. There had been, of course, the assassination in 1989 of a military officer involved in the JUSMAAG [Joint U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group] operation, Nick Rowe. In addition, there was a financial incentive to close out the bases because the Pentagon was already feeling the pressure of the post-Cold War budget squeeze. So the prospect of the 200 plus million dollar annual "rent" payment for the bases was something that the Navy was not interested in having to bear. Neither the U.S. military nor the Filipinos were taking a strategic view of the situation; it was basically a situation where the Pentagon, in particular, was fed up with the Fils, and they didn't want the monetary burden of sustaining the bases. So they were quite prepared to take a walk, and that's in effect - for complex reasons - what happened.

My relatively brief tour in the Philippines, which began on September 1, 1992, involved overseeing the already fairly well-advanced process of closing out Subic Bay. I worked closely with the military, the commander of Subic Bay, whose name I forget at the moment, who was a terrific Naval officer. He did a very professional job. The major issue we confronted was whether we were going to leave a polluted facility. The military, I think, gilded the lily a bit on the degree to which they had cleaned up POL facilities and firing ranges of pollutants. But for the most part, I was impressed that they did do a professional job even though the Philippine press was highly critical, saying that we were leaving polluted facilities. I would say the culminating experience of my six-month tour as Ambassador to the Philippines was presiding over the formal ceremony closing out Subic Bay. That event, in the Filipino psyche, ended the colonial era. As President Ramos said in his speech at the closing ceremony, for the first time in more than three centuries there were finally no foreign troops on Philippine soil. The Spanish, of course, had gone when we drove them out at the turn of the century, after three hundred years, and now we were out of there. That really did end an era in Philippine history.

The remainder of my tour, which was only six months in all, was focused on developing a dialogue with the Filipinos about what they needed to do to get their economy going. Under Corazon Aquino, they had not taken very aggressive measures to keep up with the other ASEAN countries, who were growing at 7 to 8 percent a year. The Koreans at that time were growing over 10 percent a year. The Chinese were growing at about 10 percent a year. The Filipino economy was basically stagnant, in no small measure because Corazon Aquino refused for political reasons to build power plants. So there was a deepening electric energy shortage. Of course, with an energy shortage you can't expand your industrial base and make your economy



grow. So that was the issue that we focused on in an effort to encourage the Filipinos to get on the fast track of economic development that all the other countries of ASEAN were on.

*Q: Wasn't Corazon Aquino under any pressure from business interests in the Philippines to develop a better power grid?*

SOLOMON: I can't tell you all of the details, but she was certainly under the influence of political advisers who felt that the Americans were untrustworthy because they had worked with Marcos. One major issue was a nuclear power plant deal that had been negotiated in the 1980s. The Filipinos claimed that General Electric had paid major kickbacks to Marcos to get the contract to build this plant, and to this day it has never been finished for political and environmental reasons. The environmentalists claim that to finish the plant, which is located not very far from Mount Pinatubo, would create a danger because of volcanic and earthquake instability, and the consequent risk of a nuclear accident should there be a major earthquake with this plant in operation. So while the structure of the plant was built, the nuclear reactor has never been installed and the project has never been finished.

*Q: How did you find relations with the Filipinos when you went there? You talk about nationalism, I would have thought there would have been sort of a dual thing. One that would be the nationalism, let's get the Americans out. At the same time, let's keep up the special relationship which included immigration and close ties. We can always call on the United States.*

SOLOMON: Well, "ambivalence" is the word. The hostility to the U.S. was basically concentrated in a number of people in the Filipino Senate, and some people in the press. But on the whole the Filipinos were extremely friendly, and certainly friendly to me. I'm sure they wanted to feel that they were fully independent, but on the other hand they felt, I think, relatively close to the United States. During my time there the communist insurgency had diminished significantly, so some of that hostility toward the U.S. had eased. There was still the Moro insurgency down in Mindanao, but that wasn't directed at us. On the whole, I would say the Filipinos were generally very friendly to the United States. They were very anxious to maintain relations because so many Filipinos either wanted to emigrate to the U.S. because they have relatives here, because of wartime service, or because they don't have economic opportunity at home. Because they have good training in English, they could look to the United States as a place to emigrate.

*Q: Did you find when you were in the Philippines did the Philippine American community play much of a role? Almost every other of our immigrant seem to have political clout but I never hear of the Philippine Americans.*

SOLOMON: You mean in the United States? While I was there, in the 1992 elections, a Philippine American woman ran for Congress out of the Santa Barbara area of California. She lost, but the Filipinos in Manila were intensely interested in whether she won or not because, as you say, they felt that they did not have as much political clout as they wished they had.

*Q: But did you feel they would make any difference in what you were doing at the embassy?*

SOLOMON: Not really, although when the Clinton administration took office, President Clinton had at least one Filipino woman on his team who had worked with him in Little Rock, and she became a fairly central player in terms of White House personnel activities. Consequently, everybody in Manila was trying to get messages to her about who they'd like to see appointed to the Clinton administration positions. And frankly, President Ramos used his contact with her in an effort to get a very early meeting in Washington with President Clinton. So the Filipinos were pretty active. They're not as influential as some foreign communities, but they were quite active.

*Q: What about Filipino immigration to the United States? Did that play much of a role?*

SOLOMON: It is a major issue, and at the embassy the major section is the consular affairs office. Because of our past colonial relationship with the Fils, because of the service of many Filipinos in the U.S. military during World War II, because of the poor prospects for rather well educated Filipinos to get jobs in their own country, there was substantial pressure to emigrate. Every day in front of the embassy there would be a line of several hundred people seeking visas. There was a lot of scamming activity, and persistent efforts on the parts of various people to help Filipinos emigrate. During my time there I got a direct call from Vernon Jordan, who I had known in earlier times -- he was very close to President Clinton. He called on behalf of a Philippine woman who was seeking to emigrate to the United States. There was a lot of that kind of activity. The one asset that an American ambassador in the Philippines had in the '90s was not foreign aid, it was - in the Philippine mind - the ability to facilitate visas. And our young FSOs who worked the "visa line," as they call it, learned very quickly the Philippine skill for scams in efforts to get exit visas. We also had a bad situation in Hawaii, where the Immigration and Naturalization Service had a very bad reputation for mistreating Filipinos who would first land in Hawaii on their way to the continental United States.

*Q: When you would get reports about the bad treatment of Filipinos by Immigration Service in Hawaii, did you pass this on to the Immigration head office?*

SOLOMON: Sure. We had an INS officer on the Country Team because of the volume of immigration activity. That was something that was an ongoing part of work at the embassy, and a serious issue. I think it's still a problem.

*Q: What about the relations military to military particularly with the base closure? How did this develop?*

SOLOMON: The Philippine military, I believe, was not anxious to be cut off from the United States. After we closed out the bases, we still maintained a defense treaty. The question was what shape would future mutual defense activities take? Because of the negative political voting on the issue of the bases and nationalistic sentiment, right after the bases were closed the big issue that provided counter pressure against us was whether we would work out a so-called "access arrangement" with the Philippines, as we had with Singapore. Even though we no longer maintained Subic Bay as an American Naval base, the question was whether the Philippine government would give our naval ships and sailors access to Philippine ports. Again, there was enormous political pressure in the Philippines against providing such access. So the level of U.S.-Philippine military cooperation subsided significantly.

One of the things I was able to do at the time was through the Mutual Defense Board and through CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific], who was then Admiral Chuck Larson. We negotiated a statement of mutual intention to maintain defense cooperation between the two sides, and we envisioned such activities as training and joint exercises. That was an effort that at least got a joint statement on paper that President Ramos supported quite actively. It helped to keep the door open. But despite that piece of paper, the political mood in the Philippines did not prove very conducive to doing very much, and the so-called SOFA agreement - the Status Of Forces Agreement - lapsed. The American military decided that they would not send their people to the Philippines unless they had the kind of guarantees in terms of judicial treatment and other favorable treatment for American troops that were part of the SOFA agreement. For several years thereafter there was basically no military training or visitation in the Philippines because of the lack of status of forces guarantees for our military personnel.

The reason I urged the Filipinos to keep our defense relationship active - this was in 1992 or early '93 - was that I felt that they were going to find the Chinese putting pressure on them as Beijing pressed its claims for the Spratly Islands and other areas in the South China Sea, some of which the Filipinos claimed. The Filipinos, at an official level, were aware of that situation. The Foreign Minister, Bobby Romulo, used to like to say that we shouldn't call the South China Sea the "South China Sea," we should call it the "ASEAN Lake." They were aware of the possibility of Chinese pressure, and indeed within a year of our leaving Subic, the Chinese put a structure up on what was aptly called Mischief Reef. They actively staked out a claim to territory that was in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, an area where oil and gas had been found off the shore of Palawan Island. The Chinese asserted their presence in this contested area in the South China Sea because of a growing nationalism, which led them to want to reinforce their territorial claims. But I also think they did it as a way of making everybody aware that the Americans were not around anymore, and that the Philippines and the other ASEAN countries would have to deal with China on their own. I had urged Secretary Baker to take a fairly active position in response to Chinese efforts to put pressure on the Philippines and others who were our friends or allies in the region on the issue of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. I made the argument that even if we weren't a direct claimant to these territories ourselves, if we were not seen as supporting the interests of key allies like the Philippines, then other allies in the region who are much more important to our interests - especially Japan, which had its own territorial dispute in the East China Sea with China, and Korea - would begin to have doubts about our staying power and our value as a defense partner. I urged a fairly forward leaning position in responding to these Chinese activities. But in the wake of the Gulf War, and in anticipation of the '92 elections, the Secretary, and I think the White House itself, was not anxious to take on another foreign policy challenge that seemed to hold the prospect of a military confrontation with China.

*Q: Did you have a feeling in the time you were in the Philippines that this was almost a period that we had to get through doing the best one could, but with this resurgent nationalism but eventually it would sort of run its course. Our bases wouldn't come back, but there might be some other event, as far as bringing troops in, port visitations.*

SOLOMON: My assumption was that after the bases were closed out, given what was going on in Southeast Asia, the Filipinos really had to face up to their economic circumstances and get

their economy moving. They had missed the wave of heavy investment in Southeast Asia during the 1980s first because of the Marcos situation, and then due to the flaccid policies of Corazon Aquino on issues of economic growth. So in my view the Filipinos had to make economic growth their primary focus. We knew that nationalistic sentiment was still strong. We knew that President Ramos wanted to reorient the Philippines toward ASEAN somewhat, to make them much more of a player in ASEAN. I didn't see defense issues as high up on the agenda, but I wanted to keep the door open. As I say, the irony is how quickly the Chinese started putting pressure on the Fils in terms of the South China Sea, something that they themselves haven't figured out how to cope with.

I might mention one other thing that I tried to do - and failed to do - that I thought would have helped the Philippines and the U.S. maintain the integrity of ASEAN. That involved the American ambassador's residence in Baguio, up in the mountains. That residence had been significantly damaged during the Mount Pinatubo eruption because of earthquake activity. One small building on the site had been split in half and was no longer useable. There was a little damage to the residence itself, but a very steep hillside on this particular site where the Baguio residence is located became very unstable and had to be shored up. In addition, because of budget cuts, the Office of Foreign Buildings in the State Department was trying to save money and was eyeing the Baguio residence as something that could be eliminated. In that context, I tried to convince our people to, in effect, give the Baguio residence to the Philippine government in exchange for some favorable treatment on land in Manila that we wanted for housing and for a possible new ambassador's residence. I also proposed that the Filipinos make the ambassador's residence in Baguio a conference center for ASEAN. The State Department Foreign Service officers went along with me, but reluctantly. They were not enthusiastic about my plan, because a number of them didn't want to lose the use of the facility -- this was a terrific facility for our people to get out of the heat of Manila, to get up into the mountains, and Baguio is a very interesting little artistic community. It has many benefits, not least of which is Camp John Hay, right beside the residence area, which was being privatized by the Filipinos as part of the base closing and turned into a nice recreation center.

So the State Department people dragged their feet, and a few years later the issue of getting rid of the Baguio residence was dropped. It's still the ambassador's residence, but I felt it was potentially a very useful bargaining chip in terms of other things we were trying to accomplish in Manila and with the Filipinos. We were trying to acquire a major piece of land in Manila near the American cemetery to build a new residence, to build other new housing, and this would have been a very good trade. And, because the Philippines were not a lead country in ASEAN, with a conference facility they could have hosted conferences, seminars, and become one of the intellectual leaders of the ASEAN countries. But that approach to handling the ambassador's residence was not to come to pass.

*Q: What about the American community, the business community. They had always been there hand in glove with the American military. Did the departure of the American military, and rising nationalism. How did the Americans...?*

SOLOMON: There was a lot of interest in the business community in keeping things going. There were companies like Texas Instruments and Timex that had very effective manufacturing

facilities, very profitable facilities. Everybody wanted the power generation problem solved, and many American firms wanted to remain active in the Philippines - down in Cebu or up closer to metropolitan Manila. I used to hold meetings with the American Chamber of Commerce once a month, and have other kinds of dealings with the American business community. In the post-Cold War period, I was certainly aware of the shift in emphasis in our foreign policy to supporting American exports and American business. This was one of the major new responsibilities of an American ambassador. So we worked actively on those economic issues.

*Q: Is there anything else we should cover on this before we close it off?*

SOLOMON: I think that pretty well covers it. I can't think of any major things.

**ALOYSIUS M. O'NEILL**  
**Deputy Director, Philippine Desk**  
**Washington, DC (1992-1993)**

**Deputy Director, Office of Philippines, Indonesian, Malaysia, Brunei & Singapore Affairs**  
**(PIMBS)**  
**Washington, DC (1993-1994)**

*Mr. O'Neil was born in South Carolina and raised there and in other states in the U.S. He was educated at the University of Delaware and Heidelberg University. After serving in the US Army in Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill joined the Foreign Service in 1976 and was posted to Korea. He subsequently served three tours in Japan as student of Japanese and Consular and Political Officer. He also served in Burma, Korea and the Philippines as well as in Washington, where he dealt primarily with East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.*

*Q: I have to mention that in Korea when a child is accepted in school, the parents are asked, "How many hours a day can you work with the child on their homework and drill what we teach?" This was expected. Al, you left there in '92?*

O'NEILL: June 25, 1992.

*Q: June 25<sup>th</sup>. That's a date I remember.*

O'NEILL: The 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War.

*Q: Where did you go?*

O'NEILL: I went back to the State Department for two years. My immediate assignment was as deputy director of the Philippine desk. There was still in the East Asia and Pacific bureau a separate Office of Philippine Affairs. I got there at the beginning of August 1992. Most of the

American military bases had closed by that time. Only one major installation was left which was Cubi Point Naval Air Station, part of the giant Subic Bay Naval Base. I had never worked on Philippine affairs before.

On the way back we stopped in Hawaii, and I went to the Pacific command for some meetings and briefings about the final close-out of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines. Also, I visited the East-West Center for a day or two for consultations with the people who dealt with Philippine affairs or Southeast Asian affairs in general.

*Q: We're talking about the U.S. Pacific Command. Were you picking up an attitude about the Philippines? After decades in the Philippine bases was there a sense of relief or a change or resentment?*

O'NEILL: At Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawaii?

*Q: Yes.*

O'NEILL: By way of background, we had had quite a number of installations in the Philippines going back to 1898. Our acquisition of the Philippines from Spain was in itself a strange business. We fought the Spanish in a war that lasted about 90 days in 1898, and in a battle in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898 George Dewey's small fleet annihilated the Spanish fleet. At the time that this happened there was a fairly large rebellion going on against Spain led by intellectual Filipinos, Spanish-educated elite. Originally what they wanted was more autonomy within the Spanish empire, including seats in the Spanish parliament. But the Spanish over-reacted, cracked down on the Filipinos, thereby sparking an independence rebellion which was underway at the time the U.S. went to war with Spain. They had already come up with a democratic republican constitution, the first in Asia's history a couple of years before, in 1896. Because Spain lost the war, the U.S. agreed to pay Spain \$20 million for the Philippines, ignoring the fact that there were Filipinos for one thing, and also that the U.S. had used these ones who were in an armed insurrection against Spain to further our war aims.

There's a famous story about President William McKinley and the Philippines. McKinley told a group of Methodist missionaries working in Asia that he was struggling with the issue of whether the U.S. should simply control Manila and the Manila Bay area which is a huge harbor, or take the entire island of Luzon, the big island that Manila is on or take control of the entire archipelago. McKinley told the missionaries that God told him to take the entire archipelago which we proceeded to do. When I would brief groups like visiting newly minted American generals and new Peace Corps volunteers I would use a hypothetical analogy from U.S. history to illustrate how Filipinos saw our action. Imagine if after the Revolution, the French, who had given us naval and ground support to beat the British, had said, "Well, these 13 colonies look pretty good. We're staying, and we're taking control." That's basically what we did in the Philippines.

Shortly a war broke out between the Philippine independence forces and the American occupation forces which dragged on a very nasty fashion for several years. We called it the Philippine Insurrection, because they were rebelling against U.S. control of their country. The

war resulted in the deaths of a lot of Filipinos but also resulted in the first universal system of education the Philippines ever had, English language education. Spain had deliberately avoided using Spanish as a common language, as a way of keeping the Filipinos divided, since the islands were home to dozens of languages. The war began about 35 or 40 years of slowly receding American control over the Philippines leading to independence in 1946. But the bases that we had throughout the Philippines went back to that early period, including Clark Air Base which was originally a cavalry post called Fort Stotsenburg. Subic Bay was a huge installation for the Navy and Marines; it has one of the best harbors in Asia. The entire Seventh Fleet can anchor in Subic Bay. It's that big.

To bring things closer to the present, in 1991, there was a huge eruption of Mount Pinatubo, which near both those bases. It was one of the biggest volcanic eruptions in recent decades, which essentially destroyed Clark Air Base. There was an evacuation of Americans and Filipinos from the entire area. There were ash flows all over the area and Clark Air Base was rendered inoperable.

During this period, the U.S. was renegotiating the base agreement with the government of Cory Aquino. Aquino's government was conflicted about the base agreement. They wanted it. They knew that it was valuable to the Philippines in a lot of ways, not only economically but also in terms of Philippine stature and ability to defend itself. But there was also this nationalist tugging in the opposite direction, trying to reduce ties with the United States. Some Filipinos talked in terms of "slaying the father figure," which gives you some of an idea about their psychology. The renegotiation was long and contentious. The Aquino government and the U.S. came to an agreement on a new base arrangement that focused, again, on Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. Under the Philippine constitution which was put into effect after Marcos fell, two-thirds of the Philippine senate had to approve this agreement. For the U.S., it was an executive agreement under the president's authority, so it did not need to go to the U.S. Senate for advice and consent although it would be sent to the Senate after it had been completed.

The Philippine Senate is a strange body. Each senator is elected nationwide. There are only 24 senators and you needed two-thirds or 16 to vote in favor of the new base agreement for it to go into effect. In 1991, twelve senators voted against it; so the agreement was dead. Then the U.S. announced – this was August of 1991 — that we were clearing out of these two bases and that we'd be gone within 15 months, which was a gigantic undertaking because these were huge installations which had been very important for a long time.

Clark was not so much of a problem because it was rendered unusable for the time at least by the Pinatubo eruption, but Subic Bay was not only a great training area for the Navy and Marines with its jungle warfare school and other facilities but it had been a real anchor of the Navy in Asia for a very long time. There were great ship repair facilities. You could bring aircraft carriers in to do work on them as well as smaller ships. These shipyards and other Subic facilities employed thousands of Filipino civilians.

That was a very long way around to your question. There was definitely a feeling of resentment at Pacific Command in general at the Filipinos for this defeat of the base agreement. There was a strong belief that President Aquino did not press hard enough for it, did not stand up and say that

the agreement was very important to Filipinos for many reasons as well as it is to the United States. Equally, her defense secretary, Fidel Ramos, West Point 1950, and a Korean War veteran of the Philippine Army, did not step up as far as the U.S. was concerned. So there was considerable anger particularly over the loss of Subic Bay because the Navy had to find places to put these ships, had to figure out what replacement ship repair facilities could be used.

There were tough negotiations with the Filipinos as to what the U.S. would leave behind in addition to the millions and millions of dollars worth of infrastructure: housing and clubs and various kinds of maintenance shops and all that that were part of Subic Bay and Clark. One of the biggest bones of contention was that some of the facilities in Subic were floating dry docks, which are like large boxes into which you move a ship to repair it. You pump the water out, and you have the ship dry and resting dry on a cradle, and you could work on the hull. They weren't permanent as they are in some places, but they were basically part of the U.S. Navy's fleet. The Filipinos said that they needed those dry docks and the Navy said they're going when we go. The Navy did take the dry docks with them which inhibited the development of Subic Bay into civilian pursuits, but it was not surprising. That was part of the atmosphere in which I arrived in the Philippine desk in 1992.

We were still engaged with the Filipinos despite the closeout of the bases which was finished in November 1992. We were still engaged in what was called the Multilateral Assistance Initiative or MAI in which we were trying to get other countries to assist Aquino's government with infrastructure projects of various kinds and longer term aid projects. As a mark of the importance that we put on the MAI, Elliot Richardson, the former attorney general, a very distinguished figure in foreign policy, was the head of it. It was a tough sell to get third countries to sign on, with all the usual turmoil in the Philippines. It was another one of those cases where we weren't doing very much in monetary terms but were trying to get other countries to aid the Philippines in what we said was their interest. But we still had our own aid program under USAID. We were dealing with a huge change in U.S.-Philippine relations, but we worked hard and came out with a pretty good solution to some of the problems.

As a peculiarity of the Philippines' relations with the U.S., the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) was not part of the mutual security treaty that we still had with the Philippines. The mutual security treaty dating from the 1950s was not changed by the end of the bases, but what did change was our ability to exercise with the Philippine forces and have ship visits because the SOFA predated the treaty. The SOFA was part of the bases arrangement and not an annex to the treaty as it is, say, in Japan, Korea, and Thailand.

We had to come up with interim arrangements because we didn't think on either side that the time was right to negotiate a new SOFA. That didn't come until I was serving in the Philippines later, the late 1990s.

*Q: Was there a certain sense of relief, say, at these base negotiations? We would no sooner finish negotiating one base negotiation and get it signed then crank up for another one which seemed to be a matter of how much money we would pay.*



O'NEILL: I think that was a part of the mix of the American emotions toward the Philippines. In fact, I think you could see that in the speed with which the U.S. closed out these gigantic installations. They were completely gone from Subic and Clark within 15 months. There wasn't much to take out of Clark because of the volcanic eruption, but Subic was still a huge operational base with Navy facilities that were basically second to none. Here's just one illustration about Cubi Point Naval Air Station. Normally, when an aircraft carrier comes into port the planes are flown off first, to an air base so they'll be ready to go if the carrier has to leave quickly. Well, at Cubi Point you didn't have to fly the airplanes off. They just moved the carrier's bow up to a giant ramp, and towed the airplanes onto the runway. As far as I know was unique in the entire world of American bases. Some admiral got the idea of building that off-ramp and lo and behold they did it.

Losing Subic was a real setback for the Navy, but they pulled out within 15 months. In fact, after the failure of the senate vote and the dooming of the base agreement, the Aquino government then got energized to say that 15 months was too fast. They said space things out. The Navy said the agreement was defeated and they were leaving.

*Q: Two things: Where did the dry docks, etc., where did they go to, and what about all these skilled laborers?*

O'NEILL: The dry docks, as I recall, either went to Guam which is a U.S. territory, or maybe to Yokosuka or Sasebo, our naval bases in Japan. In any case, those skilled laborers were really in a fix because they were Filipinos. They weren't going anywhere, and their livelihood had been a very good one. The Navy had happily paid them for very good work repairing U.S. naval vessels.

I remember a Philippine newspaper editorial lamenting the end of the base agreement and what it meant to the Philippines. It pointed out that at the ceremony to close Cubi Point in November 1992, none of the senators who had voted against the base agreement showed up. The editorial said they were sure the reason was that these base workers — the shipyard workers — would probably have lynched the senators who put them in the situation. That may have been somewhat of an exaggeration, but they all of a sudden went from being employed skilled laborers to people with no employment at all.

What happened was “only in the Philippines.” The mayor of Olongapo the Philippine city adjacent to Subic Bay was named Dick Gordon, Richard Gordon. He once told me he was the grandson of a man named Jacob Gordon, an interpreter for the U.S. Army who came from upstate New York at the time of the Philippine Insurrection. Jacob Gordon married into a Philippine family from Olongapo. The Gordon family essentially ran Olongapo and its congressional district thereafter. Somebody in the family's always the mayor of Olongapo. Somebody in the family or who's married into the family like Dick's wife Kate Gordon would have the seat in the House of Representatives from that district.

Dick Gordon was mayor of Olongapo and also chairman of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, SBMA. He was a pretty visionary guy. He managed to persuade the workers of Subic Bay to stay as unpaid volunteers until he could come up with a plan that the Philippine government would approve for the conversion of Subic Bay Base into a civilian facility, some

kind of free trade zone, etc. Among the things that the workers were doing was preventing the extensive looting that took place at Clark Air Base.

*Q: At Clark they just came over the fence and stripped the...*

O'NEILL: Not only over the fence but within Clark Air Base because it was a joint Philippine-U.S. facility. There were Philippine Air Force units as well as the Americans. When the Americans closed it out the Philippine Air Force and the happy local population swarmed onto the base and took out everything but the runway because they couldn't move the runway, but everything else was gone. They just looted everything: light fixtures, toilet fixtures, everything. Clark Air Base was essentially destroyed.

Well, Dick Gordon was determined not to have that happened at Subic, so the workers were making sure that nobody did that to Subic Bay. He was charismatic enough to be able to persuade them to work for nothing for however many months or perhaps years it was going to take to convert Subic to civilian use, which is what has happened. They do at least a limited amount of ship repair there now, but they have lots of other companies including American ones operating there. There are call centers, various American firms like Dell have call centers there, and some of the Taiwan computer manufacturers like Acer have factories there. At this point now you also have U.S. Navy ship business there, including ship visits. Ultimately, the Philippines came out of it fairly well, but they still had a sort of somewhat conflicted relationship with the United States.

Another thing happened during this time as a direct result of the closeout of the bases, which historically had generated probably two-thirds of the work of the Office of Philippine Affairs in the State Department. When the Clinton administration came in 1992 and Warren Christopher was Secretary of State, they were looking for ways to consolidate and cut the Department. Among many results, the Office of Philippine Affairs became combined with an office that covered Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore, so it became PIMBS: Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore. Tom Hubbard, the deputy assistant secretary who covered Southeast Asia, decided that I would be the deputy director of the new office, which happened in the fall of 1993. Tim Foster who was the last director of the Office of Philippine Affairs went on to the senior seminar when the consolidation took place. Scott Butcher, who was the DCM in Kuala Lumpur came back to become office director of this new PIMBS.

*Q: Okay, let's pick this up the next time when the two combined...*

O'NEILL: Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore.

*Q: ...some of the issues there and how we viewed the government of Corazon Aquino and developments in the Philippines. This would be...*

O'NEILL: This would be 1993 to '94.

*Q: Okay, good. We'll pick it up then.*

*Today is the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2008 with Al O'Neill. Al, we're talking about your time. First, you had something you want to talk about when you were in Seoul. What was the year of this?*

O'NEILL: This was in 1990, and it was something I forgot in the discussion about Japan and the Koreans. There was a pretty strange visit to North Korea by a very senior Liberal Democratic Party politician named Kanemaru Shin in 1990 which was not coordinated with the Japanese government, particularly the Foreign Ministry. Kanemaru was an extremely powerful character. The tag line for him was the "King Maker" in the LDP. I'm not sure if he ever held any cabinet positions; he certainly didn't at the time that he made this visit. He went off to North Korea with a large LDP delegation, met with Kim Il-sung. This was at the time when the U.S. was beginning to pay more and more attention to the North Korea nuclear weapons program.

To me, it was a mystery that it took the Japanese so long to get spun up about the North Korea nuclear weapons program because, of course, it combined two of Japan's biggest prejudices. One is nuclear weapons, and the other is Koreans, but it took them a while. But Kanemaru went to North Korea in 1990, met with Kim Il-sung, to the great consternation of the Japanese foreign ministry and also to the unhappiness of the South Korean and U.S. governments.

While he was there he was talking about reparations to North Korea which is a keystone of any occasion when the Japanese and North Koreans talk about normalization of relations. He apologized for the Japanese colonial period, but he went further and apologized for the period after 1945 to the present in 1990 of, I think the expression was "abnormal relations," which really drove the South Koreans and us up the wall. As I say, the Japanese Foreign Ministry people were just beside themselves as well.

Kanemaru did go to Seoul which is where I heard the details of the visit. He met with President Roh Tae-woo. I got a read-out from the Korean Foreign Ministry people, which we were reported back to Washington. One of the things my interlocutor in the Northeast Asian division said was that Kanemaru had told Roh Tae-woo he was so overwhelmed by Kim Il-Sung's hospitality he had tears in his eyes. You can imagine how that would sit with the South Koreans. The second thing was that Kanemaru told him that he had received Kim Il-Sung's assurances that of course North Korea was not developing nuclear weapons, and he accepted that lie at face value. This was a very strange visit, and it set people's teeth on edge in several capitals for a while. What saved it was that it was clear that the Japanese government was not going to pursue Kanemaru's initiative.

*Q: I was wondering, did you get any from your Japanese contacts or Korean contacts what was behind this? Was this just an idiosyncrasy of some guy out of his depth or something in the international context?*

O'NEILL: That's a good question, and I can't remember now what the Korean government's view of that was. I'm sure we talked about this with our Japanese embassy colleagues, too, and I'm sure there was reporting from Tokyo. Because I wanted to remember the year of the visit, I recently looked at Kenneth Pyle's great book called Japan Rising, which came out a couple of years ago. His view was that Kanemaru was hoping for kickbacks from the North Koreans thinking that upon normalization, Japan would provide billions of dollars in reparations and

Kanemaru somehow figured that he would get a slice of the pie. This is not too farfetched. Pyle is an expert on Japan. When Kanemaru was finally ousted and his political career came to an end, the police searched a safe in his house and found quite a large quantity of gold. I'm not saying that this came from the North Koreans. It's just that Kanemaru in his King Maker guise certainly had a strong attachment to money. I take Pyle's view as an accurate assessment, bizarre as it is.

*Q: On the Philippines. You talked about the bases and all, but I don't think we've gotten into the Philippine government. You were there from when to when?*

O'NEILL: I was the last deputy director for Philippine affairs in the East Asian Pacific bureau in 1992-93 and then deputy director for PIMBS for the following year. This was under the presidency of Corazon Aquino, the widow of Benigno Aquino who had been killed under the Marcos regime. Mrs. Aquino of course had led the people power revolution that ultimately ousted Marcos in 1986. Aquino was in many respects a wonderful person. She was essentially the perfect person in the sense of being a living symbol around whom the People Power movement could coalesce to oust Marcos. She came from a wealthy Sino-Filipino land owning family. Her husband Benigno Aquino was from another wealthy land owning family in central Luzon. She had plenty of relatives in political positions. Until her husband's murder, she was non-political, just a very devout Catholic housewife.

She was also not the most decisive person when she became president. Among many examples, this showed up in the base negotiations with the U.S. Last time, we talked about the achievement of a renegotiated base agreement through very, very tough negotiations between the U.S. and Philippine government led on the U.S side by Richard Armitage and on the Philippine side by a man named Alfredo Bengzon. He was a nationalistic character who was basically determined to squeeze the U.S. as much as he possibly could. On the Philippine side that agreement had to go to the senate for approval. A two-thirds majority was necessary which would have been 16 votes. It fell short of that with twelve votes against it.

At the time the last base was closing, some members of the Philippine congress were demanding that the U.S. amend the 1950s-vintage security treaty. There were some in the Philippine congress who were insisting that the U.S. renegotiate the treaty to add a specific security guarantee for the Philippines and any places that it had claimed in the South China Sea. Obviously, we had no intention of doing that at all.

*Q: Al, did you have the feeling that in the Philippines the fact that the United States was going to pull out, did it come as a surprise that the United States agreed.*

O'NEILL: It probably surprised a lot of Filipinos, especially those who didn't like us very much. From our perspective we had no choice. We could not have maintained the bases in a situation where the Philippine senate had failed to approve the agreement. It would have been a legally and constitutionally untenable.

*Q: It could have been another vote or something...*

O'NEILL: This is what happened — far too late. Cory Aquino, after the senate vote failed, she tried to... She had been quite silent as had her defense secretary Fidel Ramos, later her successor as president. He was a 1950 graduate of West Point, I might add. They were quite silent. Certainly the U.S. belief at the time was that they could have done more in their position to tell the Philippine people the value of these bases both in financial terms and also in terms of international politics, and they really didn't.

By the time I got to the Philippine desk from Seoul, this was pretty much done. There was no doubt that we were leaving completely. I got there in August 1992, and in November was the final hauling down of the flag at Cubi Point. There was certainly belief on the part of the U.S. military that the Aquino government didn't try hard enough, they could have done more but didn't, so we're getting out as quickly as we could. Aquino did try, I think, to get the U.S. to extend the withdrawal period. She cooked up this idea of some kind of a national referendum which just fizzled.

Let me mention an odd factoid. Later when I was the political counselor in Manila in 1997 to 2000, I met a number of times with the man who ran an organization called Social Weather Stations, which was by far the most respected and independent polling organization in the Philippines. He told me that they did a poll around the time of either the Philippine Senate vote or the closeout of the bases and found that there was an appreciable number of Filipinos who didn't have any idea that there were American bases there in the first place. This was while the bases were still there and had been there since the Spanish American War. I forget what the percentage was, but it was a notable percentage of his polling.

We now had a unique situation where we had a treaty of alliance and no SOFA. Fairly quickly, though, we lashed together some agreements with the consent of key senators that allowed for very tiny groups of American military people, up to 12 or 15 — I think the limit was 20 — to be in the Philippines with SOFA-like protections for training, to allow Special Forces or Navy Seabees to train certain Philippine units for very brief periods.

Anyhow, we did that, and we did not have any intention to abrogate the security treaty for a lot of reasons, one of which was Philippine archipelago didn't move. It was still the geographical keystone physically between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia and also straddling some very important sea routes among others.

*Q: I may have asked this before, but did you sense... We'd been fighting this base thing. It's like the Azores. If you happened to be dealing with Portugal. We still had something in Azores. There's such a thing as base negotiation fatigue and all this. Did you find in a way a certain sense of relief or just plain write off? You know, saying, "Okay, we've got other things to do," almost a relieved disinterest in the Philippines.*

O'NEILL: There was certainly a high level of irritation about the Filipinos. It was partly the lethargy of the Aquino administration in dealing with the issues. Then the other thing was that I think particularly in the Navy. The Air Force as I mentioned earlier the previous session had been pretty much shut out of Clark Air Base...

*Q: Pinatubo.*

O'NEILL: Pinatubo's eruption, the effects which lingered for a decade in terms of ash and mud flows every time it rained. It was a horrendous burden on the central Luzon area where these bases were. Pinatubo didn't affect Subic quite as much although Subic was evacuated, but the physical damage was less because of, I guess, prevailing winds at Subic. But the Navy really liked Subic Bay. I first saw the gigantic harbor in March of 1993 as I was there on a TDY as the deputy director of Philippine affairs. It is magnificent! The whole 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet could fit in that harbor. They had facilities as I mentioned before, the wonderful ship repair facilities that the Navy relied on so much. But finally the Navy just said, "Enough is enough." They made sure that they left as quickly as they possibly could.

Incidentally, this provided a wonderful example for us to use in Korea later on because when Koreans particularly on the left would say, "You're in Korea militarily for your own purposes. You're just dominating us," and all this. We could point to that vote and say, "If your government says go, we will leave. Look at the Philippines. We left because of their democratic processes. If your government says the same thing, we'll go." It was not a terribly effective argument given the stubborn mindset of those Koreans who were so anti-American, but it was a fact and one we could point to, and one we would have followed, too, for that matter.

Part of the closeout of the bases was a subset of negotiations done by Pacific Command as to what facilities would be left behind and what facilities would be taken away. We left, of course, a terrific runway at Cubi Point and the quarters and hospital, all sorts of other things that the Navy had built up over the decades, but they did take the floating dry docks which were actually numbered ships in the U.S. Navy list, too, and even though the Filipinos were crying that they needed the dry docks for civilian ship repair in the future. They were Navy ships, and the Navy was not going to leave them behind.

I remember there was a big argument about the main bowling alley at Cubi Point. I can't remember the details but the Navy, as a way of showing their irritation with the Filipinos, was somehow determined to take all of the equipment out of the bowling alley. That was a measure of the depths to which things had descended. Adjusting the relationship and salvaging the positive parts of the relationship occupied a good bit of our time for the remainder of that year which was 1992 and into 1993, the last year of a separate office of Philippine affairs.

As I mentioned the Department also combined the office of Philippine affairs with another office that handled Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore. This took place in, August or September of 1993, and I became the new deputy director of this combined office covering all five countries. The Philippines were dismayed about losing a separate office, but the fact was that two-thirds or more of the desk's business had had to do with base issues, so when you took that away there was no rationale for a separate desk.

Connected with this move was a huge cut in State Department staffing at Embassy Manila. Embassy Manila was huge, but the hit came to the State Department offices, particularly political, economic, not so much consular or administrative. As you know, in the fall every year it's the bidding season for the following summer. Deputy office directors have the lead on

staffing, making sure you get the best possible candidates for the vacancies coming up the following summer not only at the desk itself but also in the various posts that they were responsible for. In this case we had five embassies: Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, Singapore, and Jakarta. We also had consulates in Medan and Surabaya in Indonesia and in Cebu in the central Philippines.

I found, particularly dealing with upcoming vacancies in the Philippines that fall, it seemed like every day in Embassy Manila we were losing positions. I'd have people calling from Embassy Moscow and other posts asking about this or that job, and I'd be looking at the lists and, "Sorry, that job just disappeared. It's no longer in the embassy." It was a really horrendous cut, though some of them made sense. For example, we didn't need three political-military officers anymore. It was during that period that there was serious consideration being given to closing the consulate general in Sapporo, Japan, and it was only the personal intervention Walter Mondale who was ambassador to Japan at the time that that post was saved from being closed. So we were going through a bad period in the State Department in terms of funding and staffing, etc.

In Manila, there were 23 U.S. government agencies including five or six law enforcement agencies: Secret Service, FAA security, Diplomatic Security, INS, FBI and DEA, and a large Veterans' Affairs office to take care of the large somewhat dwindling number of Philippine veterans of U.S. forces and Philippine scouts, etc. who were owed pension benefits under the U.S. Veterans' Administration.

*Q: What was the feeling you were picking up in Washington toward Warren Christopher as secretary of state?*

O'NEILL: Nobody looked to him for leadership; I'll put it that way. It was hard to believe that Secretary Christopher felt there was this department under him that he was responsible for. I think the cruelest remark was, when something went bad, whether in the department or elsewhere during his tenure, "Well, this wouldn't have happened if Warren Christopher were still alive." That encapsulates the view of a lot of people including myself about his "leadership" in the department.

*Q: Before we turn to some of the other areas like Singapore and Jakarta, and others, what was our feeling? When we pulled out of the bases about the insurgencies that were going on in the Philippines? It had been going on since certainly 1898, mostly with the Moros, at least I recall at one time.*

O'NEILL: Moros is what they called themselves, too. They used the Spanish word for Moors. The Moro or Filipino Muslim insurgencies were concentrated in western Mindanao and the islands in Sulu Sea which points toward Borneo.

We dealt with one of the Moro insurgent groups, the Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF which was headed by Nur Misuari, a former University of Philippines professor had pretty much come over to the government's side by then. Misuari was getting the political recognition, the political power that he was seeking. There was another group called the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, MILF, which had broken away from MNLF. It was more radical in the sense of being

more Islamic and more determined to — at least as advertised — to set up an autonomous Muslim state somehow in western Mindanao. I don't think they had any clue how they would do this, but nonetheless they were fighting against the Philippine government. I don't recall during that period 1992-94 that the fighting was particularly intense. And it was just not something that we were involved in because the U.S. military had never been involved to the best of my knowledge in combat with the Moros post-independence.

The other insurgency was a little bit nastier in terms of the U.S. That was the so-called New People's Army which was the armed wing of the Philippine Communist Party. By that time though most of the leaders of the Philippine Communist Party's political wing were in exile in the Netherlands eating Gouda cheese and sipping white wine while their armed comrades were living miserably in the jungle. They had pretty much gone into disarray with the fall of the Marcos.... The New People's Army had expanded vastly during the Marcos era. He was a tremendous recruiter for them.

*Q: You might explain that you were being sarcastic...*

O'NEILL: Yes. Marcos, as dictator of the Philippines for 20 years, looted the country, damaged the country almost beyond repair before he was ousted. His policies drew countless numbers of people, largely very poor people, into the New People's Army. If some poor kid had a choice of spending his life behind a plow and a water buffalo or getting a gun and going off into the jungle fighting against Marcos, a lot of the young people picked the gun and got into the fight even if they didn't know exactly what they were getting into and didn't have any idea about communist ideology or the bloody realities of communism.

That threat tapered off a good bit after Marcos. In fact, some things did come out better in the Aquino years. There was certainly a much more open political system. Nobody was being arrested and tortured for expressing political opinions. A lot of former dissidents came into the government. Still, Aquino was very indecisive. One good example of this had to do with electric power generation. During the entire time that she was president, not a single base load national power plant went on line anywhere in the Philippines while demand for electricity was burgeoning. So you had what the Filipinos called "brown outs," major electricity failures throughout Manila and elsewhere all the time. In fact, by the time I went on temporary duty to the Philippines in March of 1993 for two weeks, the brownouts had extended to Sundays as well. Parts of Manila would be electrified and most of the rest of the city would be dark, on a rotating schedule.

This was a direct result of her inability to push back against the huge array of environmental NGOs who thought that power generation was bad. When she turned over the presidency to her defense secretary Eddie Ramos in the next election, one of his major problems was this power generation disaster. He came up with a lot of innovative ideas including moving huge power generation barges into various ports to alleviate this. Things did get better under him, but this was a real mark against Aquino.

It was a combination of Aquino's indecisiveness and also of her being totally in thrall to various environmental NGOs. The Philippines is the land of NGOs. How half of them were funded I just



couldn't imagine, but they're all over the place. Some of them were responsible and took up serious causes in a serious way including environmental causes and opposing illegal logging which was raping the Philippine forests. Some of them took up the cause of various indigenous groups. There are hundreds of ethnic groups in the Philippines some of which are pretty downtrodden. Some of these NGOs were good on those issues, also child labor, etc. There were just so many of them that I suppose in each category there was a range from the irresponsible to the responsible, but they were a force to be reckoned with.

During that March 1993 visit, among the places I went was to Palawan which is the long island that runs northeast to southwest across the Sulu Sea from the main islands of the Philippines. I went with John Miller who was then in the political section. One of the people we met was the mayor of Puerto Princesa, the capital city of Palawan Province. He was named Edward Hagedorn, not a typical Philippine name. His German grandfather had come early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, perhaps as a merchant. Somehow he wound up in Palawan. Mayor Hagedorn invited us to lunch. He was wearing the typical Philippine male garb, a shirt called a *barong* which is either long or short sleeve, but it is not tucked in. It's a fairly sheer material, and his allowed you to see that he had a Colt .45 automatic stuck in his belt which was not an unusual thing in the Philippines. I asked Mayor Hagedorn why he had the .45 with him. He said was combating illegal logging and was in danger of being killed by the logging interests. He had his own security people with him at all times, too, but he relied on his .45 pistol. Hagedorn indicated that one of the forces that he was fighting against was at the time Speaker of the House of Representatives. Anyhow, it was a good illustration of certain aspects of life in the Philippines that this mayor felt the need to go around armed. But again, the Philippines is a place where you have armed guards in McDonald's and in shopping malls.

*Q: We weren't particularly concerned on a scale of one to ten or whatever with a communist insurgency at that time.*

O'NEILL: No. In fact, by that time the NPA — the New People's Army — was pretty much an organization that you would have to find in order to get in trouble with as an American. If you went to certain places on the island of Negros for example, or a couple of other places, and went way into the forest, you might find yourself killed or captured by the NPA, but it was not a force in Manila, for example.

This is in marked contrast to what it had been in years past. For example in 1989, Colonel James N. Rowe who was then the chief of the army branch in the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group was assassinated by the NPA by a so-called Sparrow Squad, one of their assassination squads. He was on his way to work in Manila. This was, of course, a tragedy on a number of levels, not the least of which was that Rowe, when he was a Special Forces officer in Vietnam, had been captured by the Viet Cong and held for more than five and a half years before he could escape.

*Q: I would think that it would be a little bit hard to withdraw all the Americans because Filipino officers or cadets had gone to West Point for God knows how long. The president was a graduate of West Point. Also, I'm sure Leavenworth and all the other kind of staff colleges always had Philippine contingents. We had jungle warfare people and all.*

O'NEILL: They had been for a long time. The business of sending Philippine cadets to West Point ended with the base agreement. I can't remember the exact details, but the arrangements that allowed Philippine cadets to be sent to West Point and the Naval Academy, actually all three of the academies, was embedded somehow in either the base agreement itself or in annexes to that. So that arrangement also went. I think it's since been revived in recent years under different auspices, but there was a long hiatus in Filipinos going to West Point and the Naval Academy.

There had been people who eventually rose quite high who went to our academies. Those cadets would first go to the Filipino military academy in Baguio which was an all-service academy, to establish a class group for the future. Then they would go to Annapolis or West Point because if they had had no PMA class group, they would just have been like aliens when they returned.

*Q: It's like a Korean academy class. This is a tie that lasted for your life.*

O'NEILL: Right, and that was certainly true probably for the civilian colleges, too, but it was certainly true for the Philippine Military Academy. Let me add another little thing, just another illustration of the uniqueness of the Philippines. When I was on this same trip I went to JUSMAG, Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group for consultations. The JUSMAG chief told me he had just come down from the academy at Baguio because he had gone to their graduation parade. He said that as part of this parade, you'd have the cadets parading, but the tradition was that older graduates, alumni, would parade with their year groups toward the end of the parade. He said he saw former coup leaders marching in the graduation parade with their alumni group. I'm sure that was a tradition every year, but to see military people who had been in armed insurrections against the government, particularly in the Aquino years, was a bit much.

There were many very bloody coup attempts to overthrow Aquino mostly led by senior military officers including the notorious Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, an allegedly charismatic but very narcissistic colonel in the Philippine army. He has been a senator several times over, to give you an idea about Philippine politics. As a senator, he was implicated in further coup attempts against the government of the time.

*Q: Before we leave the Philippines, what about coups while you were there or attempted coups? Did we get involved in anything during your time?*

O'NEILL: Again, I was in Washington. I don't recall that there were any coup attempts during the two years that I was involved in Philippine affairs in Washington. If there were, they were pretty minor. They were nothing like the earlier times when there was a famous one, and I can't remember exactly what year it was, but let's say 1987 or '88 in which the Scout Ranger Regiment or another elite regiment rose up against the Aquino government protesting one, overall fecklessness, and two, corruption. Cory Aquino herself was not corrupt, but lots and lots of her relatives, the Cojuangcos, really were. Some of them were the associates of the Marcoses including a cousin of hers Jose "Danding" Cojuangco who was very wealthy and a real crook but also very shrewd politician and horse breeder, among other talents.

Anyhow, during that coup attempt, we still had U.S. aircraft at Clark Air Base. Defense Secretary Eddie Ramos was pleading for the U.S. to intervene in some fashion which he later

vociferously denied doing. In response, a couple of our F-4 Phantom reconnaissance aircraft from Clark flew very low over the coup units' positions to demonstrate that they had better stand down. Ultimately the coup did collapse. It was an unusual American intervention at a particularly key time because we didn't want Cory Aquino to be thrown out of office because she had been duly elected. Some coup attempts were bloody; others were laughable. There was one in which the military people with the backing of a member of the House of Representatives took over a hotel in Manila for several hours until that coup fell apart. That and other events made it difficult in general for Washington to take the country seriously. Cory Aquino's government was shaken a number of times by coups. I don't recall that in the 1992-94 time frame that there were any such things at all. By this time, I was also engaged in the Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore...

*Q: I'd like to move to that, but just one further question on the Philippine side. How effective was the Philippine embassy?*

O'NEILL: We were in touch with them all the time by phone, and they would often come over and talk to us. We had I would say quite close ties. The folks that we dealt with in the Philippine embassy were mostly career diplomats. They tended to be very competent people, well educated, well disposed toward the U.S. and worked with us quite well. Washington was their most important post and generally this was reflected in the staffing.

We had one real tragedy. Ambassador Suarez died at post. I think it was in late '93, after PIMBS was formed. Ambassador Suarez, who was a senior career diplomat, contracted cancer which he managed to conceal for a long time from his staff before he died at post. I don't think that we knew he was sick, at least not terminally ill. I learned that the U.S. tradition is if a foreign ambassador dies at post, it's the U.S. government's responsibility to return the body to his home country. As soon as his embassy notified us, the first thing we did was call the op center, the state department's 24 hour operations center and also the chief of protocol's office to let them know. The chief of protocol's office is an extraordinary operation. It's usually a combination of political appointees and Civil Service, and in my dealings with them I've always found to be extremely capable.

In this case protocol guided us through this whole process of getting in touch with DOD for an Air Force airplane to return Ambassador Suarez's remains, accompanied by Mrs. Suarez. Somebody from the chief of protocol's office went with them. Mrs. Suarez and the party were met at Manila Airport by Ambassador Richard Solomon. I think we got a lot of credit out of doing this. Whether Filipinos knew this was a tradition or not, it was a very positive thing in Philippine-American terms.

*Q: Let's turn over to the other parts, talk about pick them up one at a time?*

O'NEILL: Yes. We're talking about Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore in the period 1993-94. As I say, I became the deputy director of the combined desk, and Scott Butcher, a career officer who had a lot of Southeast Asian experience including in Jakarta as political counselor became the director. He had just come from being deputy chief of mission in Kuala Lumpur. Scott was a good person to work for. Most of the PHL staff came with me to the new

office. A deputy director is the in-house manager. I found that it was surprisingly difficult to meld a one-country office that had been in operation for a long time with a multi-country office which had also been in operation for a long time. There were more challenges than I would have thought. Parceling out the workloads turned out to be quite interesting. But the main things we were dealing with aside from the Philippines were largely focused on Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Brunei was not very time-consuming. It's very small, fabulously wealthy because of the oil, a self-described Malay Muslim monarchy, an absolute monarchy under Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

These other three countries posed various kinds of challenges to us. Indonesia was largely a question of human rights and whether to interact with the Indonesian military because of their bad record of human rights violations. There were certainly a number of U.S. congressional leaders who were dead set against almost any training with or training of the Indonesian military at that time because of their admittedly very bad human rights record. The philosophical issue is whether you can achieve your objectives by shunning somebody or can you achieve them by engaging with them and trying, perhaps, over a long span of time in trying to get them to do what you want them to do.

Needless to say, as a career officer my view was that if you ignored them they would continue to do whatever they did, whereas if you engage them you would have some chance of ameliorating their behavior. I think that was the general State Department view, but it was not a big seller with, for example, Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont. Nor of the people like Human Rights Watch, etc., who were dead set against our engaging the Indonesian military. So this whole business of the Indonesian military under Suharto and human rights was a big issue in U.S.-Indonesia relations. We had a state visit by Suharto in late '93 in connection with the APEC leaders meeting in Seattle. To the best of my recollection, it was the first time there was a leaders meeting of the chiefs of state and heads of government under APEC, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation.

*Q: This was a Clinton initiative...*

O'NEILL: Yes, the leaders' meeting idea was. The earlier top level meetings of APEC were at ministerial level. In connection with that Seattle conclave, we also had both Suharto and Ramos coming on state visits. Kim Young-Sam of the Republic of Korea was coming at the same time; so the poor NSC Asia staff was just going out of their minds trying to handle all of these things. I was calling from my house in McLean on a Sunday morning to the NSC Asia staffer I was dealing with on the Suharto and Ramos visits. He sounded obviously exhausted because he was not only dealing with our two but also the Kim Young-Sam visit as well. He said at one point, "Excuse me, but I've been up for 25 hours straight working on all these visits."

Mahathir Mohammad, long-time prime minister of Malaysia, a usually consistent thorn in the U.S. side, refused to go to leaders' meeting because he saw it as a slap at his plan for the EAEC or the East Asian Economic Caucus. That was his idea of an anti-APEC which would gather all the non-Caucasian governments of the Asia-Pacific region under his leadership. This was only one of the examples of Mahathir's prickly relationship with the United States. He was usually looking for ways to criticize the United States for being hegemonic, etc., and he would raise the

idea of Asian values — that the U.S. shouldn't be preaching about human rights because we Asians have got our own ways of doing things. But on the other hand, Mahathir cooperated with the U.S. in military training, which was in our mutual interest. They bought U.S. military equipment, too. Indeed, during that period Ambassador John Wolf in Kuala Lumpur was able to clinch a deal for the Malaysian Air Force to buy F/A-18 fighter attack planes from the U.S. I learned later when I was in Okinawa that the Malaysian Air Force squadrons with F/A-18s were much happier than the squadrons that were equipped with MiG-29s. Buying those MiGs was again an example of the way Mahathir operated. He wanted to show he could thumb his nose at us as a source of military equipment and buy from the Russians.

We tended to shrug off a lot of things that Mahathir said and some of the things he did because we knew he was doing them both for domestic political reasons and also to boost his credentials as an independent leader, sort of a non-aligned figure. Malaysia had a reasonably democratic society with a large Malay-Muslim majority, a good sized Chinese minority, and a smaller Indian minority, a mixture descended from the British era.

We sort of shrugged off certain things that Mahathir said, but there were things that we were opposed to, and we did not like the idea of the East Asia Economic Caucus of his. We saw it as aimed at weakening APEC which was broader based on both sides of the Pacific and we thought APEC had a great deal of potential in lowering trade barriers and increasing trade, etc. and also for eventually discussing other things including security relationships as it turned out.

*Q: Was Lee Kuan Yew still the chief guy in Singapore?*

O'NEILL: He had elevated himself. Lee Kuan Yew had finally relinquished the prime ministership to his designated successor, Goh Chok Tong. Lee invented the title of Senior Minister for himself, and so he was overseeing the whole thing. His ultimate objective, which has since been achieved, was to get his son Lee Hsien Loong into the prime ministership. The son was universally known as BG Lee for Brigadier General Lee. Goh Chok Tong was the prime minister, and Goh as I recall went to that APEC leaders' meeting. Despite the fact that Singapore was basically an autocratic Confucian government with only the veneer of democracy, it was a very prosperous place. Singapore was a good friend of the U.S., an important business center and strategically located at the narrowest point of the Straits of Malacca between the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia.

Lee Kuan Yew was very much dismayed by the disarray in the Philippines leading to the end of the American bases. He went out of his way to do what he could to ensure that there was no gap in the U.S. security presence in Southeast Asia which he valued greatly. He began offering facilities to U.S. forces for ship visits mainly.

I believe it was during that period but certainly not long thereafter, when Singapore began construction of a major naval facility which would allow U.S. aircraft carriers to dock. Until that was completed, aircraft carriers and other large warships had to anchor out in Singapore Harbor. People and supplies were brought back and forth by smaller vessels. This was both a practical thing and also a symbol that Singapore was trying to take up the slack that was produced by the closeout of Philippine bases.

We were largely pleased with Lee Kuan Yew's government. The biggest bone of contention was the human rights issue because he really allowed no interference from the handful of opposition politicians. One of his devices was if an opposition politician in the Parliament would raise objections to the government policy too often or too loudly, Lee would sue the man for libel. This happened very often, and with the Singapore court system being what it was I don't think he ever lost a libel suit. Often he could run an opposition parliamentarian into bankruptcy through this device. It was nasty but legal, at least in their legal system.

The biggest row we had with the Singapore during that year was something called the Michael Fay case. In the spring of 1994, Fay, an American student at an international school, was arrested along with a number of other international students, at least a couple of them Malaysians, for vandalizing cars. What distinguished this particular case was that what we normally refer to as vandalism such as spray painting a car or spraying graffiti on a building, is known as "mischief" in Singapore law. You can be fined for it, you can be imprisoned for it, but you can't be caned for mischief whereas the crime of "vandalism" in Singapore law had a political connotation. Just spray painting your name on somebody's car was mischief in Singapore law. If you spray painted "Down with Lee Kuan Yew," on the other side of the same car that was vandalism because there was a political message. You could be caned if you were convicted of vandalism, and this was being beaten on the bare buttocks with a stout rattan cane.

When those students were arrested, I don't really think there was any doubt that Michael Fay and his fellow students were spray painting cars out of sheer boredom or whatever was motivating them. There was no political message in any of this spray painting, but they were arrested by the cops and probably vigorously interrogated. One of the Malaysian boys had a burst eardrum out of the interrogations. They were charged with vandalism even though as I say there was absolutely no political connotation in anything they had done. The expectation was that they were going to be found guilty which indeed happened. Michael Fay was sentenced to six strokes of the cane. This caused a big uproar and actually got a lot of attention in the American press.

*Q: Yes, very much.*

O'NEILL: This got to be a real tangle because among other things our fellow Americans in some numbers were calling and writing to the Singapore embassy in Washington threatening all sorts of violence. My Singapore/Brunei desk officer was a crackerjack FSO named Nan Nida, now Nan Fife. Nan got a stream of diplomatic notes from the Singapore embassy with attachments which were the transcripts of all the obscene and threatening phone calls. They were requesting additional diplomatic security around the embassy which we arranged very quickly. One note after another would come in with these filthy, obscene phone call transcripts attached to them with all sorts of blood-curdling threats against the embassy.

Meanwhile, we were getting phone calls, too. One person who was calling during this time was a professor at some college somewhere in the U.S., and I wound up handling his calls. I tried to keep Nan from having to deal with too many of the wacky callers because she had too many other things to do. But this guy kept demanding over and over again that the U.S. government send a Special Forces team to rescue Michael Fay from the Singapore prison where he was

awaiting caning. I was gritting my teeth and saying we're not going to do that and trying to get him off the phone as quickly as I could. All the while I thought that I'll just bet that during the Vietnam War, this guy was probably a vociferous critic of the U.S. military and Special Forces as baby killing rapists but by God, he now wanted the Green Berets to rescue Michael Fay.

Obviously the U.S. embassy in Singapore was up to its neck in this whole thing in all sorts of ways and we were in constant touch with them by phone and message. Skip Boyce (Ralph Boyce) was the deputy chief of mission, actually the Chargé d'Affaires during that time. We were engaged with the Singapore government in a number of ways including the diplomatic notes. The Singapore ambassador at the time was a man who later became the president of Singapore, a largely ceremonial position. But he was also a career intelligence officer service before becoming ambassador. Ambassador Nathan was coming in to the Department at a high level. We commiserated with him about the threats which we were taking seriously, and we did have extra protection of the embassy.

*Q: Was this almost racist?*

O'NEILL: I don't know. Well, there were several different currents in the United States because there was this backlash (no pun intended). Whether it was racist or not, I don't know, but the idea of corporal punishment, of caning an American student didn't sit well with certain Americans. On the other hand there were others including, at least one member of the Maryland House of Delegates, who wanted to allow for caning in the Maryland school system.

And we got more than a few calls saying "right on, Singapore. That's a good way to stop vandalism." So there were various currents in the U.S. It wasn't all one-sided by any means. The opponents were the ones harassing the Singapore embassy. The weirdest twist was that after Fay had been convicted of the political charge of vandalism and was sentenced to six strokes of the cane; there was a news conference at the White House. It was a Friday, and President Clinton was with a visiting prime minister or president. One of the newsmen asked what about the Michael Fay case and this kid being caned? Clinton said he didn't know anything about it or didn't know the details, but he would get back to the reporter which, of course, sent the NSC staff into a swoon as well as us, because the last thing we needed was presidential involvement in a case like this.

Well, on the following Monday or Tuesday Clinton had another news conference. Nobody asked a question about Fay, but Clinton then said somebody had asked about the Michael Fay case on Friday and he had looked into it. He said it was really bad. We and the NSC went into a swoon again because then what do you do? You've got Bill Clinton vs. Lee Kuan Yew and Lee had the home court advantage, so to speak.

I'm not sure that we ever knew for sure exactly what the Singapore government's thought processes were in prosecuting the boys for vandalism, but our embassy's best analysis was that Lee Kuan Yew was sending a very Chinese message to Singapore's own students. There's a Chinese expression, "Kill the chicken to scare the monkey," and this may have been what he had in mind — that there was sort of unrest of some kind, or at least unrest by Lee Kuan Yew's very narrow definition of it, anyway, among Singapore students. What better way of showing

Singapore students that they better stay in line than to whack some Malaysian and American kids for having spray painted some cars and gotten out of line.

Anyway, now the President of the United States had interjected himself into a situation which was from my narrow low-level perspective very non-presidential. But there we were, and in the end what the Singapore government did reduce the sentence from six strokes to four, as a result of presidential intervention but the kid still got caned. There was no way that I can imagine somebody like Lee Kuan Yew backing down and saying, "Well, thank you. We'll just sentence him to a rap on the knuckles." He just wouldn't do that, but he did reduce the sentence which may have given somebody some satisfaction.

This case, as such things always do, brought some real wackos out of the woodwork, not only my friend from academia insisting that Special Forces rescue this guy. We were of course in touch with Michael Fay's father, a long time business representative in Singapore which is how his son got to be there. My recollection is that he and Michael Fay's mother were divorced. Mr. Fay kept calling us, not surprisingly, wanting us to stop the caning. Then one time he told us somebody had sent him a letter or an e-mail detailing in a very sadistic fashion what caning was like. The sender was an American as far as I know who took it upon himself to tell Mr. Fay about just how horrendous and painful and it was going to be for his son. So he was calling us about this, too. It was just a really messy, miserable case. Michael Fay did, indeed, get his four strokes, and that was more or less the end of it. But the case was one of the more unusual things that I dealt with in my Washington days.

By this time I had been paneled to become the U.S. Consul General in Okinawa which would mean a return to Japan after a hiatus of 10 years. I was really looking forward to that and looking forward to getting out of what I called the Tar Pit, going back to the Foreign Service which was what I had joined up for in the first place.

*Q: Let's start with Indonesia. Had we reached the point where we were getting to the end of the tether on Suharto or not?*

O'NEILL: It was several more years before Suharto fell from power. It was a difficult and complex relationship. Suharto was a former general, the man who had been instrumental in overthrowing Sukarno and in the very bloody repression of the PKI, the communist party of Indonesia, in the context of getting rid of Sukarno in 1965. The death toll in that may have been 500,000 people.

*Q: By the way, I have an interview I did some time ago with Bob Martens who was basically a Soviet expert but was the political counselor, I think, in Indonesia at the time and came up with an estimate which was off the top of his head which was 300,000. That number kept being bandied about. He was accused of sending out a death list. It was quite interesting. It's ...*

O'NEILL: Is it on your website?

*Q: It's on the website. Bob M-A-R-T-E-N-S. Robert Martens.*



O'NEILL: Whatever the real death toll was it was very, very bloody and undoubtedly in such things, a number of personal grudges and debts were probably settled in the context. There was a great deal of anti-Chinese animosity in the bloodletting. Even though the chairman, named Aidit, was as far as I know an ethnic Malay Indonesian, the PKI I think was a heavily Chinese organization with some Chinese Communist influence in it, as in the case of Malaysia or Malaya during the insurgency there. I'm sure that more than a few ordinary Chinese shop keepers who were owed money by various Malays wound up getting murdered along with people who were actually in the communist party.

So that was in Suharto's background. But the major contribution that Suharto made during his time in power was as the central figure in ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ASEAN turned out to be a remarkably important gathering of countries in which you had a real multiplier effect, to use a military term, by a regional group. Indonesia was the centerpiece, and Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines were also charter members. Brunei when it became independent from Britain became the sixth member. Suharto was far-sighted enough to suppress a number of territorial claims that Indonesia had, with a view to the making ASEAN unified and an important regional group. ASEAN came into being in 1967 after several previous unsuccessful attempts at regional groupings that involved the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

ASEAN came to the fore as a regional grouping during the period when Vietnam had occupied Cambodia after ousting the Pol Pot regime. This was a policy springboard for ASEAN to become recognized and important. Eventually the organization attracted other countries to meet with their senior officials. I don't know the history of it well enough to say when, but there began to be ministerial meetings in which the ASEAN foreign ministers would meet, and then there would also be follow-on meetings with the ministers of, say, the United States, Canada, etc.

Becoming an ASEAN dialogue partner became a sought-after goal for quite a number of countries including, for example, South Korea. Whatever bad things he was doing or had done, Suharto was the centerpiece of this internationally important and stabilizing regional organization. He also presided over a great improvement in the Indonesian economy and the lifting of a great number of Indonesians out of quite dire poverty.

For all of his faults the importance and power of ASEAN as a very useful regional grouping was a plus. Somewhat in contrast was an organization in South Asia that involves Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and maybe one or two others. It's the South Asian Regional Conference or something like that, SARC. It was an attempt to follow ASEAN's lead in a different part of Asia. It just never really caught on; at least it never has gained the international attractiveness that ASEAN did and still does to a great degree.

*Q: Did East Timor come up while you were in PIMBS?*

O'NEILL: I don't recall any particular flare-up involving East Timor. It was a long time before East Timor became independent. It was always part of the bill of particulars against Indonesia, because the takeover of East Timor in 1975 was pretty bloody. Pretty bloody in part because East Timorese themselves were at each others' throats. Suharto was afraid that one of the communist

factions in East Timor would win out as the Portuguese government was falling apart, undergoing its own leftist revolution and getting rid of East Timor, Angola, and Mozambique. Of course, to the discredit of the Indonesians, aside from the bloodiness of their takeover of East Timor, they did very little to develop the place. As far as I'm concerned during the period that they ruled East Timor, they did no better job than the Portuguese did in 300 years.

*Q: Which is extreme neglect.*

O'NEILL: Yes, extreme, yes, neglect on sort of an Olympic scale, so East Timor is still in its... Well, I don't want to get into this.

*Q: Aceh. Was that an issue?*

O'NEILL: Not especially that I can recall. There was an old insurgency. Aceh is the northernmost province on Sumatra. It was always restive, as far as I know. Indonesia is by far a majority Muslim country although there is a Hindu population on Bali, and there are Christians throughout Indonesia. The overwhelming majority of the people are Muslim and Aceh is more Muslim than anyone else. They had a long record of rebelliousness against the Dutch colonials. They were pretty much independent of everybody else in Indonesia before. But even before Indonesia became the Dutch East Indies 300-something years ago, the Acehnese were a pretty feisty and prickly bunch. As part of modern Indonesia they wanted either more autonomy or complete independence or both. In fact, there was a organization called GAM, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, which means Free Aceh Movement, an Acehnese independence movement.

The Indonesian military was pretty heavy-handed as they always have been in dealing with this kind of rebellion. Aceh, East Timor, all were part of the package that human rights activists in the U.S. in Congress, NGOs, were using as evidence that we should not have interaction with the Indonesian military because of all these human rights abuses. As I say, it's a philosophically arguable point but not one that I think makes sense in practice. If you don't deal with people, you have no chance of changing their thinking.

*Q: I would that there would be an overriding concern at least from the State Department's perspective as, "You sure don't want Indonesia to break up into nationalities." I mean, if you like Yugoslavia and what happened there, Indonesia could really uncork...*

O'NEILL: Indonesia was, in effect, it still is, sort of an empire. Even if you take the Muslim population, you've got many different ethnic groups among the Muslims and they don't always like each other all that much. You also had a Christian population which tended, I think, to be concentrated in certain parts of Indonesia. They were a relic of the Dutch colonial period in which non-Malay peoples were more readily converted into Christianity under the Dutch than may have been the case of the Muslim Malays. You had this vast area of all sorts of places like Irian Jaya, the western half of Papua whose people were Melanesian and not in any way like Malays, and yet Indonesia was ruling that too. There was an insurgency going on there.

So you had a real empire covering several time zones and 14,000 islands which, again, is very strategically located right alongside the Straits of Malacca, a vital maritime choke point. It would

have been in absolutely nobody's interest for Indonesia to come apart. The fact that it has managed to hold together after the fall of Suharto and through a number of democratic elections is remarkable indicating that, I'd say some concept of Indonesian nationality has, indeed, taken root. It would be a pluperfect disaster if Indonesia would start breaking apart into its constituent parts. The only part that did break away was East Timor which was the newest acquisition and probably shouldn't have been there in the first place and was of no particular advantage to Indonesia.

**DONALD MCCONVILLE**  
**Counselor for Economic Affairs**  
**Manila (1993-1996)**

*Mr. McConville was born and raised in Minnesota and was educated at St. Mary's College in that state. After service in the US Army overseas, he joined the Foreign Service in 1962. Specializing in Economic and Trade issues, Mr. McConville served in a number of posts abroad, including Panama and Vietnam as Economic Officer and as Economic Counselor in Korea, Malaysia, Mexico and the Philippines. In Washington, Mr. McConville also dealt primarily with International Trade and Economic matters. Mr. McConville was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2001.*

*Q: I mean in the Philippines.*

McCONVILLE: '93 to '96.

*Q: In a way, you were in a country that was on its way up before in Mexico, and I would think that the Philippines would be a country that from the outside looks like it's a country kind of on its way down.*

McCONVILLE: That was the way it looked when we arrived, but as it happened, there was also a new President in the Philippines, Fidel Ramos. As you said, the Philippines, at one time they had been sort of, after you got past Japan and Hong Kong, one of the more advanced of the countries of East Asia. By this time they had fallen behind most of them because of the Marcos dictatorship. My second assignment was in the Philippines. As a young officer I had done that consular assignment there, and I was there when Ferdinand Marcos was first elected. He ultimately had been a disaster of huge proportions for the Philippines. Then, when he'd been toppled and Aquino's wife had become President.

*Q: Cory Aquino.*

McCONVILLE: ...Cory Aquino, the flower-power revolution, there had been a lot of goodwill then towards the Philippines. A lot of countries were willing to give a lot of aid. We increased ours even though we were in an era of declining aid, but the Europeans and others came in with a lot of aid because they all wanted to help Cory Aquino and people around her to restore

democracy in the Philippines. It had been a well-intentioned but a poorly disciplined and chaotic administration. Their economic policies had floundered to a significant degree. In addition, they were getting into more and more trouble again financially, and in addition to that, the biggest and most acute problem was on the energy side where, because of leftist political pressures, they had not built a single power plant in the Philippines during the Aquino administration, and those that had been built or did exist were very, very poorly maintained. With Ramos coming on, there had been almost a collapse of the electrical system in Luzon, where Manila is located, and they had these rolling blackouts. Sometimes they'd be six or eight hours a day without electricity. Of course, this had devastating effects on what was already a weak economy. But Fidel Ramos, somewhat like Salinas in Mexico, had brought in more technocrats in key positions in government and was deeply committed himself in trying to open up the Philippine economy, which was what his technocrats were telling him he needed to do, and to get the political support for this sort of thing and to turn towards liberal and open economic international trade, get on this bandwagon of internationalization of global economy to spur growth in the Philippine economy and invite foreign investment and so forth, the sort of thing that worked to a very considerable degree in most of the rest of East Asia. That in fact did begin to emerge during our three years in the Philippines. When we first arrive, as I say, with these blackouts, in fact, they had responded by getting a lot of private investment in electrical power, some of it short term but some of it on a much longer term basis. By the time we got there - we got there in July of that year, I think - by December the blackouts were over and they never did return except during a typhoon or something. In the meantime, they were enacting an increasing series of liberal economic policies opening up the economy and doing a lot of things that Mexico had done, for example. When I first arrived from Mexico and word got out that I had participated very much in NAFTA - there was tremendous interest in NAFTA in the Philippines - I was asked by some people in the American Chamber of Commerce - but it wasn't just the American Chamber, it was the economic community there, the international economic community - to speak on NAFTA and what it was about. I appeared for this thing and there were 150 people in that room, including the brother of the foreign minister. I was somewhat astounded at the audience that had accumulated for this, and it went on for a couple hours. They had all sorts of questions, and it was pretty fascinating. There was tremendous interest among many of these technocrats about the experience in Mexico and what Salinas had done in Mexico and what applicability that might have for the Philippines. Again, I found myself having excellent relations with a lot of technocrats who were very interested in opening up the Philippine economy and were pretty candid in telling us what they were doing and what they were trying to achieve. In so many other countries, where the executive branch is totally dominant and relationships with whatever sort of legislative body they have are not that significant, whether it was in Korea or in Mexico, just examples, it was hardly worth your time to spend much time cultivating those legislators because they had such minimal consequence, so you dealt almost exclusively with the executive branch and the private sector. But in the Philippines, the congress has very significant power, and they welcomed contacts from us, so we in the embassy and the economic section would put a great deal of effort into it. We spent a great deal of time in cultivating relationships with key figures in both the house and senate in congress, and they were, by and large, pretty open about that. We'd meet with them often, and they would listen to us. We would have a chance to advance some of the issues we were concerned with, whether it be rice again or some of the trade issues. The Uruguay Round had been concluded by that time, as I recall, but getting it ratified in the Philippines was important. So in addition to the relationships with the technocrats, which were

on the whole very good, we worked very hard at relationships with the congress because they were very important in getting good legislation passed there, and they found it entirely acceptable for diplomats to come and see them and give them some perspective and to discuss with them the kinds of things that we thought were important and why. I found that very interesting and satisfying as well. Again, the agencies from the U.S., such as Treasury, came over on quite a few visits. They were very interested in getting the banking sector and financial services open. But then USTR, as well as partly getting the Uruguay Round ratified, also sought intellectual property rights and a series of issues in which there was very strong interest in the U.S. We arranged for these visitors from the U.S. to meet with these key figures in congress as well, and both sides were very impressed by this. It was something that hadn't been done before. We succeeded during that three years in getting an awful lot of things done that would advance US trade and economic agenda there and that were in the Philippine interests as well. But the US economic agencies, like they had been in Korea when I was there, were very, very pleased with that sort of effort. Another example, we also tried to involve as well the commercial and agricultural elements, and we always had very strong backing from Ambassador Negroponte and could wheel him in whenever we needed him. So it was, again, a very significant part of the U.S. embassy's agenda, and to work with the American business community, the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, and so forth. So it was, again, a very good model to work with. This ended up being a much more rewarding experience than I had really anticipated. During that period of time, the Philippine economy made some very major strides forward and was suddenly getting attention internationally. Ramos was getting a great deal of attention as bringing about some very fundamental reform and greatly raising the prestige of the Philippines internationally as a consequence of the policies. Of course - this was after I left, when he was succeeded by this movie star, Josef Estrada, who has managed to mess an awful lot of that up again.

*Q: He was kicked out by the people.*

McCONVILLE: The woman who has replaced him, his Vice President, she was in the Congress at that time as a Senator, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. We met with Gloria, I remember, on quite a few occasions. Her father had been President. He'd actually been the President that Marcos had defeated, Diosdado Macapagal. But she actually graduated from Georgetown and was an economist. She has, I think, a PhD from the University of the Philippines, so she may ultimately get them back on track again. It was another experience of seeing good economic policy pay off very well when it's being devised and implemented by competent people in some other government, and to see what kind of positive consequences this can have for a country.

*Q: Did you see any of the problem that's brought up a number of the Southeast Asian countries and Japan and all, and that is sort of sweetheart loans from banks?*

McCONVILLE: Not in the Philippines. This had been true in Korea. The Korean system is very comparable to Japan in that degree, but not in the Philippines for the reason that there had been very significant reform in the banking sector. The American banks were a part of this, but there were some very competent Philippine banks. You know, the Filipinos have a higher level of literacy and a higher level of education overall than many of the other peoples in East Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, and because of both their abilities but also their English language capability and so forth, they are highly sought after throughout East Asia as international

employees. Many of them, including the banking sector, had worked abroad for a good while elsewhere in East Asia, and it was only with the Philippine economy now beginning to finally expand and grow very dramatically and opportunities were opening up that many of them were now coming back to the Philippines. In any event, the banking system there, because it was a much more American-oriented, open banking system than those elsewhere in East Asia, had been run a good deal better and, particularly under the Ramos administration, they were being operated on much sounder banking principles. So the degree of sweetheart loans and banks being dramatically overcommitted in those areas was not nearly as much of a problem in the Philippines. And now that they were opening up their economy, their economy was in many ways become more open than many of their neighbors who had been more open previously, because they were going further than some of the others had been willing to do. Their problem tends to be, again, more on the political side, that they get the wrong kind of leadership in there and the old enemies of corruption and mismanagement and frivolousness and so forth overwhelm them, and those who are well intentioned and an extraordinary number of capable Filipinos get disheartened. In the Philippines - again, partly it's this American heritage - they are deeply committed to a democratic society. They're comfortable with it, their mores and so forth, cultural attitudes to democracy; they're much more attuned to this than some of the other more authoritarian societies of East Asia where they have had real little experience with democracy through most of their history and find it difficult to adapt their cultures to this sort of a more open and free-wheeling kind of society. The Philippines can thrive in it, but their problem tends to be that the mass of the Filipinos, who are poor and often haven't had too much education, get enticed by some of these demagogues or some of the populists and so forth and will elect these kind of people instead of some of the much more bright and able people that they do have, and these people can lead them down some pretty silly paths. Maybe having had the experience with Estrada, they will be a little bit more sober about it the next time, but there is a real deep division. There's an increasing middle class in the Philippines, and they respect and recognize the abilities of people like that, but the broad masses of people still are deeply suspicious of these people as to whether they really have their interests in mind and are too easily swayed by the demagogues and the populists. I think that if the Philippines can simply - they've got the abilities, they had the policies in place and they had the institutions in place - succeed in getting sustained growth for a couple of decades and with this bring about the broadening enough of the middle class and of the literate in their society and so forth and with that begin to achieve a more stable political process.

*Q: Did you find being in our embassy in Manila it was sort of a relief to people that we no longer had our bases in the Philippines? Prior to that everything was so predicated on keeping those bases.*

McCONVILLE: I think that's very clear, and it wasn't just we in the embassy. Within the Philippine society, first of all, if you talk to Filipinos and talk to them across broad swaths of the body politic in the Philippines, they'll almost all tell you how much they like Americans. There's also some anti-American element, like there always is, and it's particularly on the left. Always the United States, as being the center of capitalism in the world, is going to be a lightning rod for a certain amount of resentment. Even at the time this treaty with Subic Bay (naval base) was defeated in the Senate, public opinion polls had shown a very high level of support for Subic amongst the body politic in general. So Filipinos would consistently be telling you, "I really like

the idea of losing the bases,” but most of them would recognize that this was absolutely necessary to their finally kind of cutting the umbilical cord with the United States and thinking of the fact that most of the problems that they had were of their own making and that they had to be able to address these problems themselves. I’d been there ‘65 to ‘67, now I was there ‘93 to ‘96, it’s almost 30 years later, and the difference.... During that ‘65-to-‘67 period, there had been just a constant drumbeat of anti-American agitation and certain columns in the newspaper. They did it as sort of a sport. The same guy who would be writing these and would seem vehemently anti-American in columns would pride himself about his American friends and would have his children educated in the U.S. and so forth. Particularly among the intellectuals and the intelligencia and so forth, you simply were in great danger of being dismissed if you weren’t anti-American or at least weren’t anti-base and so forth. It was just part of the static in the background. But during the period I was there from ‘93 to ‘96, this was almost completely absent. It was no longer fashionable to constantly be denouncing the Americans. There was a little bit of it here and there but, by and large, I was astounded how much the climate had changed, and this had changed largely since we had left Subic. Even the U.S. military at this point had come around to the view that it was a much healthier relationship with the Philippines now that the bases weren’t there anymore. We were beginning to having some of the first ship visits since the departure of Subic when I was there. I don’t think we’d had the first ship come back into Subic yet, but they were visiting Manila, some ship visits and so forth, and they went well, by and large. The U.S. Army Chief of Staff visited the Philippines while I was there, during the last year I was there, for the first time since we had left Subic. And we were beginning to restore relationships, like we had with a number of Southeast Asian countries, with their military, having occasional exercises together and some degree of reasonable cooperation.

The U.S. military itself had realized that it was not as important as they had once thought it to be, and having other arrangements in the Philippines might well serve U.S. military interests as well. So some of the resentment of the military and particularly the U.S. Navy had dissipated by this time. Ramos, of course, was very highly regarded by the military. He had been a West Point graduate and then had been basically a very U.S.-oriented general throughout most of his career. He was quite insistent, for example, the last time he was there in 1966, on the 50th anniversary of Philippine independence from the United States, which was granted July 1st, 1946, Ramos was quite insistent on having pretty extensive celebrations of that in the Philippines and personally attended them all. He was not at all bashful about the fact that he still had a very deep regard for the United States. So in that way it was a much healthier relationship. It was dramatic in its sort of psychological significance in the Philippines in a very fundamental way. Suddenly it had prompted the Filipinos to look to themselves and to finally accept more responsibility for themselves, for their conditions and the fact that the way out was to make changes in themselves and in the way they dealt with the world and so forth, their international economic policies and so forth, rather than always looking for a scapegoat or blaming the United States in some fashion. Then Ramos made a big hit with Clinton, so Clinton visited twice while I was there. He once was en route to a meeting of the...

*Q: ASEAN?*

McCONVILLE: No, it’s not called ASEAN. They’ve got this new organization now which encompasses all of East Asia; the name of it slips my mind right now. [Ed. note: APEC, Asia-

Pacific Economic Cooperation] But they have annual presidential summits, and this one was being held in Indonesia, so Clinton stopped in the Philippines en route to Indonesia, in part because also - this was in '45 - it was the 50th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War. I was there Clinton's visit, and he had a ceremony at Corregidor and then at the American cemetery in the Philippines, which is the largest U.S. cemetery. You know, veterans of the Pacific War are buried there, both Filipino and American, and it's the largest American cemetery outside of the United States proper. The biggest in the Pacific, I think, is in Honolulu, but this is the next biggest. It's a beautiful setting. Partly the reason Clinton stopped there was to have some commemoration of the ending of World War II. He had gone to Normandy and some of the ceremonies for World War II in Europe. But in any event, the relationship between Clinton and Ramos got to be very good. Clinton quite clearly admired Ramos. Under the new constitution, presidents serve one term of four years and they couldn't run for reelection, which is a pity in this case. Ramos was a very good politician despite the fact he'd been a career military officer. One thing that I came away with was the deep impression that Ramos was fundamentally committed to democracy, believed in it very deeply, and that while he had a role for a time in the military during the Marcos years, the man had every opportunity, when it really came to crunch time, the man was deeply committed to the rule of law and to maintaining democracy in the Philippines. There was no evidence during the time he was president that he ever accumulated any significant amount of wealth for himself. He was a man on a mission. His wife had worked in administration at the International School, which is basically the American School in the Philippines. It had a lot of Filipinos attending, and other foreigners, but it was called the International School. It was like an American School in many countries. She'd worked there for years teaching and in administration, and even during the time he was president, she continued to work there part-time in administration. She was just totally unaffected, totally natural, and they were just two very, very decent people, and the Philippines was very blessed to have them. Too bad that they couldn't have stayed on in power a little bit longer, because he was very, very good for the Philippines.

**ALOYSIUS M. O'NEILL**  
**Political Counselor**  
**Manila (1994-1997)**

*Mr. O'Neil was born in South Carolina and raised there and in other states in the U.S. He was educated at the University of Delaware and Heidelberg University. After serving in the US Army in Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill joined the Foreign Service in 1976 and was posted to Korea. He subsequently served three tours in Japan as student of Japanese and Consular and Political Officer. He also served in Burma, Korea and the Philippines as well as in Washington, where he dealt primarily with East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.*

*Q: Today is the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2008. I'm continuing with Al O'Neill. Al, we're off to the Philippines.*



O'NEILL: I went there in summer of 1997 for three years: '97 to 2000.

*Q: Okay. How stood our relations with the Philippines when you got there, and also what was going on in the Philippines, and then we'll go to your work.*

O'NEILL: I went to the Philippines on a direct transfer from Okinawa. My predecessor as political counselor had left a month before. Had I gone the usual route which was to go on home leave, then to the Philippines, there would have been a two month gap in the political counselor's position. Since it's about a three hour flight, I applied for a direct transfer and delayed home leave. The department eventually granted it — not because it made sense to have a one month gap instead of a two month gap — but because it was cheaper to do what I wanted. Had it been five dollars more expensive Personnel wouldn't have cared about the two month gap.

Anyway, I got to the Philippines in July of 1997. U.S.-Philippine relations were, I guess, good at times, less active than they had been for a long time because the bases were long gone. The last of the U.S. military bases, Cubi Point Naval Air Station, had closed in November of 1992 when I was in PHL as deputy director as I described earlier. As it happened, the ambassador when I arrived was Tom Hubbard who had been the DCM in Manila when the bases closed. Tom was very experienced, a lot of Japanese experience. He had also been DCM in Kuala Lumpur and then came back to Manila as ambassador, I think, in 1996. I had known Tom for a long time, so I was very happy to get the chance to be his political counselor.

There was still a very active U.S. trade relationship with the Philippines, a lot of economic activity despite the fact that the Philippine economy was in very bad shape when I arrived. That was the summer, you may remember, of 1997 when the Asian economic crisis hit all of Southeast Asia, Korea and other countries and did a great deal of damage. The president of Philippines was Fidel Valdez Ramos. Known as Eddie Ramos he was among other things a 1950 graduate of West Point, a Philippine army veteran of the Korean War and former defense secretary under Cory Aquino.

One of the biggest problems that Ramos was trying to grapple with was severe electric power shortages, caused by a burgeoning demand for electricity and coupled with the fact that during Cory Aquino's entire presidency no national base-load power plant was ever put in operation. He was doing all sorts of stopgap measures including bringing in barges with huge generators that would help the electricity situation. That was a pretty acute problem added to the tremendous problems caused by the economic downturn of 1997.

The Philippines has always had a very strange relationship with the U.S. which played out in a lot of ways. One of the big pending issues that I got involved in literally from the day after I arrived was creating a replacement for the old Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA. In contrast to other situations where our SOFA is an annex to an alliance treaty, the Philippine SOFA had been subordinate to the bases agreement because the bases predated the treaty. So it went when the bases went. Since there was no SOFA, there was only a shaky arrangement to let tiny handfuls of American military personnel in for minor exercises and training. But ship visits were really out of the question as well as larger exercises like the old Balikatan exercise which was somewhat analogous to the old Team Spirit exercises with Korean forces.

*Q: Why were ship visits out of the question?*

O'NEILL: Well, because there was no legal protection for the U.S. personnel. There was an *ad hoc* agreement that the Philippine senate acquiesced in. It was a stopgap agreement between the two governments to allow, I think, up to 50 people from the U.S. military in the Philippines at any one time. They had enough legal protection that everybody could live with, but if you brought a destroyer in, that would be a lot more than 50 people, so that was beyond the scope. So there was this big hiatus in navy-to-navy training which the Philippine Navy desperately needed. It was in dire straits.

*Q: If we were able to bring ships into Hong Kong, Singapore, ships were going all over the place. The Philippines is practically our own back yard. I would have thought there would be something. Was this part of anti-Americanism, or was this something that slipped under the rug or what?*

O'NEILL: It wasn't something that slipped under the rug because, as I say, when the Philippine Senate refused to approve by two-thirds vote the newly renegotiated bases agreement in 1991, the expiration of the base agreement also meant the expiration of the Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA. So we didn't have the kinds of legal protections that we need particularly to settle the always-vexed question of legal jurisdiction over criminal activity or other misbehavior by American servicemen.

*Q: Which you by now having come out of Okinawa were the expert.*

O'NEILL: I had a certain amount of experience with that, yes.

*Q: Could you talk a little about this? It seems so incredible that we hadn't patched this up.*

O'NEILL: By the time that I arrived in 1997 there had been initial discussions between the two countries over a new Status of Forces Agreement for a non-base situation. It was very difficult. Some of the difficulty was caused by the U.S. side because some of the people working on Philippine affairs in DoD figured that the way to do this was to give the Filipinos a piece of paper, throw it on the desk and say, "Sign it or else." That was what passed as diplomacy among some of the DoD people who were doing Philippines at the working level and who shall remain nameless. There were other people above them who had a somewhat more sophisticated approach, but those people were kind of sandwiched in the middle of a layer of working level anti-Philippines sentiment, if you will, and higher levels who were not very thrilled with the Philippines, either, on the grounds that they rejected the base agreement.

*Q: So you were still dealing with the sort of, "Well, screw you," attitude.*

O'NEILL: There was a certain amount of that. As I say, not everybody in DoD agreed with that approach. Certainly the State Department believed in the necessity of some new arrangement. I mean, for one thing the Philippines hasn't moved in quite a few thousand years. It is still right between the Japanese archipelago and the Straits of Malacca and the Indonesian archipelago and

not all that far away from China. That was another thing the Philippines was preoccupied with which was Chinese claims to the South China Sea and places like Mischief Reef and the Spratly Islands.

The community of Filipinos who thought in strategic terms was, as far as I was concerned, quite a bit smaller than the number of Americans who thought in strategic terms about the Philippines. There were at least 10 and perhaps as many as 12 English language daily newspapers published in Manila. Try to find an American city that has that many papers published in English or, indeed, in any language. You also had a very lively radio talk show network and TV talk show network, so there were plenty of opportunities and outlets for the chattering classes, a large segment of whom always felt aggrieved at the United States, to vent their psychological problems. One of the things that that class spoke about when the senate failed to get the two-thirds majority in '91 to renew the base agreement was "slaying the father figure," i.e., us.

Anti-Americanism is probably too strong a word for it unless you qualify it in a Philippine context. I mean, there was no violence against Americans, no personal animosity towards any individual Americans, but you'd have columnists who would use the abbreviation ORS standing for Only Remaining Superpower for the United States in their columns, venting their psychological problems about the United States. Indeed, we had been quite overbearing in the Philippines for many decades after their independence.

I used to get irritated at unconscious echoes of this overbearing attitude in certain U.S. military circles dealing with the Philippines. We in the State Department would use the abbreviation RP for Republic of the Philippines in cables and memos and that kind of thing, sort of bureaucratic shorthand. A lot of DoD and military people continued to use PI for Philippine Islands, seemingly forgetting that the "Philippine Islands" or PI passed into history on July 4, 1946. It had been long gone as an official expression from the U.S. lexicon except in the some quarters of Pacific Command and the Pentagon, etc. So there was that kind of residual sort of... disdain may be too strong a word, but somewhat of an attitude of looking down on the Filipinos as being not all that competent. Unfortunately, a number of Philippine government organizations often did things that lent credence to that unhappy belief. And there was indeed resentment on the Pentagon side about the Senate rejection of the renegotiated base agreement in 1991.

In any case, all of this was part of the mixture as I arrived in Philippines. Fortunately, we had a number of very experienced people, especially Tom Hubbard. He was pushing the idea of a realistic negotiation with the Philippines on a SOFA. In fact, about no more than 48 hours after I arrived, truly by coincidence, Kurt Campbell the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asian-Pacific, arrived with a delegation of State Department, DoD and JCS people — Joint Chiefs of Staff — to begin what became a final six month negotiating push to conclude the Visiting Forces Agreement. I had worked with Kurt Campbell very closely in the last two years that I was in Okinawa on the Special Action Committee on Okinawa, SACO.

Kurt was a very able person. Well, he was a real renaissance man in a lot of ways. He had studied violin in Yerevan, Armenia among other things and was a former naval officer. Kurt certainly understood negotiating and that when you negotiate especially with a friendly power

you will be giving up certain things that you might want to get the greater good which was a mutually beneficial agreement.

*Q: You use the term “Visiting Forces Agreement?”*

O’NEILL: Right.

*Q: It’s spelled out what we’re talking about. It didn’t smack of the old thing.*

O’NEILL: Exactly. And this, to the best of my recollection, was a stroke of genius on the part of the secretary of foreign affairs of the time, Domingo Siazon, who was one of their best Japan hands and had in fact come from their Embassy Tokyo to become foreign secretary. Siazon was a quite able diplomat. This was the rubric under which we were negotiating; we were negotiating the Visiting Forces Agreement.

When Kurt Campbell and his joint Pentagon-State Department delegation came out from Washington, there was a reception that Ambassador Tom Hubbard hosted for the Philippine negotiating delegation and the Americans at his residence. That night Tom was talking to the woman who was the senior Philippine Justice Department lawyer on the negotiating team, who had been involved in the original base negotiation renewal negotiations back in 1991 and was very nationalistic. Tom told me later that as they were talking she had this epiphany — after all this discussion of a SOFA that had gone on already — “Oh! You mean you’re talking about a SOFA for a non-bases situation!” “Yeeeessss, Tessie, that’s exactly what we’re talking about!”

The leader on the Philippine side was an undersecretary of foreign affairs named Leonidas Caday. He went by Leony Caday. Caday was very well known to the American side particularly to Tom Hubbard. He was an American hand, a lot of service in the U.S., and very well disposed toward the U.S. So Secretary Siazon had picked a very good negotiating partner, somebody who was disposed to think in strategic terms, of whom there were a limited number in the Philippines.

Since this happened so early in my tenure, it’s probably good to talk about it now and go through it. We had that negotiation session, and there were several others where the American team came out. In fact, for reasons having to do with the Philippine foreign affairs travel budget, the U.S. negotiators tended to come to Manila more frequently than the Filipinos went to Washington. I think there was just one VFA trip to Washington.

Since the Philippine foreign affairs department did not have any facilities for conference calls — you could hardly call them from our embassy on most rainy days because the phone system was so bad in Manila — we arranged to have the Philippine team in the ambassador’s conference room in the chancery which was a little unorthodox, but we had conference call facilities there. The U.S. team was calling in from Washington.

So Undersecretary Caday and his team came, and Tom Hubbard and I and a couple of other people I think from DAO — Defense Attaché’s Office — were in the room as we were going through this negotiation session. There was one particularly fascinating aspect to this. Even though the negotiation was being conducted in English which the Philippine team spoke as well

as the American team did, Tom Hubbard was actually interpreting between the two sides in this English-only conversation because of the different perspectives. It always came back to criminal jurisdiction which is always the sticking point in any SOFA with anybody.

At some points, the U.S. side would say something over the conference link, and the Philippine side would recoil with very negative looks on their faces. Then Tom Hubbard would say, "What they really mean is this, this, and this." And the Filipinos would relax and say, "Okay. Well, we can do this." A bit later the Philippine side might say, "Well, we need to have this," and you could hear the American side recoiling on the other end and Tom Hubbard would come in and say, "But what the Filipinos really mean is this ...." Then you would hear the relaxation sounds back in Washington. It was a very odd thing to have an American ambassador interpreting between two English-speaking groups both of which were trying to come to an acceptable conclusion.

As I say, this was July 1997 that we started the final negotiating push. Eventually by February of '98, we had succeeded in finishing the Visiting Forces Agreement and the two executive branches had an agreement. In the U.S. system this was like almost all our other SOFAs, an executive agreement which did not require being submitted to our Senate for approval. Although under U.S. law we would need to give formal notification to the Senate after it went into effect.

As one of the peculiarities of the Philippine constitution which came in with Cory Aquino after Marcos's ouster, there were a whole bunch of articles called "transitory provisions" which, as far as I know, are still in effect. One of these required that any kind of bases agreement with another country would have to be approved by two-thirds of the Philippine senate. This meant two-thirds of all sitting senators, not just who showed up to vote on that particular day. By that constitution there were supposed to be 24 senators. One had died, and so there were actually 23. So this meant in the event that the VFA came to a vote in the senate, 16 out of the 23 would have to vote for it.

In the very same month that the two executive branches agreed on the VFA text, February 1998, Senator Franklin Drilon and I were at a conference on the Visiting Forces Agreement at one of the big Manila hotels. There were a lot of news media present. With no warning, Drilon dropped the little bomb that the Philippine senate was not going to take up the VFA right away. As things panned out, the executive branch didn't submit it to the senate until October of '98, and it was not voted on until May of 1999. I think a major consideration in the senate thinking, was that postponing the vote would keep the VFA from being a major issue in the 1998 presidential election. This was wise in fact even though we were taken aback because we didn't have any warning of it.

In May 1998, there was going to be a presidential election, and much of the senate was going to be up for reelection as well as the entire House of Representatives and thousands of other municipal and provincial positions. By postponing submitting the VFA to the senate, the Ramos administration would take it out of the election campaign which was a very wise move. In fact, there were a number of senators who were pretty much in the pro-VFA column. There were other definitely jingoist senators who were against it. Then there was an amorphous group in the middle who could go either way.

The man who was elected president in 1998 was Joseph Ejercito Estrada who had been a senator and was the vice president when he ran for president. Originally he had been a very popular movie actor, a combination of Stephen Segal and Sylvester Stallone in his movie persona: the tough guy who overcomes all odds and then outfoxes the rich fat cats. As a senator Estrada had voted down the renewed base agreement in 1991. He was lauded by the chattering classes for this. What was particularly interesting was that as president he became a very vigorous proponent of the VFA. In fact, Ambassador Hubbard and I went at Estrada's invitation to the house of a friend of his while he was still president-elect to talk about the VFA. There were several of his very close advisors at the meeting, a couple of whom became cabinet officials including his future defense secretary, Orlando Mercado. Estrada made it very clear that he was going to push hard for the VFA which turned out to be absolutely essential when it did come up for a vote in the senate.

The vote on the VFA was not held until a year later in May 1999. Despite intense lobbying by Ambassador Hubbard and me and President Estrada who was a sort of a Lyndon Johnson-esque kind of lobbyist, we only got 18 out of 23 votes for the VFA. It was enough, but it was fewer than we expected. We needed 16 out of the 23, so it squeaked by with two extra votes.

One of the senators, a very nationalistic guy, who Estrada believed he had persuaded to vote Yes, during the actual vote made a long speech largely laying out reasons for voting for the VFA but then the punch line was, "And so I'm voting against it." But anyway, it squeaked through. There was still grumbling about the idea that since the VFA didn't go to the U.S. Senate for approval it really wasn't in effect. There was a lot of that kind of noise in the chattering classes and the newspapers and TV.

To backtrack a little bit, as I mentioned, Ambassador Hubbard and I did a lot of lobbying of senators ourselves. In some cases we were giving additional bolstering arguments to senators we were pretty sure were going to vote in favor of it just so they could use these arguments themselves. In other cases we were sort of hoping against hope to persuade some of the anti-VFA senators to change their minds. I don't think we managed that at all. Then in other cases we were doing what we could with the wavering group. One time the two of us went over to Senator Gregorio Honasan who was known as Gringo. I mentioned him earlier. He was a Philippine military academy graduate, a former colonel in the Philippine army, who became famous for leading a number of very bloody coups against Corazon Aquino. He was a really narcissistic character. The two of us lobbied really hard with Honasan, and we knew Estrada was doing the same thing. As we were walking over to the ambassador's car, Tom turned to me and said, "The things we have to do for our country...." He loathed Honasan because of the coups he had led against Aquino during Tom's time as the DCM. I certainly shared the feeling. He was a fairly disgusting character, but he was an elected senator, and he was one of the 24 votes — or 23 at the time — that was necessary.

But anyway, it did go through. The first ship visit took place two months later in July of 1999. A friend of mine who was commanding the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet at the time, Vice Admiral Walt Doran, decided that the first ship visit was going to be the *USS Blue Ridge*, the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet flagship and that he was going to be on it. So this was fantastic! This was all the things that you'd want in an initial ship

visit: tremendous symbolism, the admiral commanding the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, one of the most powerful naval units anywhere on the globe coming into Manila Bay, passing Corregidor, passing Bataan Peninsula, and tying up right next to the Manila Hotel near the chancery.

*Q: What was the ship?*

O'NEILL: USS Blue Ridge. It's a command ship. It's one of a kind; I don't think there's another exactly like it in the Navy. Anyway, we had invited President Estrada to come out to the ship for a ceremonial welcome and briefing aboard the ship and then a little reception on the foredeck afterwards. Estrada did go aboard with his defense secretary and senior generals and admirals and was given the lavish welcome as the Navy can always do especially on a ship like that.

That night we also had a much larger reception. A large number of the Philippine senate came, members of the House of Representatives, other Philippine military people, etc.; the defense attaché corps was out in strength, and we got a lot of diplomats, particularly all the allied countries. But I made a point of inviting Ambassador Fu Ying, the Chinese ambassador. She even brought her 14 year old daughter who was visiting from China. As soon as she came aboard I got Admiral Walt Doran to meet her. He immediately said, "Let me give you a tour of the ship." He took Ambassador Fu and her daughter down to the combat information center so she could see the computerized maps that showed all the ships of the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet from Hawaii to the Persian Gulf and the big CNN weather map display showing the meteorological conditions throughout his entire area of operations. When my deputy asked her reaction to the tour of the ship Ambassador Fu said, "Very eye opening." She had gotten her start in foreign affairs as the English language interpreter for Deng Xiaoping and she once told me that she was in the first class of Chinese diplomats to graduate after the Cultural Revolution ended.

Anyway, it was really terrific, a wonderful visit. Of course as the Navy always does during the several days that they were in port, there were community relations operations in nearby orphanages and schools with sailors and marines volunteering their time instead of running around bar hopping. They were cleaning up and painting schools and orphanages and that kind of thing, playing with the kids, etc.

So it was off to a really good start. When I went aboard the Blue Ridge when it first docked, I told Walt Doran, "I've been here for two years and this is by far the best day that I've had in the Philippines." It was one of those rare occasions when you could see a tangible result for a lot of hard work, not only my work, but that a lot of other people had put in too.

The attitude towards the VFA by the great majority of the Filipinos was, "Fine. Good. Where have they been all these years?" It was a sore point among, as I say, the chattering classes and the far left. Some of the opponents were nationalists in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

*Q: The French and the Americans get along very nicely, but you have this political and chattering class. There there's an intellectual affinity to the left. Did the Philippines have that?*

O'NEILL: Well, there are leftist groups in the Philippines including communist party affiliated groups, and they were often they were the noisiest in their demonstrations against the VFA when

it was under consideration. There were two or three, one called *Bayan* sticks in my mind, a communist front group. They were always demonstrating against something and the VFA was a natural for them. There was a women's group called GABRIELA, which was an acronym for a long Philippine organizational name. GABRIELA was a very leftist organization, too. As far as they were concerned, the VFA equated to mass rape of Philippine womanhood by all the sailors in the U.S. Navy. People like that you just really couldn't deal with at all. Anti-U.S. agitation was their livelihood, their bread and butter so they were a lost cause far as I was concerned.

Between my arrival in July 1997 and the vote in May '99, I talked on college campuses both about the Visiting Forces Agreement and also about Philippine-U.S. relations in general, about strategic considerations in Southeast Asia including the South China Sea, etc. I always stressed the mutual advantage of the arrangements because Filipinos tended to think that if they agreed to something with the U.S. that somehow the U.S. would put one over on them. They didn't necessarily know how, and they couldn't probably point to anything specific, other than the criminal jurisdiction thing which is always neuralgic. And in the case of the Philippines we were particularly concerned about custody issues.

I think we were quite forthcoming on what constituted the kind of crime that the Philippines would normally have primary jurisdiction on. To the best of my recollection, it matched very closely with the kinds of principles that we have in SOFAs with Japan, Korea, NATO, Thailand, etc. Essentially if, and this is an over-simplification, but if a crime is committed on military duty, then normally the U.S. would have the primary jurisdiction unless there were some reason for us to waive jurisdiction to the Philippines. If it were a crime committed off duty, then normally the Philippines would have primary jurisdiction unless they had some reason to kick it back to the United States for trial.

The particular neuralgic issue was custody in the meantime and during the judicial process. Philippine jails are not exactly a model. They're in fact usually filthy dumps, and we were not going to have a person who was still in the judicial process, a U.S. service member, in a Philippine jail no matter how strong the evidence was against the person. So we wanted to retain custody through the appeals process even when the Philippines had primary jurisdiction of the crime. We were helped in this by our defense secretary. In August 1998 Secretary of Defense Cohen made a great visit to the Philippines a couple of days after Secretary of State Albright was there for a meeting of the ASEAN regional forum ministerial group. Cohen came and, as you know, he's a very polished, extremely intelligent man and he knows how to present arguments. He talked a lot to the Philippine press about the question of what was on-duty and what was not on-duty. He said, for example, rape is not a military duty, so if somebody is credibly accused of rape then we would expect the Philippine side to have primary jurisdiction.

At the same time we were using arguments like a military truck driver who was ordered to go from point A to point B and during the drive from point A to point B as he was ordered to do, he had a collision with a taxi and he had caused injury or death. He was under orders to do a certain thing and was doing it when the accident arose. We would expect the determination to be that he was on duty and we would have primary jurisdiction. If on the same route the driver stopped his truck, robbed a store and then got back in the truck and went to point B, that crime... He was not



under orders to rob a store, so that would be an example of a crime that was committed while off duty, and we would expect in that case for the Philippines to have primary jurisdiction.

*Q: With jurisdiction, since we no longer had bases, what would you do with Seaman A who committed a rape or something like that?*

O'NEILL: It's a very good question. Not only were Philippine penal institutions really dungeons and often run by gangs of inmates as in the case of many a third world country, but Philippine trials take ages. A trial doesn't go into session and then go day after day until a verdict. They'll go into session for a day and the adjourn for weeks on end and then maybe come back for another day and be adjourned for weeks on end on and on. So we were talking about situations where an American service member who was accused and not yet found guilty was going to be in limbo for quite a long time. In the end after tough negotiations we got agreement on the custody issue. An accused service member could be removed from the Philippines with his ship or his airplane and the U.S. government would guarantee his return to the Philippines for whatever judicial processes needed to take place. This, to my great surprise, the Philippine negotiators and, indeed, their Senate who had to agree on this in the end, recognized that if the United States made such a promise we would keep it — which we did.

There was a case fairly early on in which some sailors beat up a taxi driver in Cebu. They probably had a few too many beers. It was also pretty clear from their testimony that the taxi driver had been cheating them, and the combination of things ended up with some bruises on the taxi driver which is not supposed to happen. But in fairness to the Philippine press which I often malign, more than a few columnists wrote, "Wouldn't you like to beat up a taxi driver who cheated you?" It was a very interesting dynamic because there were those who were saying the sailors had outraged the honor of Philippine "taxihood" and deserve the direst possible penalties and there were others, were saying quite the opposite. So there was a leavening of good sense and humor in that incident.

These men were, in fact, were charged with assault under Philippine law but were taken away on their ship. They were brought back for whatever proceedings took place. I can't remember what actually resulted, but this was a clear public indication that we would do what we said we would do.

There's another case that's still going on where a Marine has been convicted of rape. This was another thing. Until the appeals process in a case of a guilty verdict, until the appeals process played itself out the service member was to be in U.S. custody; in other words, would not be languishing in a Philippine jail until the appeals process was completed. The convicted Marine, who is appealing, is kept within the U.S. chancery compound in downtown Manila. This has been at least a year, maybe longer, and he was convicted of rape; he's appealing but he is in the hands of the U.S. government until the process ends.

The VFA allowed us to have not only the ship visits but also much larger scale and more realistic exercises which were a benefit to both sides. Our forces have gotten pretty restricted on what they can do in Okinawa in particular and also in mainland Japan; so being able to go to Philippine forces training areas like the amphibious landing area near Cavite, for example, and

other large training areas was a great benefit. Also, this was the time between Desert Storm which was a very short campaign and before the 2001 attacks and the wars with Afghanistan and Iraq.

So we were in a hiatus in which not a whole lot of American military people had real combat experience at the company and battalion level. Philippine forces by contrast had been fighting company- and battalion-level wars against the communist New People's Army, and against various Moro insurgents for years. So they had a lot of combat experienced guys who regardless of how modest their equipment might have been, knew what it was like to be shot at in the jungle and knew how to survive in the jungle.

To my mind that was what the Philippine forces were bringing to this mix, and we were bringing our techniques, our technology, know-how, plus the benefit of association through alliance with the Only Remaining Superpower, as the columnists called it. When I would talk to Philippine groups, particularly civilian groups, I would point out that the VFA was not a one-sided deal; our side was going to be gaining from association with Philippine soldiers who knew the jungle and knew how to deal with the combat situation. So there was mutuality as far as I was concerned to this renewal of exercises.

*Q: How did we view the Philippine military at the time?*

O'NEILL: Well, it was certainly in bad shape in terms of equipment and in what might be called the culture of maintenance. That was pretty deficient in the mindset of the Philippine forces. This was especially true in the navy and the air force because they can't move if their stuff isn't well maintained and can neither fly nor sail. Soldiers can always walk if their truck breaks down, but a sailor cannot swim very far with a torpedo under his arm. Likewise, pilots don't get very far if their airplanes don't start. The upper level officer corps was a mixed bag. Most all of them were Philippine Military Academy graduates which is an all-service academy, established originally under U.S. auspices during the Commonwealth period. It's an institution which I think is capable of producing good junior officers, second lieutenants and ensigns. The problem comes later as they rise higher within their services and get corrupted by venal superiors beyond the navy lieutenant level and captain level in the army, air force and Marine Corps.

You've got dedicated professionals who don't want any part of the corruption, and you've got others who are trying to fleece the system for anything they can get out of it. It's just never been resolved. In fact, most recent coups attempts and mutinies by junior officers have focused almost exclusively on the corruption issue. I'm generalizing, but it's pretty common that lieutenants and captains who've carried out some very ill-planned and often bloodless coup attempts will be motivated, they say, probably genuinely so, by the pervasive corruption at the top levels of the armed forces. It's really sad.

There was one famous case of an ensign who was almost certainly murdered aboard his ship. The Philippine senate conducted an investigation into that young man's death. He was almost certainly murdered by his superiors because he was prepared to expose illegal logging operations that his ship was doing for the profit of the ship's captain and senior officers, and other higher-ups in the Philippine navy. It was made to look like a suicide but there was enough forensic

evidence that the National Bureau of Investigation, NBI, had found that belied the idea of a suicide. I think that before he was killed the ensign had written to his parents about what he was discovering, etc.

In another case, an active duty major in the Philippine air force was arrested because he was running a kidnap for ransom gang. This tremendous corruption in many forms and many levels is one of the greatest brakes on the Philippines in many fields.

*Q: Do you want to talk about that corruption as far as we saw that in the political life during this period you were in the Philippines this time from 1997 to 2000?*

O'NEILL: Yes. Well, it didn't take much to find that it was all over the place, and it was pretty blatant. For much of the time that I was there Ernesto Maceda was the president of the Philippine senate. He had a reputation — remarkable even by Philippine standards — for corruption from his very early days as an aide to the mayor of Manila. The mayor he worked for was famous for the admiring quote "So young and so corrupt." Maceda later became ambassador to the U.S. That was only one example. The number of examples of large-scale corruption is just mind boggling. It's just a permanent fact of life.

This was after my time there, but corruption was what triggered the ouster of President Estrada in favor of his vice president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She was elevated to presidency when he was thrown out, in a scandal in which it was credibly alleged, by other Philippine politicians who were similarly crooked, that President Estrada was taking kickbacks from a sort of numbers game which is a nationwide illegal gambling game. One of the ironies of this charge was that Estrada had always portrayed himself whether in the movies, the senate, the vice presidency and then the presidency as the champion of the poor, and lots of poor Filipinos bought into this and vigorously supported his political ambitions all along the way. This numbers game is one in which mostly poor Filipinos play, and so he was taking money out of their pockets as president.

*Q: I have to say that as we're talking today, in the state in which I was born, Illinois, the governor is accused wanting to sell the senate seat that opened because Obama resigned.*

O'NEILL: Also, that governor has been hauled off in chains. In many cases the penalty for this kind of corruption in the Philippines is to get re-elected until you reach term limits. There is no question that there is corruption in the United States, and this one with Governor Blagojevich is certainly an Olympic contender. But anyhow, you find it at all levels in the Philippines. There are a lot of reasons for it. Family loyalty's extremely strong in the Philippines, and it tends to trump many other things like a sense of the common good, the common weal, and it produces a lot of this corruption.

One of the features of Philippine society, and it may have roots in Malay society, I'm not sure, but Catholicism in particular provided an avenue for it to grow, is the concept of "fictive kin." The simplest example is a person who is a godfather or godmother to somebody at baptism. Those godchildren at whatever age are still are part of your family, and you're expected to continue to have not only religious obligations but also parental obligations toward them for

marriages and births and all that kind of thing. They in turn have sort of filial obligations toward you for the rest of their lives.

In the case of Estrada, the now ousted president; there was an organization in the Philippines of his godchildren which to the best of my recollection numbered about 5,000 people. The then head of it was an assistant secretary in one of the cabinet departments. He was a godson of President Estrada, and he was the president of the fictive kin association of Estrada. You had that multiplied throughout the Philippines, and it produces distortions, shall we say, in the political process and in almost everything else.

*Q: As the head of the political section, did you have a problem with this Philippine society which can be pervasive. I speak as a consular officer where we've had several of our consuls general leaving Manila in disgrace, usually not much for money but for sex or for services rendered, you might say, of a horizontal nature. There's also been this concern that in the Philippines that... I'm thinking of the Marcoses that our officers might get involved in the social set and not see American interests in the correct light.*

O'NEILL: There was a very famous case of a consul general in the Marcos era. I can't remember which...

*Q: I think it was Vernon McAninch.*

O'NEILL: Yes, exactly. He was certainly delighted with the Marcos' company and was partying on the presidential yacht and all that kind of thing. I encountered a version of these potential Philippine pitfalls on one occasion. My deputy Tom Ferguson and I were going to meet with the chief of staff of Senator Dominique Coseteng because we wanted her vote in favor of the Visiting Forces Agreement. In 1991, she had been one of the twelve senators who had voted to kill the new bases agreement. Well, Nikki Coseteng, as she was known, was second to none when it came to corruption in the Philippine Senate. She had a well deserved reputation for the open hand. We were meeting with her chief of staff, whose family name was Roque.

The first thing Mr. Roque told us was that he was in the witness protection program. He was the chief of staff to a serving senator, telling us that he's in the government's witness protection program. What the reason was, I don't know. Tom and I noticed that Roque was seated with his back to an open window; you could see the building next door not too far away. So if somebody wanted to pop him, they could have done so. This was all pretty fanciful but not terribly odd for the Philippines. While we were talking about getting Senator Coseteng's vote, Roque was saying all the right things about how important the VFA was. Then he kept saying over and over again things like, "We would like to help you, but you really need to help *us*."

*Q: [laughter]*

O'NEILL: I kept saying, "Whatever arguments you need, whatever information you want." He said, "But you've really got to *help us*!"

*Q: The emphasis on the "help."*

O'NEILL: On the "help," yes! We concluded the meeting very diplomatically. When we were going out to the car to go back to the embassy, Tom and I were both looking at each other and saying were we hearing what we were hearing? Was this guy trying to get us to give him U.S. government money in exchange for Nikki's vote? Absolutely! This was a loopy kind of situation that you run into all the time and you had to brush it off.

While we're on the subject of corruption, let me mention one more messy case that I was involved in for the whole three years I was in the Philippines and that other U.S. diplomats got entangled in before and after me. It was called the Fuller Aviation Case. As background, the Aquino government had set up a Presidential Commission on Good Government or PCGG. Its mission was to search for and seize ill-gotten assets of the Marcos family and the many Marcos cronies, dispose of the assets and return the proceeds to the national treasury. There were many reasons why that turned out to be a worse idea than it seemed on the surface. This case focused on a business jet, which allegedly belonged to Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who was both a Marcos crony and a cousin of President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino. In 1989, the PCGG seized the jet and sold it to Fuller Aviation, a Texas company, for \$7.2 million. A court in Arkansas, where the jet had been relocated, ruled that Cojuangco did not own the jet and that the PCGG had seized the aircraft in error from the rightful owner. So Fuller Aviation did not get the plane but the Philippine government inexplicably refused to return Fuller's \$7.2 million.

Fuller sued in the Philippine courts which began a case that lasted over a decade. The imbroglio involved the anti-graft court called the *Sandiganbayan* and its obnoxious chief judge, the US and Philippine Supreme Courts, and powerful members of Congress from Fuller's home state of Texas, not to mention a lot of people in Embassy Manila and the State Department. In the end, in August 2001, after years of entreaties, demarches and litigation, the Philippine Government had to pay Fuller Aviation over \$16.3 million, not only the price of the jet but also accumulated interest over a decade. The whole thing was amazingly contentious and time-consuming over the administrations of two U.S. presidents and three Philippine presidents. Two years after I retired, the other State "combatants" and I got a group Superior Honor Award for our successful efforts in that affair, signed by the State Department's Legal Advisor, William Howard Taft IV.

*Q: Did you have to sit down and talk to the officers — the junior officers — when they came and just be a little bit fatherly about this and say, "This is what it is and be damned careful that you don't get caught up in it."*

O'NEILL: Actually most of the JOs — junior officers — that I had in the political section were coming from the consular section, so I didn't feel they...

*Q: They had already been through it.*

O'NEILL: They had already been through the mill, so to speak.

*Q: A real mill!*

O'NEILL: Yes, exactly! So I figured that if they hadn't figured that out, nothing I could tell them would make any difference. Three of my other officers were returning to Manila for a second tour, and two of them were married to Filipinas. I had a pretty solid group of officers to deal with these kinds of situations.

In one other case a former member of the Philippine House of Representatives was trying to get in touch with my internal officer Mike Klechesky, a Tagalog speaker whose wife was a Filipina. Mike had gone back to the States, and he was replaced by Dan Larsen whose wife was also Filipina, and Dan was a Tagalog speaker like Mike. So Dan fielded the call and explained to this former congressman that he would be happy to meet in Mike's stead. Dan returned with a Xeroxed paper purporting to be some kind of U.S. Treasury certificate for millions and zillions of dollars that this former Representative wanted help in redeeming. He supposedly had the original of this note. The date on this thing and the signature were supposedly from Henry Morgenthau's time as Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of the treasury. But nicely printed in the border at the bottom in the scrollwork around this lovely little certificate was the Treasury Department's zip code...

[laughter]

*Q: Which of course came in the '60s!*

O'NEILL: In the '60s, yes! Exactly. This was as fraudulent as almost anything else in the Philippines, and yet .... Whether the former congressman knew it was a fraud or not, I don't know. We didn't care because we obviously didn't pursue it. Dan took his fake document to the embassy's Secret Service rep who said, "That's nothing!" He said, "We have Filipinos coming in with samples of fraudulent documents downloaded from the Treasury Department website that say 'sample' right across them!"

[laughter]

That's comic, and there are lots of other comic examples, but there were other things that weren't so comic, either, which really damaged not only the political structure of the Philippines but also faith in government and the economy, too.

*Q: You mentioned these officers married to Filipino women. We talked about the Chrysanthemum Club in Japan. Was there a cadre of Philippine hands in the State Department?*

O'NEILL: Yes, there was, which was very good because they tended to be very sharp people. There were certainly, in USIS as it then was, and certainly in my political section. There could have been consular officers as well.

*Q: Oh, of course.*

O'NEILL: Ed Wilkinson was consul general for part of the time I was there, and his wife Lisa's from the Philippines. I don't know when Ed had first served in the Philippines, but unlike some of his predecessors as consul general, he was above reproach. One particular predecessor was

literally led out in chains by Diplomatic Security, because of visa fraud. Ed's immediate predecessor was Kevin Herbert. He's a former Peace Corps volunteer in Davao who came back as consul general. He and Ed were the kind of people that you'd want as consul general in that very trying environment.

Embassy Manila had shrunk a good bit in the aftermath of the base closings, particularly the political section and defense attaché's office and even more so the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group or JUSMAG. But it was still a very large embassy. We had 23 U.S. government agencies, a huge number even by big embassy standards. We had some unusual ones like the American Battle Monuments Commission which oversaw Manila war cemetery. It's the largest single American cemetery overseas, with 17,000 war dead from the Pacific War. Also related to the colonial era and World War II, the embassy had a large Veterans' Affairs office which kept track of the still considerable number of Philippine veterans who were entitled to U.S. pensions. They also had a robust fraud detection program, too.

The other thing, too, in the embassy there were five or six law enforcement organizations, including Diplomatic Security, Drug Enforcement Administration, Secret Service (for counterfeiting and credit card fraud as I mentioned), INS, Immigration and Naturalization Service law enforcement people and there was one Federal Aviation Agency security officer.

Among the law enforcement organizations was a legal attaché office with FBI agents. They were kept quite busy with fugitives from American justice whether they were American citizens or Filipinos. That was the big ticket item for them: extradition. Also, they worked on transnational crimes. Jim Nixon, who was the senior legal attaché, narrowly escaped a sort of early retirement. On an extradition case, Jim went one time about midnight to the National Bureau of Investigation, NBI, which was roughly analogous to the FBI. Jim told me later that as he was going through the building with one of his NBI counterparts, he noticed a large pile of explosives in the hallway. Perhaps it was from dynamite fishing or something similar. Within two hours that part of NBI headquarters vaporized when the pile of explosives was ignited. That earned NBI a Darwin Award for that year. It's given to people who manage to kill themselves in a spectacular fashion through their own ineptitude. Had Jim been there a couple of hours later, he could have gone up with it.

*Q: There's a significant number of Filipinos in the United States. They don't seem to show up here in Washington, but certainly in the West Coast and other places. Did this represent a significant political lobby or not?*

O'NEILL: Not to my knowledge in any sphere except veterans' benefits, and there were individual congressmen, some in Hawaii, and particularly in southern California, who were champions of better benefits for Philippine veterans of U.S. forces, Philippine Scouts and others, and what were called "recognized guerilla units." There were some Philippine guerilla units that were in some cases led by U.S. officers, in some cases led by Philippine officers but were of such quality that in terms of pension, they were actually counted with the regular forces. Congressman Filner from the San Diego area had a particular Philippine veteran constituency and was interested in the business of getting fuller benefits. That was always on the bilateral

agenda. There was certainly lobbying by Filipinos including Philippine officials to try to get better benefits for those Philippine veterans in the U.S. forces.

*Q: How stood things guerilla-wise during your time?*

O'NEILL: There were two main guerilla movements. One was the Communist New People's Army which in those days you really had to go looking for. If you were going to get shot by a New People's Army guerilla, you really had to go out and find one to shoot you. They were no threat in the cities at all. We occasionally got intelligence reports about their so-called sparrow squads, their assassination teams which had been a concern in years past. In 1989 as I mentioned they had managed to murder Colonel James N. Rowe, Nick Rowe, who was the head of the army branch of JUSMAG in the embassy.

We used to talk about it and hold emergency action meeting every so often. Basically the conclusion we came to was that the traffic in Manila was so horrendous that nobody could stake you out because nobody could tell what route you were going to take or at what time you were ever going to pass a certain point even if you were enamored of a certain route between your home and the office. So we tended to shrug it off.

The other thing, and I focused on this a good bit, was the Islamic insurgencies. There were three. One was the original MNLF, the Moro National Liberation Front, headed by Nur Misuari who was originally a Marxist professor at the University of Philippines in the Marcos era. His band was quite large and had been engaged in quite a bit of combat against Philippine forces for a long time. The MNLF came to a political accommodation with the Marcos government which held basically through the time I was there. It broke down somewhat a little bit later. In my time, Misuari was the governor of what was called the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or the ARMM which was much of western Mindanao and the islands in the Sulu Sea. He was a figure in the political scene. We used to meet with him quite regularly.

The largest group that was still in combat against the Philippine government and is still in a state of insurrection was the MILF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which had broken away from the MNLF in years past. It purported to be more religious, and was allegedly fighting for an independent Islamic state. I say allegedly because to the best of my knowledge nobody in the MILF was ever able to articulate what this state would look like, who would think it would be viable, what governments would recognize it, or any of those pesky details, but they were fighting for that, whatever it was.

The last of the groups was by far the smallest, and by far the nastiest, which was called the Abu Sayyaf Group. They were a bunch of cut-throats who wrapped themselves in an Islamic aura. They were the ones, for example, who not long after I left kidnapped a group of Americans, including the Burnhams, from a resort near the island of Palawan. The Burnhams were missionaries. Another American was kidnapped at the same time along with several Filipinos. The other kidnapped American was secretly visiting the Philippines to see his girlfriend unbeknownst to his wife.



During the months that they all were held, the Philippine-American man was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf. Mr. Burnham was accidentally killed by Philippine forces in a rescue attempt in which his wife was slightly wounded, and the remaining survivors and Mrs. Burnham were released. So that was a tragedy. It was basically a very good rescue operation by the Philippine forces that went awry enough that Mr. Burnham was killed, but even the best of forces can have an operation which will have that result.

The Abu Sayyaf group operated in fairly narrow areas of the outlying islands. There is one feature of these various Islamic groups which is true throughout the Philippines. You still have a strong tribal identity. There are hundreds of different ethnic groups in the Philippines. These groups are very much a part of a person's identity particularly in the hinterlands, maybe not so much in Manila, but in the hinterlands they are. Among the Islamic population of the Philippines which is very much a minority even in Mindanao, their former stronghold, you had people who identified themselves as Tausugs, Maranaos, and Maguindanaos and other groups. These tribal identities were among the reasons why there was a break away from the MNLF, Moro National Liberation Front, to form the MILF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Nur Misuari was a Tausug and the head of the MILF was either a Maranao or Maguindanao. You had this kind of tension even within people who alleged that they were fighting for the same objective.

I made several trips to western Mindanao because I was particularly interested in seeing what could be done by us first of all to learn more about the situation in the Muslim majority areas of western Mindanao and also to see what we might be able to do to help out. One time I went with my internal political officer Dan Larsen down to the town of Cotabato on the west side of Mindanao. The main reason was to meet with a former congressman named Michael Mastura who was among other things a hereditary chief, a *datu*, a very urbane fellow whose wife was born Catholic and converted to Islam. He was running a fairly large and ambitious *madrassa* near Cotabato City. He wanted me to come down to speak to the students there which I did and got a big tour of his *madrassa*, and he was talking to me about...

*Q: You might explain what a madrassa is.*

O'NEILL: A *madrassa* is a Muslim religious school although like the best of them, this one had not only a religious curriculum but also a secular curriculum as well. They were teaching them math and languages and all that kind of thing. It was in a sense a Muslim parochial school, if you will, in sort of Catholic terms.

Anyway, before this trip down there Michael Mastura had said that he would be happy to arrange for me to go to Camp Abu Bakr, the headquarters camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. I was really tempted to go. I knew I'd be completely safe. Even though they were in an armed insurrection against the Philippine government, they would not have harmed me as a guest, as an American diplomat. But I figured that my boss, Ambassador Tom Hubbard, would not be thrilled with his political counselor going to the headquarters camp of the main Philippine rebel group, so with great regret I had to turn down Michael's invitation.

During that whole trip, we had a lot of security whether we need it or not, including a heavily armed policeman from the National Police's field force. We also had a contingent of six

Philippine Marines under a second lieutenant, all armed to the teeth, who went with us everywhere. We were accompanied by two staff members of the incumbent local congressman, Congressman Dilangalen, one of whom was also a hereditary chief, a *datu*. When we were at Michael Mastura's madrassa, he arranged for several members of the MILF central committee to meet with me in the second floor of the madrassa offices.

As Dan Larsen and I were chatting with these nice men, one of the things that they said was that in 1945 the United States had made "a great mistake" which they wanted us to rectify. The "great mistake" they were complaining about was that we had given the entire Philippines independence all at once. There was at that time a movement among the Muslims who were still in the majority in Mindanao to stay under U.S. control longer than the rest of the Philippines, the Catholic Philippines if you will, and eventually get independence from the U.S. as a separate Muslim state. Well, the U.S. decided that the entire Commonwealth of the Philippines would become independent in 1946 as soon after the end of World War II as we could decently arrange it.

The MILF officials' demarche didn't surprise me because I had read enough to know that it had a historical basis. My response was that I rarely claimed to be speaking for the president and the vice president of the U.S. but I said in this case I'm pretty sure I can say that President Clinton and Vice President Gore would say there was no chance of the U.S. trying to rectify that mistake or whatever you want to call it. But it was a very interesting conversation. Meanwhile when I was meeting with those rebels, you had these heavily armed Philippine Marines standing around in the parking lot. Dangerous and violent things happen in the Philippines, but there are loopy things that happen, too. You wonder when one sort is going to come up and the other is not. But anyhow, that was a fascinating trip, one of several that I took to that part of Mindanao.

*Q: I think this might be a good place to stop and we'll put an end here. What I'd like to do is talk more about the rebel forces. I know maybe at a little later date we had some small American training missions...*

O'NEILL: That was much later.

*Q: ...dealing with them, and don't know if that was during your time.*

O'NEILL: No, it was much later.

*Q: Also, I'm looking at a map of the Philippines, and they've got all these island around them, including the Spratlys; they intermingle with Indonesia and actually are adjacent to Taiwan. How did this geography fit into their worldview and then let's talk about the Filipino role in international organizations. Is there anything else you think we ought to mention?*

O'NEILL: Those were the main things. The whole business of the South China Sea, the Spratly Islands and Mischief Reef, all of which was entangled in multiple territorial claims by the PRC, Taiwan, Philippines, etc. That got very tangled in Philippine-U.S. relations as well because of exaggerated Philippine expectations of what the U.S. could and would do. But also I want to talk a little bit more about the situation in Mindanao.

*Q: And a bit about social life, too, and the influence of any other powers there: Japanese, Chinese, and all that.*

O'NEILL: And another thing I should have talked about earlier is the Philippine population growth as a factor in the economic and social sort of deterioration, if you will.

*Q: Today is December 23, 2008 with Al O'Neill. We're looking at the Philippines external policy now. Do you want to do a tour of the horizon? I'm looking at the map, with Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and other states nearby. Also, you've got the Philippines as being part of the various Asian organizations.*

O'NEILL: Obviously one of the immutable factors about the Philippines is its geographic location. It's right between North Asia and Southeast Asia. That produces a number of influences on its foreign policy. It's, among other things, a founding member of the Association of South East Asian Nations or ASEAN which despite its ups and downs has been probably over the last 40 years the most successful regional grouping I can think of.

The Philippines has always felt itself to be one of the leading lights in ASEAN much like Indonesia always has. At the same time the Philippines has a complex relationship with China. Trading relations between China and the Philippines go back many centuries. There were Chinese settlers in the Philippines also going back maybe three hundred years. A number of very prominent Philippine families are of Chinese ancestry including, for example, Corazon Aquino's family, the Cojuangcos. Ferdinand Marcos had some Chinese ancestry. In many ways the Chinese in the Philippines have woven themselves into society fairly well. There are newer Chinese who are less assimilated and somewhat more distinct in some of the big cities.

China's a place with which the Philippines want to do a great deal of business and Chinese companies invest in the Philippines. But the big shadow over that relationship is a series of territorial disputes which are not acute. They normally bubble along although they got fairly active during some of the time that I was in the Philippines in 1997 through 2000.

These disputes are in most cases multilateral, involving the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea which are scattered to the west of Luzon and on towards Vietnam. These islands are disputed among Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, and perhaps Brunei. But the major claimant is China in terms of military power and its regional power projection capability.

These disputes are normally diplomatic and rhetorical, and it's pretty rare that there's any military confrontation although there is another area separate from the Spratlys but adjacent called Mischief Reef, which is well named. That's a dispute principally between the PRC and Manila. The Chinese have occupied Mischief Reef for quite a few years, and they've built several structures on it. It drives the Filipinos to distraction every time they think about this because they think they have a good claim to Mischief Reef and, of course, the Chinese have pretty much stymied them by simply occupying it.

One time the Chinese ambassador was explaining to me that the Chinese ships at the reef were really from the ministry of agriculture, fisheries and forestry. She was a very capable diplomat and a very able representative of China, but I must say it strained credulity to think that these sleek gray ships were actually from the ministry of fisheries. Anyway, there were a couple of occasions where the Philippine navy tried to bolster a claim to adjacent rocks in the Mischief Reef area by beaching one of their LSTs, a World War II-vintage Landing Ship Tank, on one of the islands. That really didn't do much other than somewhat alarming us and Washington as to how far the Philippines might go with their claim to these various rocks and outcroppings. Their interest is a combination of marine resources such as the prospect of oil, minerals perhaps, and also fisheries resources, fisheries being as important to the Philippines as to anybody else in the area.

There are other disputes, too, with Malaysia, for example, the Malaysian state of Sabah in northeastern Borneo to which the Philippine Sultan of Sulu has a hereditary claim. President Marcos tried to back up those claims from time to time with guerilla actions in Sabah. The whole thing is pretty much dormant now except there is a certainly a standing Philippine claim. The Philippine relations with Malaysia tend to be good, and normally the lid is kept on this dispute. It flares up a little bit every time the Malaysian authorities round up illegal Filipino immigrants in Sabah and deport them, then somebody in the Philippine Congress or the newspapers starts beating the drums about the claim to Sabah.

Overall, the Philippine relations with China are pretty good. They're obviously still leery of the Chinese. At the same time, they want to increase Philippine exports to China and the Chinese are basically accepting of that idea. Of course, Philippine exporters face lots of competition.

Overall in diplomatic relations the Philippines is a pretty responsible player. They have a generally able diplomatic corps and are overall well disposed toward the United States. There are some pockets in the Philippine department of foreign affairs of what I would call "NAM-think" or Non-aligned Movement thinking which is a feeling that the Philippines really isn't aligned with the United States and that their real destiny is with other countries which do not have an alliance with any of the major powers. It really doesn't have a huge effect because even with someone with that mindset as, say, an assistant secretary, it's pretty normal that the Philippine president, vice president, and the presidential staff have a much more pro-American point of view.

But it is interesting that you kind of see these vestiges of that particular thinking. In fact, in terms of international organizations, the Philippines are pretty much a newcomer to the Non-aligned Movement which it joined after the U.S. bases closed in 1992. It was an oddity in that of course the United States still had a treaty of alliance with the Philippines despite the end of the bases, so the NAM had relaxed its membership criteria sufficiently to allow a U.S. ally in. It may say something about the state of the NAM as well.

*Q: Did the Non-aligned Movement mean anything?*

O'NEILL: I don't think it did really, and particularly not by the time the Philippines joined it. I just mentioned it as an oddity in one niche in Philippine thinking about the outside world. I think

the very fact that the NAM would accept a U.S. treaty ally into its fold is evidence that they were really looking to build up their membership as much as they possible could. But no, I think it's pretty much insignificant.

The main point is, though, that the Philippines likes international organizations. In fact, during my tenure the secretary general of ASEAN was a very capable Philippine diplomat named Severino. I think his first name — he went by Rod — was Rodrigo. Severino, a former undersecretary of the department of foreign affairs did at least one term as secretary general of ASEAN. It's an organization that the Philippines likes to be associated with partly because, when you look around the world at regional groupings of modest size countries, ASEAN stands out as an unusually successful one which you could see by the very fact that they established the dialogue partners over a number of decades ago. Those dialogue partners were the United States and Soviet Union and Japan and other countries of similar importance. China has become one.

At the time that I was serving in Korea from 1988 to '92, one of the things that the ROK gained as a mark of its rising stature was to be recognized as an ASEAN dialogue partner. So it was a very attractive grouping of modest-sized countries. During the time I was the Philippines, ASEAN expanded its membership from six to ten somewhat gradually adding the Indochina countries of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and also Burma into the fold. ASEAN's purpose was that by including these four states that ranged from authoritarian to dictatorial, they would be countering the influence of China.

Certainly my qualm, and I think the qualms of other Western diplomats, was the great danger that ASEAN was going to dilute its authority by bringing in these states of varying degrees of unsavoriness, particularly Burma. That was the big one. They'd likely wind up spending an awful lot more time refereeing issues among themselves than dealing with external issues. That's what has actually happened. I think ASEAN might be somewhat less influential now than it in the past because it's got all these problems again, particularly with the Burmese. Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam do not loom as large, I don't think, as the Burma issue. ASEAN has spent a great deal of time and effort trying to figure out whether they were to continue the normal ASEAN mindset, which was operating not only by consensus but also on the basis of not criticizing publicly their other members. That oftentimes has put them — the original ASEAN, if you will — at odds with, say, the United States and the European Union, etc., particularly on the issue of Burma and the treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy. Still, I would say overall that ASEAN is still an attractive regional grouping, and it's one that the U.S. does well to cultivate.

*Q: You as political counselor in the Philippines, did you find yourself spending a significant amount of time talking to the Philippine officials who were responsible for ASEAN about policies?*

O'NEILL: To some degree, usually before certain ASEAN meetings. For example, as the Burmese military's treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi and her party worsened or if we were trying to encourage the organization to take a stronger line against the Burmese military. But it wasn't a daily preoccupation. I would say that most of my effort, certainly for the first year or so, was devoted towards the Visiting Forces Agreement and reestablishing a regime in which the United

States and the Philippines could cooperate on ship business and military exercises. Again, the Moro problem in western Mindanao and the islands of the Sulu Sea was an issue to which we devoted a good bit of effort.

Also, there were other things that we wanted to participate in like 1998 presidential elections. We got probably a dozen of our officers ranging from me as political counselor to a number of the junior officers in the consular section accredited as election observers with the Philippine Commission on Elections or COMELEC. We went here and there around the country in the spring of '98 to go to polling places. We divided the country up into different districts and sent people out to these locations. It was a good opportunity to get out to the countryside and also to get some of the younger officers out to see something different from the hordes of visa applicants they faced every day. One of the things that struck me about the '98 elections was that the level of violence was remarkably low. The security was quite good, provided by the army and police. This was a major contrast to the historical record in Philippine elections.

I went to Cebu, the main city in the central Philippines, the Visayas. As with almost everything in the Philippines, there was a big carnival atmosphere. It doesn't take much to get Filipinos to do some kind of fiesta, and this was no exception. One of the things that I remarked on when I talked to our officers after we all gathered back in the embassy: the number of people who were taking their kids to the polls. Maybe because there wasn't daycare, but in any case they felt safe enough that they didn't think they were going to be exposing their children to a crossfire between the mayor's gunmen and his major opponent's gunmen or something like that. So I thought that was healthy. I think you get the acclimatization, too. If you take your kids to the library when you go to get books, the kids figure out the library's a good place. Eventually if people keep taking their kids when they go to vote, kids are going to grow up with the idea that voting is a good idea. I forget the turnout but compared to American elections it was embarrassingly high, probably in the 80% range.

There were very few people killed, and mostly candidates or incumbents, so it was really sort of them killing each other rather than that any ordinary voters were caught in the cross fires. The problem that the Philippines tends to have is the follow-on. The campaigning is wonderful, kind of fascinating. But the slogging job of governance tends to be, as it is in an awful lot of countries, more difficult than campaigning.

Let me tell one campaign story that it gives you an idea of the relative weakness of political parties in Philippines. Before Marcos there had been two political parties of long standing which candidates joined in order to represent the platforms of those parties much like the American system. Marcos wrecked all that and in the debris that he left behind, parties became far more personal. Somebody would start a party in order to promote his candidacy for this, that, or the other thing, and that weakness persists. There was a spectacular example of that in 1997 in the run-up to the 1998 presidential election.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the current president, is the daughter of Diosdado Macapagal who was president in the early '60s and was defeated for a second term when Marcos ran the first time relatively legitimately. She was a senator, one of the 24 senators, and she decided that she wanted to run for president. So she established a political party which went by the Philippine

initials KAMPI. I can't remember exactly what this stood for. She was its presidential candidate of course. She picked a fellow senator, Vicente Sotto III, as her vice presidential running mate and was prepared to go into the election. Gene Martin, the DCM, and I had lunch with her as she was preparing to run. She was talking about how many millions of dollars were necessary for a viable presidential candidacy although she said that she could get away with spending less money because she had so much name recognition, which was true.

When the incumbent president Fidel Ramos picked the then Speaker of the House of Representatives Jose de Venecia as his party's candidate for president, he also offered the vice presidential slot to Gloria. She accepted, dropped her party like a rock and left poor Tito Sotto, her vice presidential candidate, not knowing what had happened to him. In fact, because of the strange way that elections operate in the Philippines her party's presidential candidate, Jose de Venecia, did not win but she became the vice president. They vote separately for president and VP. When a variety of forces engineered the ouster of President Estrada, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled that constitutionally she would be the president. This is the daily bread of politics in the Philippines.

*Q: Al, I'd like to go back to foreign relations. How stood the Philippines regarding Taiwan?*

O'NEILL: Interesting because there were certainly trading relationships for centuries, really. Before 1949, almost all of the ethnic Chinese on Taiwan were from Fujian Province on the coast and long established for centuries. Fujian and the Taiwan Fujianese were major trading partners of the Philippines before the Spanish came, but particularly so during the Spanish era and thereafter. There were plenty of people of Chinese ancestry in the Philippines who probably felt more political affinity toward Taiwan than to the mainland. The Philippines, from the time of Marcos, had full diplomatic relations with the PRC. They maintained an unofficial AIT-like relationship.

*Q: AIT is the American Institute on Taiwan. That's the way we conduct our relations with Taiwan.*

O'NEILL: The Philippines does the same thing. I don't recall particularly the mechanics of it in part because nobody made an issue of it. It did not become an issue in those days, at least, in the PRC-Philippines relationship even when there were fairly hot territorial disputes. So it was pretty much a regularized relationship based on trade and tourism back and forth and nothing remarkable at all.

*Q: How about with Japan? Of course, Japan was not a very nice occupier of the Philippines during World War II. How stood things in your time?*

O'NEILL: It was interesting. A number of senior Philippine diplomats who had considerable experience in Japan. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs through the entire three years I was there was Domingo Siazon, Jr., a career diplomat, a very capable one who had come to that job from being ambassador to Japan. His wife was Japanese. He spoke extremely good Japanese and later on as I recall Ambassador Siazon went back to Japan as ambassador. There were other Philippine

diplomats who if not specialized in Japan, served there a number of times that they were pretty familiar with the country.

The relationship during the time that I was there was quite good normally. Toyota and other Japanese companies were operating in the Philippines. Toyota had at least one assembly plant that built Toyota Corollas. Japanese tourism in the Philippines was noticeable. One kind of export from the Philippines was the large number of Filipinos, male and female, who went to Japan sometimes as factory workers, sometimes as entertainers. This was mostly legitimate though there were certainly cases where Philippine women went to Japan thinking they were going to be doing one kind of entertaining, and their prospective employers had other entertainment in mind.

*Q: We're really talking about brothels.*

O'NEILL: Prostitution and that sort of thing. I'm sure it kept the Philippine consular officers in Japan pretty busy, but the majority of Filipinos in Japan were working there in factories or in legitimate entertainment with bands at hotels and resorts as well. I'm sure there was a brisk business of exporting products from the Philippines to Japan. The things that I'm sure come to mind are seafood and marine products including a seaweed extract called *carrageenan* which is used in lots of things from cosmetics to ice cream. That's a big Philippine export.

In my recollection in dealing with Philippine affairs in the Department from 1992 to 1994 and also the three years that I was there it was rare that the memories of the horrific Japanese treatment of Filipinos during World War II came up much. Japanese veteran groups come to the Philippines to some of the old battlegrounds including places like Corregidor and Bataan to memorialize the men that they lost. The Filipinos just accept that. The Filipinos are remarkably accepting people.

*Q: You don't have sort of the rape of Nanking sort of...*

O'NEILL: You do in one case and that is the destruction of Manila during the liberation. Having served in Vietnam, I always find it particularly annoying that the American news media made so much of this offhand remark by one American officer in the course of the Tet 1968 offensive that "we had to destroy the town to save it," talking about the town of Ben Tre. The media people who made a lot of hoopla about that remark apparently didn't know that we used to destroy whole countries to save them in World War II. France and the Benelux countries were basically untouched early in the war, the Philippines as well. In 1942, the Philippines collapsed so quickly that there was relatively little damage done to the country. Our liberation, which Filipinos really welcomed, did vastly more damage to the Philippines than the original Japanese invasion.

The worst example of that was the liberation of the city of Manila because the Japanese overall commander, General Tomoyuki Yamashita, had withdrawn most of his forces to the mountains of northern Luzon and established his headquarters at the summer capital in Baguio. The Japanese admiral who remained in control of Manila decided without orders from Yamashita to hold Manila to the last man. When the Americans attacked to liberate Manila he and his defenders held on to almost the last man and in doing so, they went around massacring as many



Filipinos as they could get their hands on, innocent civilians, just slaughtering as many as possible.

MacArthur prohibited close air support to attack Japanese strong points particularly in the big Spanish walled city of Intramuros which was the center of old Manila. So our forces were using heavy artillery at point blank range to break through the walls and then tanks would go in. It was horrendous. The figure is usually given that about 100,000 Filipino civilians were killed in Manila, mainly because of the way the Japanese behaved and also in the resulting fighting with the Americans. Manila was reputedly second only to Warsaw among friendly cities in the degree of its total destruction during the war. It was horrendous, and the Japanese reacted with real savagery elsewhere in the Philippines, too.

There was a movie not too long ago called *The Great Raid*, about the liberation of about 500 American prisoners of war at Cabanatuan in Luzon. The movie starts out with an atrocity carried out by the Japanese on the island of Palawan across the Sulu Sea. They packed American prisoners into an underground air raid shelter, and poured gasoline in and set it on fire. It killed most of them in that horrific way. I've been to that site in Puerto Princesa which is the capital of Palawan province. It's now on the grounds of a police station.

There was a very interesting phenomenon during the war. Whether or not Filipinos liked the idea of an American colonization, they knew that the Americans were on the verge of granting them independence. I think in general most Filipinos thought that American colonization was probably preferable to colonization by just about anybody else. It was largely a fruitful relationship although it certainly had its rough edges. Certainly a lot of Filipinos, particularly very ordinary people, not so much the elites, but ordinary Filipinos sacrificed a great deal in resisting the Japanese and in aiding the Americans in the liberation of the Philippines.

There were all sorts of reasons for a lot of hard feelings toward the Japanese, but I think that has certainly eroded over time. The Japanese have a very large embassy there, and they're very active. There's a lot of cultural exchange, etc. They tend to put able diplomats in Manila. I think over time there has been a great deal of erosion of the harsh feelings that deservedly were directed to the Japanese in the aftermath of WWII. I can't remember any flare-ups other than, perhaps, problems with overseas workers.

*Q: Maybe this is a good place to move on to what did you do after you left the Philippines, and when did you leave the Philippines?*

O'NEILL: I left the Philippines in July of 2000 and came back to the States. In 1999, when I was been two-thirds of the way into my tour, I'd been notified that I was not going to get promoted into the Senior Foreign Service. I got a rather officious, badly worded letter from the Director General notifying me of all this, basically saying, "Your career is now over, but we're going to be nice enough to let you stay on another year to complete your tour in Manila." At first when I saw how badly worded the letter was I thought, "I'm going to write this man and tell him I think he's doing a pretty bad job." Then I figured I was so damn busy being the political counselor in Manila, I wasn't going to waste my time. Anyway, that was my valedictory message from the DG.

**GRETA N. MORRIS**  
**Counselor for Public Affairs, USIS**  
**Manila (1996-1998)**

*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: In 1996, I finished my posting in Bangkok and I moved to the Philippines as the counselor for public affairs.

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

MORRIS: I was in Manila from 1996 till 1998.

*Q: What was the political situation and all in the Philippines when you got there in 1996?*

MORRIS: It was a very interesting time to be there. The people power revolution had taken place in the mid-1980s-'86 I believe it was – when Marcos was thrown out. Fidel V. Ramos was the president of the Philippines at the time that I got there. He had been a military leader but at least he said he was very committed to democracy and I think he certainly was. He was a very smart man, very well organized, and was I think a good leader but I would have to say that the issue of democracy and how to have a genuine democracy was still very much part of the Philippine scene. It was democracy trying to move toward greater democracy, but it still a lot of the vestiges from the past.

There had been no success in renegotiating a new agreement for the two U.S. bases in the Philippines, so they had been closed.

*Q: Basically Clarke Field and Subic Bay.*

MORRIS: That is correct, yes. In Subic Bay, basically the U.S. military left; Clarke had been very much affected by the Mt. Pinatubo volcanic eruption.

*Q: This is before you...*

MORRIS: This was before I got there, but the feelings and connection with the negotiations of the bases agreement were still very close to the surface, shall we say. Even though a lot of Filipinos said “we are glad that we don’t have the U.S. bases here anymore,” a lot of Filipinos felt somewhat bereft that the U.S. military had left. Of course, there had been hope on the part of a lot of the negotiators that the U.S. would agree to pay a higher price and be able to stay; but that didn’t happen. So there were still some feelings left over from that. One reason that I mention that is because one of the big issues that we were dealing with at the embassy the whole time I was there was how we were going to get a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Even though the U.S. no longer had bases there, the Philippines remained a U.S. ally, we had regular military exercises with the Philippine military and with no status of forces agreement to protect the U.S. military, there was a lot of concern about whether or not we could even continue to do any of these exercises or even have any U.S. military in the country. This was a very big issue; there were elements of the Philippine government that basically wanted to end the diplomatic immunities for U.S. military. That was a very important issue while I was there. We did a lot of public affairs, a lot of public diplomacy (working with the press) in connection with that, trying to persuade the Philippine government that this was really in their interest because it was very important to be able to continue our strong U.S.-Philippine military alliance and to be able to continue these exercises.

I guess that I could say that the first thing I had to be concerned with when I arrived in the Philippines in August was the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit that was going to be taking place in Manila in November. Actually, the leaders meeting was going to be taking place in Subic; the former base was being reconfigured for the visit of (I believe at that time) twenty heads of state, including President Bill Clinton and the First Lady Hilary Clinton. This was, of course, as with all U.S. presidential visits, a major task and I would say especially for the public affairs section trying to deal with all the media. With twenty leaders there for the leaders’ meeting, it was an extra big task. Basically for the first three months I was there, August, September and October, until the meeting took place in November, the whole embassy was focused on getting ready for the visit of Bill Clinton and the meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation ministers and also leaders. That was a very major event. Of course, the president traveled with a big press corps and there were lots and lots of international media there. I think there were about one thousand journalists that came to the Philippines for this event.

*Q: How were Clinton and the United States perceived in the Philippines at the time?*

MORRIS: In many ways the Filipinos really love Americans. You could feel that in your personal relationships with Filipinos, you could feel it in their love of American popular culture; but there was also some degree of resentment left over from the colonial period and also, as I mentioned, the whole era of the U.S. bases and the rather contentious negotiations which basically ended in the U.S. leaving, but not in a totally satisfactory way for the Philippines, since they didn’t get the additional money they were hoping for. It was really more love than hate but there was that element of resentment too. Bill Clinton for the Filipinos seemed to represent everything that they loved about the United States. When Bill Clinton came for the APEC Summit he was treated absolutely like a rock star; one would go to the official banquets and everyone, all the Filipinos, were racing over to try to get as close to Bill Clinton as they possibly could. They often ignored their own leaders because they were so enthusiastic about being able

to see and be around Bill Clinton; he really was welcomed as a real rock star and I think, had a very successful visit.

*Q: How did you find dealing with the press there en mass?*

MORRIS: It's a very lively press scene; some of the newspapers exemplified yellow journalism at its best – tabloids with the latest shocking story about a sex scandal or something that a Philippine politician was involved in, or maybe that the United States was doing something that they didn't like. There were also some newspapers that were quite good and that we dealt with on a regular basis. There was one called Today that was edited by a man named Teddy Locsin, a very talented journalist who had been the press spokesman for Corazon Aquino when she was the president of the Philippines. Teddy was not always flattering about United States policy, but he operated from a very strong set of democratic principles, so everything that he wrote about, even his criticisms of the United States, were based on his understanding of whether or not the United States was doing the right thing in light of his own democratic values. He was somebody you could really deal with because you knew where he was coming from and he was basically quite a principled person. That is what I would say was one of the better newspapers.

There was another newspaper called the Philippine Inquirer that was also quite a good newspaper.

*Q: Were there papers that were the personal tools of the political party in taking stands for political purposes?*

MORRIS: There were, certainly. There was a presidential and senatorial election campaign in 1998 and certainly then some of the papers became very closely allied with various candidates. You could tell even before the campaign started, for example, the newspaper called Today, as I mentioned, was very closely aligned with Corazon Aquino and with the more democratic elements of Philippine society.

*Q: When you arrived there in the embassy...who was the ambassador by the way?*

MORRIS: John Negroponte had just left, he had been the ambassador; he left actually the same day that I arrived and I hope there was no connection. Tom Hubbard then came shortly after that; he had been deputy assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs before that. He was the ambassador the entire time that I was there.

*Q: Being the new girl on the block arriving at an embassy you get a different view than if you had been around for a while did you have a feeling that OK we've got the status of forces problem but basically from the embassy point of view thank God the military has left? The military has a different view, obviously, but I think from a parochial point of view I would think that the embassy would feel this is one more thing we don't have to worry about as much or not?*

MORRIS: I think there was general relief that we didn't have to deal with the negotiations. I was certainly glad because the public affairs counselor who had had to deal with being the spokesman, essentially, during the negotiations, a man named Stan Schrager, was on the nightly

news almost every night and was bombarded by the media there. So I think there was certainly relief that that issue was behind us and a desire to get on with the relationship, but I didn't sense that there was a feeling in the Embassy that this was a good thing that we didn't have these military bases.

*Q: Was Clarke basically, particularly after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, was gone wasn't it as far as we were concerned?*

MORRIS: Yes, and Subic. The military had left and it had basically gone to wrack and ruin; it almost looked like a ghost town. We went up to Subic early on to survey it, because this was going to be the sight of the APEC leaders' meeting and the Filipinos were working to try to get it ready. Of course, this was one of our constant worries at the embassy before the APEC meetings: would the Filipinos be able to get all of this done in time for the visit of Bill Clinton and all the other leaders. The person who was in charge of Subic at the time was a man named Richard Gordon, whose father had been an American; his mother was a Filipina. After the APEC summit, Subic was going to be a free trade area where people could come and buy things duty free. Richard Gordon was our partner in trying to get Subic ready. He was a very charismatic and energetic person and he had a group of young volunteers who were helping him. And they did it; they managed to get Subic ready in time; even the sites in Manila, as well, were really in very good condition by the time everybody arrived.

*Q: How did you feel about the Philippine society as you looked at this? What struck you about it?*

MORRIS: As I mentioned, the Filipinos were very friendly; they are people who really do enjoy socializing with other people; they enjoy music and they enjoy festivals and basically having a good time. Of course, there was a real contrast between the part of the Philippines where I lived in Manila and the southern part of the Philippines, Mindanao, which was predominantly Muslim. Shortly before I had arrived, I believe it was in July of 1996, the Moro National Liberation Front, which was one of the two Islamic Separatists groups that had been fighting the Philippine government, signed an agreement with the Philippine government to establish something called the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM was the acronym). The person who was put in charge of this was a man named Nur Misuari, who had been the leader of the separatist movement, the Moro National Liberation Front. He was then supposed to work with the Philippine government; Mindanao and the ARMM were supposed to get a significant amount of assistance to be able to develop the region and in return for this, Misuari was supposed to give up the fight. There were a lot of problems with the implementation of that project, the ARMM. Part of the problem was that Nur Misuari didn't seem to know how to manage money; he spent a lot of the assistance money on very lavish trips, taking his entire entourage with him on overseas trips. Consequently, he didn't use the money that he did have (or at least not a sufficient amount) to develop the region, so that the people remained very poor. I visited Mindanao several times while I was there. I visited the strongly Islamic part three times, I believe; it was quite different from Manila or even other parts of the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic country.

*Q: Was it just that it was poorer or that it was...?*

MORRIS: It was very Islamic and, in a way, a taste of what was developing in Indonesia, including some of the more strongly Islamic parts of Indonesia. I remember my visit to a place called Marawi, a city which is right in the heart of Mindanao. I knew that it was a strongly Islamic area so I needed to be conservatively dressed, but I didn't realize until I got there that the women there would be completely covered. They didn't wear burkas, but they wore very colorful scarves covering all of their hair, none of their arms were visible and their clothing came down to the ground. It was very conservative in terms of the way of living; there was absolutely no alcohol in that part of the country.

*Q: As the public affairs officer you've got this strongly Islamic group; how did you reach them or did we reach them?*

MORRIS: Yes, we did. I think we were able to reach them, at least to a certain extent. The reason for my first visit was in connection with the embassy's pledge to work with the Philippine government in trying to help develop this region; our USAID presence in the Philippines was very actively engaged in Mindanao and we were going to try to do more in terms of Fulbright and other public diplomacy programs for people from Mindanao. I went down with the person who was the head of our Binational Fulbright Commission in Manila to visit Mindanao State University. The head of Mindanao State University had done her study in the United States and I think she had done it through the Ford Foundation because the Ford Foundation had a very active program in Mindanao back in the '60s. At Mindanao State University, there were still houses that had been set up for the Ford Foundation scholars who had come to teach there. I stayed in one of them overnight. But the people of Mindanao, particularly those we met at the University, were very interested in education, they were interested in getting more scholarships and having more educational assistance from the United States; that was certainly one way that we were able to reach out to them.

Another thing that we did on a later trip was to establish what we called an "American corner." This was really right at the beginning of the period during which the State Department decided to set up American corners in universities or libraries in different parts of the world as a way of replacing our centers that we were closing very rapidly; all the USIS centers were being closed. We set up an American corner at Mindanao State University; Ambassador Hubbard and his wife went to Mindanao to open the American Corner officially. The people of Mindanao and particularly the university were very interested in having American books, in learning English, in getting scholarships, so this was a way of being able to reach them.

*Q: How about did we see a problem in promoting scholarships to universities particularly for the women or going there in a traditionally Islamic people's dumping in the middle of Colombia University or something? I could see where there could be problems because they are not really attuned to dealing with fundamentalist Islamist's.*

MORRIS: I guess that there are different degrees and kinds of fundamentalism, so to speak, and the woman who was the president of Mindanao State University, even though she dressed conservatively, was a very dynamic woman and very well educated. She spoke beautiful English, she was clearly a very strong leader and she was somebody whom the male members of her staff clearly respected. She reminded me of the Indonesian women whom I met later who were also

traditional Muslims but very well educated and were therefore people who would be able to be successful in a U.S. academic setting. I don't think we felt that there was anything contradictory about this.

*Q: So you didn't have to over tailor things?*

MORRIS: No, these were people who obviously had to do well enough on their TOEFL tests and on their GRE tests to be admitted to an American graduate program and they went through the same very rigorous competition for the Fulbright program that any of the other scholars did.

*Q: Well I take it you were spared having to deal with a tremendous immigration or non-immigration flow to the United States, or nurses and all that? Your piece of the action was well controlled was it?*

MORRIS: I was not responsible for visas, so that was good. We had a very, very large visa section and in fact, it still is the largest in the world; it's a major operation there. It's always terribly interesting because even when we were having some of the demonstrations, for example, about the SOFA and even going back further when there were demonstrations against the bases, there were always people standing in front of the consular section waiting to apply for a visa to go to the United States. It was a major issue. There was always a concern on the part of the Embassy and the State Department about the people going to the United States, even for study or for a short term exchange program, or maybe they were going as tourists: were these people really going just to visit and were they going to come back to the Philippines or were they going as intended immigrants? There was a lot of concern certainly about that.

*Q: You were saying about the demonstration about the SOFA? SOFA is Status of Forces Agreement.*

MORRIS: Status of Forces Agreement, that's correct yes.

*Q: This is making sure American military don't end up in the local jail or something.*

MORRIS: That's right, yes.

*Q: How did you work with the ambassador?*

MORRIS: I think we had a very good relationship; he was very keen on getting our message out to the press. He was willing to do interviews and also to do speeches; he was good from that perspective. He also was very interested in exchange programs as well, so he was willing to participate actively. During that time we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fulbright program in the Philippines. The Philippines has the oldest continuous Fulbright program in the world; it began in 1948. The widow of Senator J. William Fulbright (who initiated the program), Harriet Fulbright, came out for the anniversary. Tom Hubbard and his wife were very active participants in all of the events surrounding the anniversary of the Fulbright program. They were very good to work with because public affairs was something that they saw as important to the mission of

the embassy, very important to getting our word across to the Philippine people; so they were very active participants in public affairs programs.

*Q: How was Filipino TV?*

MORRIS: You could get the news from Philippine television. There were some stations that did their news mainly in Tagalog, with a lot of English mixed in. This combination of Tagalog and English was referred to as “Taglish” (I’m not sure that all Filipinos were very enthusiastic about that name). We sent a number of Philippine television (as well as print) journalists to the U.S. on IV programs to help them in making their television news broadcasts more professional and objective.

*Q: Was CNN a factor?*

MORRIS: Yes, you could get CNN there. It was helpful for those of us at the Embassy to be able to get our international news on CNN.

*Q: Did you find yourself to some extent having to respond to CNN? If they’ve reported on something happening and we have to make sure that we put the right spin on it or whatever?*

MORRIS: Yes, sometimes. I can’t think of any specific examples of that occurring there but we were dealing with a situation, and had been for some time, where news was basically instantaneous. If a major event occurred any place in the world, it was reported virtually instantaneously on CNN. The Filipinos were getting the same news, and at the same time, in the Philippines as people in the United States, Europe and those parts of Africa where CNN was available were getting it. There was always that need to be able to react, to respond, to comment on something that was on CNN.

*Q: Was the American ex-patriot community an important element for you all?*

MORRIS: There was a fairly large American expatriate community. I lived in a large apartment building in the area of Manila called Makati and the apartment building had people from all different countries: there were other American diplomats living in this building, diplomats from other countries, business people. The person who lived right above me was Imelda Marcos. I used to see Mrs. Marcos in the elevator from time to time; I lived on the 44<sup>th</sup> floor and she lived on the 45<sup>th</sup> floor. When she was running for election to the Philippine congress in 1998, her big campaign bus was parked out in front of the Pacific Plaza, as the building was called.

I went to a church that had a lot of Filipino members, so I interacted a lot with Filipinos. That was one of the things that I enjoyed very much about the Philippines. I think because the Philippines had been a U.S. colony for basically fifty years and we had continued to maintain a very close relationship with the Philippines, there were close relations between the U.S. and the Philippines on a people-to-people level as well as on an official level. Many Filipinos had studied in the United States or had family members in the United States and they spoke English well. There was, I think, a pretty easy rapport between American’s and Filipinos.



*Q: I've never served in the Philippines but one of the things I've heard was that sometimes the American diplomats got sort of engulfed or overly embraced by the powerful families and really didn't get out to the non-powerful family areas and all that.*

MORRIS: That certainly was true for a number of reasons. In the Philippines, the powerful families were very important: the Aquino family, for example, was a very powerful family that owned an immense amount of land in the Philippines. Members of the rich and important families held many of the key positions in government, in business, in the media, in every facet of Philippine life, so they were our natural interlocutors in our daily work. They also spoke English well and were used to dealing with Americans. It was particularly difficult to meet other Filipinos if one did not speak Tagalog. As PAO, I was very thankful for my contacts with the academic and media communities because they enabled me to meet many Filipinos.

*Q: By the time you left in 1998 was it? Had things changed at all politically or not?*

MORRIS: Getting back to politics, I think I mentioned at the beginning that democracy was still a kind of fragile concept in the Philippines. As we were moving toward the elections, there was a lot of concern about who was going to replace Fidel Ramos, who had been quite a good leader and also very favorable toward the United States. He was barred from running again by the Philippine constitution, but one of the things that he kept talking about was that maybe there should be a change of the Philippine constitution so that he could run for another term. Of course, it was kind of a delicate dance for us when we were asked to comment on this. Our response was, "This is really an internal matter for the Philippines to decide, but all parties should respect the constitution of the Philippines and we strongly support Philippine democracy". Ultimately that didn't happen; Ramos didn't move forward with trying to change the constitution.

They had an election and it was a fascinating experience to be in the Philippines during an election because their election campaigns are very lively. Campaign rallies were really more like shows, with music and singing and dancing and everything else along with the campaign speeches. One of the candidates that was especially good at this was Joseph Estrada, who had been a movie star and his persona in the movies was that of the champion of the little guy, somebody who would always fight for the working man, for the peasant, to help them get what they needed, their just desserts and their rights in Philippine society. Basically he ran almost as his movie character and people seemed to identify him very much with the persona that he had had in the movies. He was elected as the president of the Philippines. He was someone who had not had extensive education and had not had much preparation for being the president of a large country – even at that time the Philippines had over 70 million people. He served as mayor of San Juan, a municipality of Manila, at one point and he was Fidel Ramos' Vice President. At any rate, he was elected, and, of course, as we all know now his presidency was not successful; there was a lot of corruption and other problems from the start. Finally, he was deposed, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was pardoned by his successor, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. But it was fascinating to be there during this election campaign.

*Q: How did you find your staff in the public diplomacy side both American and Filipino?*

MORRIS: On the American side, there was a cultural affairs officer, assistant cultural affairs officer, information officer, assistant information officer (that position was eliminated by USIA during my tour) and I had an American secretary as well. It wasn't a terribly large staff but they were a good staff, very hard working and talented Foreign Service officers. The Filipino staff were by and large very good and just absolutely delightful to work with; they were very nice, hard working and dedicated. Of course, I also had the privilege of working with the head of our Fulbright Commission who didn't report to me directly because he was the head of a binational commission (reporting to the Commission Board) but, nonetheless, we worked very closely together on the Fulbright program and he was a wonderful and very capable person to work with. They were a very fine staff.

*Q: Well I can't remember exactly but President Clinton, had he gotten into Monica that's not the term...*

MORRIS: No.

*Q: Had the Monica Lewinsky affair taken place at this point?*

MORRIS: No, I think that was, if I recall correctly, that was a bit later.

*Q: But he was having problems with Congress?*

MORRIS: Oh yes.

*Q: Very hostile. Did you have problems explaining it?*

MORRIS: When I was in Thailand, of course, that's when we had the furlough, as you may recall, when basically much of the government was shut down. There were actually some people on the embassy staff who were furloughed and that had an impact on us because the second furlough was right at the end of the Christmas holidays when students, and there were many, many Thai students, I think well over 20 thousand, many of whom had come back for the Christmas holidays, and they needed to get back to their universities. Of course, they were not able to get back because there weren't enough visa officers to take care of their visas. It had a real impact on our relationships in Thailand and I'm sure that was the case in the Philippines also, but I wasn't in the Philippines yet. We didn't have that particular problem.

The other thing, of course, that happened during that time was the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

*Q: How did that hit the Philippines?*

MORRIS: The Philippines was quite fortunate in some ways. The perceived truth at the time—and I think it probably was true—was that because the Philippines wasn't as well developed and perhaps not quite so well integrated into the world economic and financial system as a country like Thailand was, the financial crisis didn't seem to affect the Philippines quite as badly, particularly not at first. So in some ways the Philippines did not suffer quite so badly. Nonetheless, that was a very difficult period, I think certainly for the whole region.

**G. EUGENE MARTIN**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Manila (1996-1999)**

*A Specialist in Chinese Affairs and a speaker of Chinese, Mr. Martin spent the major part of his career dealing with matters relating to China, both in Washington and abroad. His overseas assignments included Hong Kong, Taipei, Huangzhou (formerly Canton), Beijing, Manila and Rangoon. His Washington assignments also concerned China and the Far East. Mr. Martin was born in Indiana of Missionary parents and was raised in the US. and India. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo College and Syracuse University. Mr. Martin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.*

*Q: After Guangzhou, in 1996, you were off to the Philippines. What were you doing there?*

MARTIN: I went to the Philippines as the DCM. Coming up on the end of my tour in Guangzhou in the summer of '96, I noted there were two DCM-ships opening that summer. One was in Seoul, and one was in Manila. Having been in Manila, I thought maybe it'd be worthwhile taking a look at something new, although Manila was obviously of interest. I went to Seoul and had a good interview with Ambassador James Laney. I did not get that job which is probably just as well since I did not have any background in Korea, nor the language. I got the Manila job with John Negroponte instead. I fit right back into Manila very easily and was there from 1996 until 1999.

*Q: What was the situation when you got to Manila in '96?*

MARTIN: The situation had changed dramatically. I had left in mid-1990, six months after the December 1989 coup attempt; a couple weeks after the Baguio earthquake, which had destroyed much of the hill station of Baguio and other towns in northern Luzon; and a year before Mount Pinatubo, which had buried much of Zambales Province, Clark Air Base and parts of Subic under ash and lahar. A year later, in 1992, the Philippine senate had voted to not renew the base agreement. The U.S. Air Force had actually evacuated Clark because of the volcano, but Subic was closed in the fall of '92, leaving no U.S. military presence in the Philippines except for the attaches and JUSMAG in the Embassy. So when I came back in '96, it was really quite a different situation.

*Q: I take it, in a way, certainly from the diplomatic perspective, this must have been a relief, wasn't it?*

MARTIN: My personal belief was that our bases had tipped the balance of U.S.-Philippine bilateral relations totally out of alignment. Everything we did diplomatically, economically or culturally was seen as being in support of our security military presence. Our bilateral relations were dominated by the bases. So in many ways I think it was useful that the bases left. The navy,

of course, complained that it might as well scuttle the fleet and fall back to San Diego because it would never be able to operate in the western Pacific again. Fortunately, it found a way to do so. It is a little bit more complicated, and the sailors, I think, all missed Olongapo liberty; but other than that, the U.S. Navy has been able to survive in the Pacific. The post-9/11 U.S. military return to the Philippines and its counter-terrorism activities is a whole different story.

*Q: But those are limited so it's not the same thing.*

MARTIN: The troops are not permanently based in the Philippines.

When I returned to the Philippines in 1996, the mood of the country was very different from when I left in the summer of 1990. At that time, six months after the coup attempt in late '89, Cory Aquino was still president, and the economic outlook and the country's mood was quite pessimistic. There was a sense that Cory, despite being a personable and charismatic leader, did not have a vision or a program for the country, which everybody could support.

When I came back in '96, Fidel "Eddie" Ramos had been elected president in 1992 and his leadership and programs had turned the country around in so many ways. There was a dynamism, optimism, and sense of progress; of serious problems being addressed that had not been in the Philippines before. So it was a more positive atmosphere.

The problems were still there. A tremendous number of people still had to go overseas, as migrant workers, to earn a living. The population still continued to boom, without a corresponding increase in job opportunities. Environmental degradation of the country proceeded, as people cut down what little forests were left in the country.

But in general, people felt the Philippines was beginning to get its act together. It was doing much better in terms of economic growth, up to around three something percent a year, certainly better than negative growth. The political structure, of course, had not changed very much as the oligarchs still ran the country.

*Q: What is your impression of the Philippine Congress?*

MARTIN: The Congress continued to be a colorful institution. Members are great at seeking publicity through hearings on nearly any subject. There's never a shortage of laws. The problem is that the country is "overlawed" but the laws are not enforced. Senators are elected nationwide. So all 24 of them have the same nationwide constituency as the president, and feel that they are as good as, if not better than, the president. Elections are really a popularity contest. People with national name recognition tend to get elected. They are either from old, well-known families or media, sports or film stars. It would be like Katie Couric, Diane Sawyer, or Michael Jordan running for the Senate because everybody knows who they are and would vote for them.

The House of Representatives tends to be parochial. Members are influential figures in their provinces or municipalities, and focus on getting the pork for their districts. Many are from the old families that have been the politicians in the Philippines for decades, if not centuries. You look back at the Philippine-American War, back in the early 1900s, and some of the families that

were involved in politics a hundred years ago are still in politics.

*Q: Did you see any change or dent in the oligarchy of these old names, these families*

MARTIN: I think the major change is the growth of the Filipino-Chinese oligarchs. While the Overseas Chinese, mostly from Fujian Province, have long been commercially active, since independence they have captured much of the retail commercial market. The fastest growing sector of the economy seems to be shopping malls, owned by the Sy family, which tap into the massive amount of money remitted by the Filipino diaspora.

There is a growing middle class which is increasingly important politically and economically. But it is too small to have much of an impact beyond day-to-day business. The problem, I think, is the great mass of poor people, both in rural areas as well as in the cities, and the rapid population growth. USAID has tried to provide family planning, counseling, advice and equipment, but the strong Catholic Church in the Philippines limits any kind of family planning.

*Q: As DCM, you're usually stuck with running the embassy, and Manila has always been, next to Mexico City, one of the three or four largest embassies. Had the departure of the military changed this at all, or was this still a huge embassy?*

MARTIN: The Embassy had changed from its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s. When I was there in the late '80s, the embassy probably had over 400 Americans, which was may not have been the largest in the world. I think Cairo was far larger because of an AID presence.

When I went back, we had shrunk probably to about 60 percent of that size, somewhere around 200 at most. Part of the reason was military, but mainly it was because of the security situation, the pollution, and the living environment. In the '50s, many agencies put their regional offices and people in Manila because it was an English speaking country and the life style was good and inexpensive. This had all changed by the late '70s and early '80s. The communist insurgency caused the security situation to deteriorate, the cost of living went up, the housing standards went down, and pollution, traffic, and other urban ills got worse. Many regional offices moved to Singapore or Bangkok mainly for security reasons.

So when I went back in '96, the size of the embassy was much smaller than it had been. The AID presence had shrunk considerably, from over 70 some Americans to somewhere around 20. The Veterans Affairs was still there. The military was smaller. The JUSMAG (we had quite a large JUSMAG previously) had shrunk since our FMS (Foreign Military Sales) relationships with the Philippines had shrunk as well after the bases left. As a result, we ended up with an excess of facilities. U.S. government owned property included the Chancery Compound with the Annex office building; the Seafront Compound, which contained staff apartments and townhouses, administrative offices, the club, pool, and other sports facilities, and a few other sites such as the military cemetery (the largest abroad). One of the main things that I worked on during my three years was to try to rationalize the offices we had, downsize excess facilities and move offices from commercial rentals into government owned property. USAID, the commercial and agricultural sections and the USIS library were in commercial office space. Unfortunately, those agencies and their Washington headquarters opposed moving into the Seafront compound, so the

government continued to pay premium rents while owned property was underutilized.

*Q: First let's talk about the ambassador, John Negroponte. How did he operate, and how did he fit into the Philippine context?*

MARTIN: John fit in well. Of course, he'd had Latin American experience, in Honduras as well as in Mexico and many people consider that the Philippines to be Asia's only Latin American country. As you know, the Philippines was a colony of Mexico, not of Spain, until Mexican independence in the early 1800s. In many ways, what John had experienced in Mexico was replicated in Manila, with many similar personalities. But John and my tours overlapped only about a month. I arrived in July and he left in August. In fact, I shortened my home leave in order to arrive early as John was due to leave.

I was chargé for about a month and a half before Tom Hubbard arrived and presented his credentials. Tom came from being the principal deputy assistant secretary in East Asian Affairs and had considerable East Asian experience, mostly in Northeast Asia but also as DCM in Kuala Lumpur and as DCM in Manila. So he, too, was a returnee. In fact, he and I overlapped in Manila in 1990 by a month. He left in '93 and came back in '96, so had been away only about three years. Both of us had Philippine experience, which was very useful, because we both were able to start right up without a learning curve.

*Q: How were relations at this point? Our military was out and it would seem that the fact that we had withdrawn would have given sort of ammunition to the nationalists who may have felt they were on a roll. Did this cause any dislocation in our relationships?*

MARTIN: No. In fact, the relationship was much better in my view because it had removed the burr under the saddle. The nationalists were much quieter. There wasn't really anything to attack anymore; and much to my pleasure, the press and the nationalists could no longer blame the Americans for everything that was going on, as was their wont previously. Occasionally old habits resurfaced but now they had to look to their own devices, structures, and institutions for a reason as to why things were not doing so well. But, as I said, the atmosphere was much more optimistic than when I had left, because Eddy Ramos had really turned the country around. He had a vision, a program and a plan that seemed to be working. People were more optimistic and happier. There was more foreign investment. There was more employment. Officials seemed to be focusing on national issues of poor infrastructure, air pollution, trash collection, and so forth.

*Q: Was there, in your estimation, a pronounced diminution in the interests in the United States in what happens to the Philippines?*

MARTIN: Very much so. We were very much off in left field or in outer space in many ways. We had few visitors; an occasional congressman or Hill staffer came by; Executive Branch policy-makers seldom came to the Philippines. CINCPAC was about the only real high-level visitor we'd get and then about once a year. The military still maintained a grudge about the Philippines. They said, "You threw us out, so we're not going to do anything for you." There was not a lot of contact back and forth.

One of the problems, of course, was that we did not have a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). So the military really couldn't send soldiers into the country without some legal safeguards. However, Ramos and the military were beginning to realize the AFP's skills and capabilities were being lost without joint exercises. Tom Hubbard and I spent much of our tours working on what we called a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), a SOFA-like agreement. We finally were able to complete it in 1999 before I left. It took a lot of effort and time to work through the old issues. Many Filipinos, not just the nationalists, were concerned about Americans coming in again through the back door to reestablish the bases and the old dependent if not colonial relationship. The frustration of working in the Philippines is high because one constantly has to exorcise these old ghosts and mindsets, which never are very far away. We have had a complex relationship over the last century with the Philippines. We came in to help rid them of the Spanish but stayed to steal their revolution by double crossing them. We even paid Spain to buy the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. These historical colonial legacies still remain and irritate our relationship, even though I think it's better without the military security relationship that we had during the bases era.

*Q: Were we trying to set a new tone? Was this something you and the ambassador were working on? And if you were, how would you go about it?*

MARTIN: Our tone was that we now had a normal relationship with the Philippines, on a more even level without the bases and security issues weighing down one end of the relationship. Our focus was on economic development, on social programs. USAID was still active. We tried to get as much money as we could out of AID for the Philippine program. We still had an active economic relationship. American investment had gone up considerably. We were still the largest investor in the Philippines, mostly from our historical legacy, and we worked on various ways to increase U.S. investment by improving the investment climate. We spent time with the (Philippine) Congress working on legislation to improve the tax base for investors, improve the tariff bases, customs relationships, regulatory system etc.

The consular relationship continued to be a positive yet nettlesome problem. Manila is one of the major visa mills of East Asia in terms of visas - controversial, emotional, unrelenting.

*Q: I would imagine this would be exacerbated by almost a panicky feeling. I mean the people who were dependent on American military would say, "Now it's time to get the family out!"*

MARTIN: That had pretty much dissipated by the time I returned in 1996 but I don't think it had been a big issue. There was some concern, obviously, right as the bases were closing. People did not know what was going to happen. Olongapo was a shadow of its former self. The Philippine government had taken over the former bases and actually had done quite well with Subic. Olongapo mayor Dick Gordon had become the chairman of the Subic Bay Special Economic Zone. Fed Ex had established its Asian hub at the Cubi Air Strip, and was doing quite well. A number of companies had opened export processing operations -- Acer Computers from Taiwan, Thomson communications from France, several Japanese companies. Clark air field was looking to do the same sort of thing but Clark was a very different situation, and did not get off the ground as well as Subic had. The situation has corroded around the edges since then, but I think that they were doing quite well at that particular juncture.

The consular problem was that almost every Filipino has a relative of some degree in the States, and they all want to visit them. The problem of non-returnees was apocryphal in many ways, and the problem we had was being able to help the consular officers treat everybody in a patient and polite way. This was difficult sometimes with the pressure, and endless lines of applicants, and the willingness of applicants to stretch the truth if not out and out lie in order to get a visa.

*Q: One of the problems that was certainly apparent during the Marcos regime was how many of the officers of the embassy were absorbed into the higher reaches of Philippine society, which left them open to pressures, and temptations.*

MARTIN: True but consular officers were wined and dined less than they perhaps had been previously or in other consular posts in which I have been. The leadership of the consular section was very much incorporated into the society and had a social life. Fortunately while I was there, we had a stolid, honest, and upright Consul General, Kevin Herbert, who made a big difference. Kevin was terrific. He understood all the pitfalls, and he understood he was following in the footsteps of previous Consuls General who had not finished their tours.

The media was always willing to carry stories of dissatisfied visa applicants. Every time somebody was treated more abruptly or impatiently than they thought they warranted, the press would have a field day, saying, "The Americans are insulting and denigrating Filipinos, blah, blah, blah." And then we had to do damage control.

But generally, the consular section worked very well under a great deal of pressure and a tremendous workload. We were constantly trying to find ways in which we could improve the operation, to streamline it, to make it more efficient. At one point, we had problems with people cutting the line, and getting around others. At another time, we had a squatter village outside the consulate, a line of applicants two blocks down the road. Some people were in line two or three days, waiting to get in. Fortunately, we were able to change it to an appointment system, which seemed to work out. The problem with the appointment system was that some appointments were three to six weeks out. That made it difficult for people who came up with last minute needs to travel, but these seemed to be worked out over time.

*Q: When one looks at Asia, the Philippines sort of stands off to one side. They don't seem to be integrated with the rest of Southeast Asia. Everyone talks about Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand but not the Philippines as they just don't seem to get involved.*

MARTIN: When I was there the first time in the 1980s, I used to joke that psychologically, the Philippines was not in Asia, but about 20 miles off of Catalina Island. They knew more about California politics and what was going on in California than they knew what was going on in Indonesia or Malaysia. And they cared not a wit about what was happening in their Asian neighbors. They did not feel a part of the region. This had changed by my second tour. Partly, it was due to Ramos' policies of closer integration with ASEAN; partly it was our withdrawal from the bases, and partly it was just that they realized that they had to begin to join and participate in ASEAN and the rest of Asia. They were much more engaged in, a part of and active in Southeast Asian activities, diplomacy, regional issues. Their focus on the Asia-Pacific region was all for



the better.

*Q: APEC - the Clinton administration paid quite a bit of attention to this, didn't they?*

MARTIN: Very much so. President Clinton was the one that made it a summit. It had started out as a series of meetings at the ministerial level, until Seattle where Clinton elevated it to a meeting of the leaders of the economies, as the participants were called, since Taiwan and Hong Kong were members and could not be called countries. It was Manila's turn to host the annual meeting in 1996. We had quite a circus.

*Q: How did it go?*

MARTIN: It was successful in the sense that the meetings came off, and the participants seemed to have obtained the results they wanted. Participating "economies" had grown to the point where, when it was in Manila, there were 18 members. It's subsequently grown, I think, to 21 as they've added a few more. But it was a big, big show!

In fact, one of the reasons I came out early, in July, was to start planning for the November APEC meetings. August, September, and October were focused on APEC more than anything else. We had a lot of TDY (temporary duty) people coming in to help. Even with a large embassy like Manila, we still needed a considerable number of TDY people to help us with administrative details and to coordinate support facilities. I was the overall control officer for the meetings. I was also the president's control officer, which made it difficult. It was a bad choice being both, because once the advance team arrived, I had to focus almost totally on the president's schedule, rather than the overall APEC schedule. So I ended up doing both. But things went smoothly. We had the president, Mrs. Clinton, four cabinet officers, and several hundred others from Washington. It was quite an operation.

But it worked out well. The embassy staff turned to and did a good job with everybody pulling together and getting things organized. Almost all other, normal, work in the embassy stopped, particularly for the last two weeks before and the week of. The Filipinos did a good job. They were good hosts. They had a number of events which were rather humorous. They held the leaders' meeting at Subic so as to show off the Subic Economic Zone. This had started in Seattle, when they had the meetings in Seattle, and then Clinton had the leaders' meeting a boat trip away on one of the islands in the sound. Since then, hosts have arranged a remote location for the leaders' meetings. Flying up to Subic and back got complicated as it required us to establish and staff two operations centers, two control rooms, and all that. But it did work out, and I think it was quite successful.

One of the things that the president did was to come to the embassy and meet the Embassy staff in the ballroom of the Chancery. That gave all those working behind the scenes a chance to at least see him. Hillary Clinton came with him but stayed only about 13 hours before heading for Australia. She spoke to an audience of about 13,000 women from all over the Philippines, the largest foreign group she had addressed at the time.

Presidential trips are unique events in an FSO's career. I am always amazed at how imperial our

leadership has become on these trips. They take everything but the kitchen sink, and maybe that too! Actually, I didn't notice a food taster but there may have been one in the crowd, particularly after Bush 41's stomach upset in Japan. The White House Communications Agency and Secret Service takes over the hotel for days if not weeks in advance of the President's arrival. And there is always the advance team, and the pre-advance, and the pre-pre-advance. It goes on forever, and never quite ends. But of all the visits I've done, the Manila APEC visit was not too bad. It was a lot of work and endless detail, but it worked out fairly well.

*Q: What was your impression of President Ramos the time you were there, of how he operated?*

MARTIN: He was hands-on, very much of a commander given his military background. He assembled a good staff who reported to him, enabling him to keep his fingers on the pulses of the nation. Personally it was nice, because during my first tour in Manila, as the pol/mil officer, I had known Ramos when he was the chief of staff and then defense secretary. The first time I ran into Ramos after my return, he said, "Well Gene, welcome back! It's nice to see you again!" To have the president of the country say that was a good way to start one's assignment. I had very good access to the palace - not to him all the time, obviously - but to his staff. That certainly helped doing the APEC planning the first few months, and it continued through the rest of his term. The Department of Foreign Affairs was also helpful. Many people with whom I had worked previously were still there, in higher positions, having moved up from the assistant secretary to the undersecretary level. Such personal contacts are always valuable. Ramos' protocol chief, who had been in the Defense Department when I was there the first time, was now his private social secretary at the palace. It proved the importance of making and keeping personal relationships with counterparts.

I think Ramos was an effective president because he set the tone. He had a sense of direction, a sense of a mission and what his goals were, and he communicated this well. A number of things he did got a little over the top but I understood his motives. One was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence from Spain in 1898. He wanted to highlight that the Philippines had been the first republic in East Asia, despite our having moved in behind Spain for another 48 years. So Ramos planned a big centennial celebration, and spent a lot of money, which subsequently turned out to be riddled with corruption. They created a centennial village at Clark Air Base, a whole community in which different countries put up pavilions to show the history of their bilateral relations with the Philippines. We participated in many of the centennial activities including quite a successful pavilion at Clark.

*Q: Were there any residual Marcos groups sitting around pouting or being a problem?*

MARTIN: When I was in Manila the first time, we used to talk in biblical terms about the earthquake, fire, and pestilence. Shortly before I left, the Baguio earthquake occurred. The year after I left, we had the fire when Mount Pinatubo erupted. And when I came back, the pestilence had returned in the form of Imelda Marcos. We used to joke that the Philippines had to face all these biblical catastrophes.

Imelda was certainly around. She had been elected to the House of Representatives, and was very visible around town with all of her jewelry, but at the same time saying how poor she was,

and how difficult life was now. There were still a few Marcos's kids around. I did go up to Marcos' home province of Ilocos Norte where she kept Ferdinand's body under glass. She had refused to bury Ferdinand when she brought his body back from Hawaii because she wanted to have a state funeral and bury him in the national cemetery, the Manila counterpart of Arlington Cemetery. The government had refused her wish as it did not want to create a rallying point and monument for Marcos supporters. So Imelda built a mausoleum in his home province where his body was on display. It was quite a bizarre, morbid monument. I think she may have copied the mausoleums of Lenin, Mao and Ho Chi Min.

The surviving Marcos family members continued to dominate Ilocos Norte politics. Daughter Imee was a Congresswoman, son Bongbong (Ferdinand, Jr.) was Governor, and various members of her family, the Romualdezes, also were still active in politics. But other than making sure that none of the court cases against them succeeded, and the hunt for their hidden wealth was obstructed, they weren't a big political factor anymore. The country had moved on beyond that.

*Q: How about Cory Aquino? Was she a factor in all this?*

MARTIN: Cory was still active, more in society than in politics. She had supported Ramos' run for president and continued to be a supporter of his until his last year in office (1998) when she took a lead in opposing his effort to change the constitution so he could have a second term. Other than that, she was not active politically.

*Q: The man who succeeded Ramos, wasn't he a movie star*

MARTIN: Joseph Estrada was a movie star. He liked to say that he was the Philippine version of Ronald Reagan. He was a very colorful character.

*Q: Was he on the scene when you were there?*

MARTIN: He was the Vice President during the Ramos administration. In the Philippines, like California and perhaps a few other states, the president and the vice president are elected individually, not on a single party ticket. So Estrada was of a different party than Ramos, and they did not spend much time together. Nor did he spend a lot of time on government. He had quite a colorful life. Dr. Loi [Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito Estrada] was his first wife (or "Tai tai," as the Chinese would call the number one wife), and then he had several mistresses in different houses around town. He was doing quite well financially from various uncertain sources and was quite a man about town. He was also, officially, in charge of the anticrime task force. The crime situation in the Philippines was quite bad, particularly against the Chinese. Chinese residents, usually wealthy businessmen, were frequently kidnapped and all too often killed after the ransom was paid. Many people believed, I think with some validity, that much of the crime, much of the kidnapping, was being carried out by off duty or former policemen and soldiers. So there was an unusual connection with those charged with providing security. This affected investment from overseas and mainland Chinese who weren't about to come invest in the Philippines. We had good friends in Hong Kong who would not come visit us in Manila because of the crime situation.

Estrada, whose nickname was “Erap,” the reverse of “pare” (which means the masses or the people), had built his movie image as a man of the masses. His movies were of a swashbuckling good guy who always defeated the bad guys, usually with his fists or other physical means. He might be compared to John Wayne or Clint Eastwood characters. He didn’t do much as vice president, but he did run for president in 1998 and won.

*Q: How was our reporting on Estrada? Was it reserved? Or were we saying, “Oh, my God?”*

MARTIN: I think a little of both. We kept in touch with him. I saw him from time to time. Tom and I both visited with him. Initially, he was a little cool to us because he didn’t want to be seen as too close to the Americans. But as he began to run for president, he reached out and invited us to dinner several times, and wanted to get together. One of his aides kept in pretty close touch to us so that we knew what he was doing and we had a channel to communicate with him. We reported on what he was doing but initially, nobody thought he had a chance of winning. As we got closer to the election, it looked like he had a better chance, and in fact, he did win.

*Q: You were still there when he came into office.*

MARTIN: Oh, yes.

*Q: Yes. Did we see this as not signifying good things for the Philippines? How did business people view him?*

MARTIN: I think we all were a little dubious as to what sort of an administration he’d have; whether or not this was going to be something that was going to continue the upward track that Ramos had initiated. We’d been quite pleased with Ramos. He had done well until toward the end of his term when he explored the idea of staying on for a second term. Under the 1987 post-Marcos Philippine constitution, presidents are limited to one six-year term. So they’re not allowed to run again sequentially.

There were a lot of rumors around town that Ramos wanted to run again, that maybe there would be a coup that would allow him to do it, that he would try to force through a constitutional amendment that would allow a second term, etc. The active Manila rumor mill worked overtime. Cory Aquino and Cardinal Sin got involved and held big rallies against Ramos. So there was a political split there (although Cardinal Sin had opposed Ramos’ election in 1992 because Ramos was Methodist not Catholic). The rallies caused a lot of heat and emotion around town. My assessment is that Ramos probably did toy with the idea of running again by amending the constitution. I don’t think he ever toyed with the idea of a coup, but his military background, his involvement in the overthrow of Marcos, kept many people on edge.

This did not help the investment climate, particularly right after the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis. The Philippines was not as badly affected by the crisis as neighbors Thailand and Indonesia or South Korea but the economic takeoff Ramos’ had helped begin slowed. One comment was that the Philippine takeoff had not gained much altitude so the landing was not as hard as others who had been flying higher. In the end, Ramos wisely backed off from his effort

to stay in office, the election was held, and Estrada was elected. But Cory and Ramos had come to loggerheads and the bad blood has lasted.

*Q: How did we respond to the Estrada inauguration? Were we reserved? Who went? Were we saying, "Okay. He's been elected. Let's really try to work with this guy and hope he'll be on the right track." Or was it a matter of sitting back and saying, "Well, they elected him, and let's see how it goes," and "We're an observer."*

MARTIN: We were forward leaning. We said, "Let's work with him. Let's see if we can do it. We figured it would be a big change from Ramos, as it was. He was a bit of an unknown even though we'd been in touch with him. He told us he wanted to have good relations with us, and was anxious to work closely with the embassy and the U.S. We were not sure how it was going to work out, but we were willing to give him a chance and work as closely as we could.

*Q: How did we view the insurgency? There were various insurgencies, weren't there?*

MARTIN: Oh, yes, almost as many as Burma, not quite! Ramos had reached a peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao, headed by Nur Misuari. That rebellion had been going on for many years, and the 1996 agreement raised hopes the conflict would be resolved. In fact, the second month I was there, in September of 1996, I was still the chargé, so attended the peace agreement signing at Malacañang Palace. The peace agreement called for the MNLF to end its revolt and for Nur Misuari to become the governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), consisting of several provinces in Mindanao. The agreement provided for a four-year program to set up this autonomous area in which the Muslims would begin to run some of their own internal affairs, begin to improve the livelihood of their people and provide alternate employment for the former MNLF fighters. USAID was quite involved. We spent some time down in Mindanao, starting new agricultural and livelihood programs for the former combatants.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) a more religiously oriented splinter group of the MNLF, refused to go along with the peace agreement that Misuari had negotiated with the government and continued to conduct operations.

In addition to that, the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which we now know a lot more about, was holed up on Basilan Island, off of Zamboanga. They weren't as active in my early days, but subsequently, they became violent bandits who kidnapped people for ransom.

In addition, remnants of the New People's Army (NPA) of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) continued to operate in a number of provinces but was much less a threat to the government than it had been during Marcos' years. CPP leaders were still running the NPA from exile in the Netherlands but internal splits and purges had reduced the New People's Army to a much smaller group kept alive by banditry and revolutionary "taxes.

*Q: Did we see any connections with terrorist groups anywhere else?*

MARTIN: Oh, there were indeed! Ramzi Yousef and others plotted in December 1994 to blow

up American jumbo planes across the Pacific. They had a trial run in which a plotter took a Philippine Airlines flight from Manila to Cebu, planted a bomb under a seat before getting off in Cebu, and the plane went on to Japan. The bomb exploded over Okinawa, killing the passenger in the seat and blowing a hole in the side of the plane. Fortunately, the plane was able to land in Okinawa without crashing. The Philippine police did some good work investigating the plot, and tracked down the plotters. Ramzi Yousef escaped to Pakistan, but Pakistan eventually turned him over to us, and he's now in jail here. But they had quite a cell going on in the Philippines. Osama bin Laden's brother Khalifa lived in Mindanao for a while, married a Filipina and had a family there so came in and out periodically. So there were a lot of connections.

After Desert Storm, the first war against Iraq, two Iraqi "diplomats" tried to bomb the USIS library. However, the bomb exploded early, killing one bomber and wounding the other. Despite our effort to have access to the other bomber, the Philippine government expelled him. The terrorist threat remained during my tour, with the ambassador and me receiving enhanced security protection. I found the protection understandable but not very logical. Tom Hubbard and my official cars were heavily armored black Cadillac. I often told the RSO (Regional Security Officer) at the Embassy that terrorists had a 50% chance of getting one of us since these were the only two black Cadillacs in the country. The New Zealand ambassador offered to sell me his armored gray Mercedes, which blended beautifully into the Manila scene, for a reasonable price. The RSO did not agree since, although the car had been armored by the same company used by the State Department's Diplomatic Security (DS), it had not been done under a DS contract. So Tom and my black limousines continued to stand out in Manila traffic with our Philippine National Police escort in the front seat. On weekends, I periodically drove our own car to church or shopping without the escort.

*Q: With this stream of people going to the United States, was there a strong Philippine lobby in the United States, like the Greek lobby, and obviously the Jewish lobby? I just don't hear about the Philippine lobby.*

MARTIN: No. Part of the reason, and I don't say this in a pejorative sense, is that Filipino society is a fractured society. They don't agree with each other much of the time, and the Philippine-American community in the States tends to be broken down along provincial or local lines. So you have the Cebuanos from Cebu; you have the people from Cavite; you have the Ilocanos from northern Luzon. They get along in a general sense, but they don't talk or work together. In fact, there are often separate associations of people from the same province or university because "everyone wants to be in charge" and not join a group headed by someone else. So the Philippine community tends to be fragmented and doesn't come together to exert influence. I think one of the things that they've tried to do recently is to try to establish coalitions between various components of the Philippine community and become more politically involved, because they are a very large community. They could be quite powerful if they could work together.

But this is the problem in the Philippines, of course - that they've never really work together, never seem able to coalesce behind one program, one idea, one leader and get their work teams together.

One issue that we did spend a lot of time on was veterans' benefits. There were many Philippine veterans, of course, who fought with us during World War II and before. They felt, and I think correctly, that the U.S. government discriminated against them after the war because they were given 50 cents on the dollar - U.S. army veterans received a dollar in benefits, the Philippine veterans got 50 cents. The government's logic was that the Philippine cost of living was lower than that in the U.S. and since the exchange rate after the war was 2 pesos per dollar, a 50% benefit would not be out of line in terms of the standard of living in the Philippines. But it was very unfair, particularly since many of the veterans were given the right to move to the U.S. but were still limited to the 50% benefit. The Embassy received a lot of pressure to persuade the U.S. Congress to revise the benefits to give Filipino veterans equal rights. The only (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs office overseas was in Manila in the embassy. It distributed millions of dollars each month in veterans benefit checks as well as ran a VA clinic for the veterans and dependents. It seems fair to me to give Filipino veterans living in the U.S. equal VA benefits, particularly since there are fewer of them every year.

We had a big American cemetery in Manila, the largest overseas cemetery run by the American Battle Monuments Commission [ABMC]. It's a beautiful cemetery, but that took a lot of work. There were a number of internal labor and squatter problems which I dealt with.

In the South China Sea, the Philippine government in 1995 suddenly discovered that the Chinese had put up what the Chinese call fishing shelters on Mischief Reef in the Spratly Island chain. While I was there, the Chinese had "repaired" the fishing shelter, which had previously been constructed out of cardboard and lumber. Now it was a solid cement foundation with a helicopter port on top and what looked like fortifications on the corners. The Philippines got very exercised about that. We supported their effort to resolve the issues in the ASEAN regional forum but made it clear we did not consider the Spratly Islands to be within the boundaries or definition of "metropolitan Philippines" as described in our Mutual Defense Treaty. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-California) came for a visit and strongly supported the Philippine position against China. He asked the embassy to arrange for him to go scuba diving in the Spratly Islands. We said we had no facilities to be able to do that. He was able to finagle his way onto a Philippine Air Force C-130, which flew circles around Mischief Reef and some of the other sandbars while he took pictures to make his political point.

Environmental degradation was a continuing problem. The Peace Corps, which had been in the Philippines for many years, worked with USAID on coastal resource management, trying to improve the fisheries, cut down on dynamite fishing (that is a problem in the Philippines) and educate fishing communities on sustainable fishing techniques.

We had a Peace Corps volunteer (PCV) who was killed. He just happened to be on a fully loaded jeepney which was stopped by bandits - essentially a few local thugs that wanted to rob the passengers. The PCV and other passengers were lined up along the side of the road, and shot. So the volunteer was one of eight or nine people killed, including women and children. They caught the killers and sentenced them after a lengthy trial, but it brought back memories of the concerns the embassy had during my first tour in the Philippines over threats to PCVs from communist insurgents which resulted in all PCVs being forced to leave the country. Fortunately the quick

identification and arrest of these killers indicated it was only a badly handled robbery.

*Q: Were there any other issues that you were involved with there?*

MARTIN: As you noted earlier, a DCM's job is generally to run the embassy, particularly a large one. I took that as my primary duty but Tom Hubbard made sure I was included in much of what he did. I joined him on many of his calls and sat in on his meetings with visitors. But I spent much of my time keeping in touch with the diverse offices within the embassy. I preferred the "walk about" management style and tried to visit every embassy office at least once a month. I made it a point to know where people worked, what they were doing and how their morale was. I was a frequent visitor to the consular section where most of our first tour Junior Officers (JOs) were assigned. They were the public face of the Embassy and their moods and attitudes made a big difference on how the embassy was perceived by the public. Manila is such a visa factory with constant pressures on officers to make numerous, quick decisions that JOs often became cynical and negative about the Philippines. To counter that, I organized quarterly evening sessions for JOs (and others if interested) on other aspects of the Philippines - history, culture, literature, opinions, etc. I believe this helped officers get a bigger picture of their environs and perhaps reduce the frustrations of an endless stream of visa applicants.

As this was my second tour in Manila, I was fortunate to have numerous contacts in the Filipino community and government who included my wife and me in social events; at times too many. We found ourselves included in many evening events attended mostly by ambassadors. This gave me an opportunity to liaise with the diplomatic corps, which often approached the U.S. embassy for information as we generally had more substantive access and resources to track developments. However, I found even much smaller diplomatic missions had insights on personalities and events which we did not. I focused on maintaining contacts with the Chinese Embassy, mostly from personal interest but also because China was becoming a much more active player in Southeast Asia and its younger, more outgoing diplomats were more engaged with Filipino society and media.

One final soiree before I left at the end of my assignment was off the charts. When President Estrada came to the Embassy's 4th of July party, I mentioned that I was leaving the following week. He immediately said I should let him give me a farewell dinner. I thanked him for his kind offer but said all my evenings were already committed, including a dinner Ambassador Hubbard planned to give me the day before I left. Shortly after he left the reception, an aide called back to say the President wanted the ambassador's dinner moved to Malacañang Palace. Obviously, Tom Hubbard conceded to the president's request. The palace then invited many of the senior officers of the embassy as well as most of the cabinet officials. The evening turned out to be almost on the level of a state dinner, with musicians, singers, dancers, speeches, etc. I was seated at the president's right hand and at the end of the dinner, he escorted me to the door and waited with me until my driver was able to jockey my car around the ambassador's which had been first in the queue. It was almost an embarrassing honor but I gather the ambassador received a similar farewell when he departed the following year.

I left Manila in July 1999 at the end of my second tour in the Philippines as the country was beginning a downward slide on the endless roller coaster that is Philippine politics and



governance. President Estrada, who had won a solid mandate from the non-elite masses in the May 1998 elections, was beginning to reveal his weaknesses. He showed little vision or ideas for addressing the nation's major problems - population, unemployment, deteriorating and inadequate infrastructure, pollution - while seeming to prefer late night counsels with close and somewhat shady advisors (cronies) over Blue Label Scotch. He remained open to U.S. embassy approaches but abused our consular section offer of cooperation for officials by applying for official visas for mistresses, girlfriends and hangers on. The elites, who had opposed his election, were increasingly alienated and muttering about Erap pulling the country down to ruin. The optimism Ramos had brought for six years was fading and, two years after I left, Estrada's vice president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, used public disquiet to orchestrate public street protests into a second EDSA movement which unconstitutionally removed Estrada from office.

*End of reader*