

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

MARGARET A. MURPHY

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: September 20, 1999
Copyright 2014 ADST*

[Note: This interview was not edited by Ms. Murphy]

Q: Today is the 20th of September, 1999. This is an interview with Margaret A. Murphy. The A stands for what?

MURPHY: Ann.

Q: Ann. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

MURPHY: Yes. I was born in Longview, Texas, which was the home of my paternal grandmother. I had two sisters, two older sisters. One who is 15 months older, the other 30 months older.

Q: Oh, boy.

MURPHY: First one was born in New Jersey, because that was where my parents were working at the time. The second one was born in Nebraska, which is where my maternal grandmother lived. And I fifteen months later was born in Longview where my paternal grandmother lived.

Q: Now, Longview is where in Texas?

MURPHY: Longview is east Texas; it's near Shreveport, Louisiana, about sixteen miles.

My sister was born in Omaha, Nebraska, where my maternal grandmother lived, my mother's mother. I was born in Longview where my father's mother lived.

Q: What about your parents?

MURPHY: Well, my father was a cook. He worked for Tom Dorsey as a matter of fact.

Q: Oh my goodness!

MURPHY: That's why he was, they were in New Jersey when my oldest sister was born.

Then...

Q: There was quite a, some pavilion or something? Tommy Dorsey played, there were big dance bands in, there in New Jersey.

MURPHY: You know I really don't know too much about it, what I do know is that he lived somewhere in Jersey, it wasn't exactly where my sister was born, she was born where the hospital was and I can't remember the name of that city. But my mother got pregnant I remember. At the point where I don't think he wanted them to have more children. So, they had Harriet. They stayed. And then, according to my sister who told me this recently, my other sister was about to be born. And so, since he wasn't interested in their having that many children, Tom Dorsey had his, my parents left. And they went, my sister was born, and I don't know what my father did in between, whether he stayed with Tommy Dorsey, my mother left and went to Nebraska or what. And unfortunately we weren't curious enough to ask those questions.

Q: No one ever does. Well, tell me about, were your mother and father together most of the time, or...?

MURPHY: Yes. We were very lucky in that, we had a two-parent family. We moved, after I was born, I know we were in Austin, Texas, for awhile. I think it was Austin. And then we went to Santa Barbara, California. Which is what I remember only. That's where I was raised.

Q: So, in Santa Barbara you were, how old were you when you got thereabout?

MURPHY: Maybe about one and a half. I think we left very shortly.

Q: You were born what year again?

MURPHY: I was born in 1940.

Q: So you're really been too young to remember World War II.

MURPHY: No, I don't remember much, other than some things that my sister has told us, that the time when a plane came down near Santa Barbara, my mother, her friends stood and cried as the plane was falling, thinking someone was dying.

Q: Yes. Well, what, when you recall it, how long were you in Santa Barbara?

MURPHY: Well, I was in Santa Barbara, I lived there my entire knowledgeable life. I left there when I graduated from high school. Went to college in the state of Washington. Whitman College, in Walla Walla, Washington. I would come home for the summers, so basically my entire education was in Santa Barbara. I had never changed schools at all anywhere along the line.

Q: What was family life like in Santa Barbara, when you began to know it?

MURPHY: Well, my father was a cook. And what I remember most was when he started his business as a caterer. Home next to us burned down, my father built a large, concrete structure which was a large kitchen. With barbecue pits in the back, cause he did barbecuing and he also did catering. Cater parties, people come to him for meals, Christmas turkeys or whatever at Christmastime. And he catered parties, along with my mother helping him, and other people.

Q: I was wondering, I mean as a caterer's kid, you must have gotten into passing peanuts and the equivalent thereof, or not?

MURPHY: Well, no.

Q: (laughter)

MURPHY: Only thing I remember, a couple of times that my father had things like a dog show or a flower show. And he would have favors around one of those, and I remember selling hot dogs once or twice. But I usually wasn't put to work, although I was only, I was the youngest of the three, but not that much younger. I was the one who was never put to work much. As most children do work, in the summers, we never worked, other than a couple of times helping my father do things like that.

Q: I see. What was school like?

MURPHY: Well, school was, first of all we were the black family, and there are not that many blacks in Santa Barbara.

Q: Particularly in that area.

MURPHY: Right. And so my life was a very mixed life. I remember when I was in third grade I had this one friend who was black and I only think about that now because I didn't have black friends after that. It wasn't as though there weren't blacks around, but my friends were the people who were in my classes, and so the people who were in my classes were white, primarily. And there were lots of Mexicans, but I didn't see any Mexican friends either. (laughter)

Q: So, at that point probably there weren't too many people from Asia, were there?

MURPHY: No, Japanese.

Q: Japanese.

MURPHY: One of my best friends was a Japanese girl, a girl I went to school with from the time I was in kindergarten through high school.

Q: What were your, let's stick to the elementary side first, do you recall what you were interested in, in school and outside of extracurricular activities?

MURPHY: Well, we were always fairly good students, pretty competitive. And we're in competitive classes, but what I do remember about elementary school is that I wasn't very good in math. My oldest sister likes to tell this story to pass on to her children. I was a very poor student in math. But when I reached fifth grade we had a teacher who was also a high school math teacher, and she taught us algebra, the basics of algebra. And taught us how math worked and I began to understand math. And I was very good in math after that. But before I couldn't figure out what they were talking about, they were talking about fractions. I didn't understand the basics of it, I couldn't remember the form they would teach us.

Q: This is always one of the great problems of education is getting children to understand the basics of math, once they do it's much easier. What about reading, do you recall sort of early books you were reading or what you liked to read?

MURPHY: Well, we'd go to the library always I remember as young children. We'd go to the library and go to the Mickey Mouse club, something like that that they had, or Donald Duck club, I don't remember what it was called. And the only book I can remember right now, cause we really enjoyed that book was the Boxcar Children. Which I thought was absolutely fascinating these children living in a boxcar; either they were abandoned by their parents or something and they were living in this boxcar.

Q: Ah yes, it's wonderful how these books come back to you. I always think of Santa Barbara as being a fairly affluent place. Was it at that time too, or how did you find it?

MURPHY: Yes, it was a much more charming city then than it is now, because now there's a lot of movie stars. Before it had a lot of wealthy people. And I always maintain Santa Barbara was a city of people. Of wealthy people and the people who serve them. And I was on the side of people who served them, my father being a cook. And it was pretty much that way, but it was not a divisive society of any type. There were about twelve elementary schools, there were only two junior high schools, one was more affluent than the other. By the time we got to high school, everybody was in the same high school. Well, there was a Catholic school as well, but much smaller. And most people went to the regular public school. And so you had very wealthy people, some of my friends were, and to this day are still very wealthy people. But we didn't make those kinds of distinctions, it was based upon the friends you had, the classes you were in. We had a Y club, for instance. And some of my friends were friends that had homes with swimming pools, and you'd go to their homes. My experience is one of being about the only black friend in this.

Q: How about in school, what were you active in?

MURPHY: Well, I was a good student, I think, and I was primarily active in the newspaper, and I was the editor of the paper. And my very best friend was my managing

editor. So I used to write editorials once a week. And I look at some of those.. (laughter) very preachy person I was.

Q: Now, when you were in high school, were you pointed towards anything or were your parents pointing you towards something?

MURPHY: Well, not really. I've had people say "Oh, your parents must have really encouraged you all to go to school because all your sisters went to college." And I said no, not really, look at my background. My father finished maybe about third or fourth grade, but he was very smart and very good in math and very proud of that. My mother, and I'm talking about parents who were quite old, my father was born in 1893, my mother in 1903. Yet my mother went through two years of college back in the twenties, which was a time when many blacks didn't go, and women, she spent two years at the University of Nebraska. Her sister was living in Lincoln, Nebraska. I guess we were just naturally competitive. The only thing I can remember my parents saying, my mother would say, do the best you can. That's all we expect of you, and my father would always say, "Well, you have to be better than everybody else, if you're going to succeed." I think he basically meant although he never said it that way. We always interpreted it "You have to be better than the person next to you, which is white." But my parents didn't teach any of that, they never used those terms. I remember that was the only push.

Q: Did race enter into anything?

MURPHY: To my knowledge, no, and that's a real embarrassment in a way because I'll tell you some other things that happened to me because I wasn't aware of the race issue. When I came back here, first of all, when I went to college. I was not aware at all of there being any problem. Turned out I went to a college, Whitman college, which is all white. I went there because I liked the picture on the front of the magazine they had sent out. That showed snow, and I had never seen snow and I thought that would be great. I could only afford to apply to two schools. The other school was in Los Angeles. I preferred to go further away from home, to go out where there was snow. Well, when I think back on it, my freshman roommate who I've just recently been in touch with again, what that school must have gone through to find somebody whose child would room with a black person. I'm sure I was a big surprise to them, even showing up there. And I never thought about that until very recently. And I don't know why it never occurred to me, that there must have been an issue. I'm quite aware of the issues now, but it never occurred to me the problem I must have been at the time when I applied to go there. I got a small scholarship or grant. It was a private school. I had no money at all, and my parents had no money to give me. Two sisters, one year ahead. The sister ahead of me did not take any money from the family. She said, "I'll do it on my own." She went to UCLA. My oldest sister, my father paid completely for her. She went to University of Nebraska, where my mother had gone. I think my father probably mentioned to the people at his bank, how he was sorry because I was a very good student, one of the top students at the school, that he was sorry he didn't have money to help me. Well, they had me apply for a scholarship loan, the Alexander scholarship loan. You could borrow as much money as you needed to go to school, with the obligation that you pay it back when and if you got the money, 'cause

it was truly a scholarship. And I can remember figuring out to the last penny, sixty cents for dinners on Sunday nights when the school didn't serve dinners. I really figured it down to the last penny. I cheated myself in that way, did not give myself anything other than a bare minimum, like I couldn't go to a movie and have dinner. I could do one or the other, that's how tightly I had budgeted it. My girlfriend and I had gone to work in this factory while we looked for jobs, had a hard time finding jobs. And probably some of the jobs they couldn't find were because I was black. But we weren't aware of that. She was white, neither one of us were aware of that, except that one job I applied for at Penney's, it was as a cashier, and they said, "Oh, we don't have a job as cashier but we do have a job ironing." Well, I don't like to iron, I was never good at ironing. See, I never had to do anything, I was the youngest. So I didn't have to do anything and I didn't know much about ironing. So we didn't get that job. We kept applying and finally, we decided we'd have to lie to get the job. We said we weren't going to college. But we figured if we didn't get these jobs and didn't get the money we weren't going to college. So we lied and got these jobs in this factory doing piece work, and it was wonderful. I did that same job every summer for the four years I was in college.

Q: Now, what type of factory was this?

MURPHY: It was a factory for producing electronic, or the equivalent of electronic equipment, in those days. They were tubes, basically then. And my job was doing this color coding, which was a great job, a job that one of the top people in the factory had and she was happy to be able to leave, take a full summer off. I would come in and take her place, after they learned that I would come back every year. She would take a full summer off. She'd wait till I got there because she didn't want anybody else to get her job. So I was no competition. And yet it was a paying job. I would work right through lunches. I was interested in making the money. So it was piece work, which is something that's not very respectable now but for me, a person who's going to college, I was happy.

Q: It allowed you to push ahead.

MURPHY: Push and do as much as I could, to make money. I've got off the subject now.

Q: No, no, I mean, cause I'm trying to capture slices of Americana, too, because I think later people who will be reading these accounts will want to know: Who are these people? Where did they come from? What was life like at that time? When you arrived at Walla Walla, the name of the school?

MURPHY: Whitman College.

Q: As Marcus Whitman?

MURPHY: It was named after Dr. Marcus Whitman, but it's not a religious school.

Q: Well now, other than the snow on the cover, can you describe Whitman College when you got there, and how it impressed you and how it worked?

MURPHY: My freshman roommate's parents invited me to come up to Oregon where they lived, near Eugene Oregon, and drive up with them. My freshman roommate's a reporter, her older sister, one year older, was already a student at Whitman College. And so, I took a bus up to Eugene, Oregon and drove with them to college. It was just a small campus. I was not aware enough of differences in people to be aware that I was the only black person there. I was always the only black person around in my classes so it never occurred to me. This is one reason I've gotten in touch with my freshman roommate to try to see from her, ask her what the perspective was and what people were thinking, really. That I wasn't aware of.

Q: It's interesting, there was sort of a period where, depending of course in which parts of the country and the people involved. I think the lines are much more, almost divisive today than they were earlier, depending on the society.

MURPHY: I think people were more aware of what's going on, even in California. I think things back here in the East are quite different anyway. They had open type of discrimination. In California, people lived in houses, we didn't have apartments. So it wasn't a question of someone renting you an apartment. Everybody had homes, you lived where you could afford to buy your home. So, it wasn't a question of you weren't allowed to buy here, well you couldn't afford to buy there. So it didn't arise in terms of jobs. I never thought about getting a job, before. My sisters, once my sister did some babysitting, my oldest sister. But the rest of us didn't. Maybe my parents didn't ask us, or we never thought about... maybe because the jobs were unavailable. But we never thought about it, in terms of...

Q: Well, I don't think there was that much push. I mean if you could possibly do it, I don't think young people were pushed to get jobs as they almost are today I think, there wasn't much fast food or types of work that require a sort of young and unskilled labor. What about, when you got to Whitman, did you have any idea what you wanted to do with your education?

MURPHY: I chose Whitman because I wanted a small, co-educational school and I was majoring in chemistry. So I started off as a chemistry major, and then I switched to math, cause I really liked the math teachers and liked the math subjects. And then a friend of mine said, "I'm going to be a Foreign Service officer." She was a good friend of mine, lived in the dorm, and I said, "Well, what's that?" I had no idea, I'd never heard of the term. She gave me a vague idea of what it was and she said, "I'm gonna study political science." I didn't even know what that was. Because for us it was social studies, or history. So she said, "Oh, you've gotta take this course, this professor is just fantastic, you know, you get all this great reading and you write papers, and you'll really like it." And I resisted. I didn't the first year, but the second year I think I took one course, and I did enjoy it. There was a lot of reading, a lot of writing papers and whatnot, but the teachers were really very good with discussions. And so I switched in my junior year to a political science major and really doubled up and took mostly political science. I did take economics, sociology, and a few other things, 'cause you have regulated courses, dictated

courses to take your freshman year anyway.

Q: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: So I didn't get that much and I took German. I concentrated on political science and said that's what I wanted to do. I didn't think about the Foreign Service, actually.

Q: Well, do you have any idea what sparked the Foreign Service in this friend of yours?

MURPHY: No, I don't. I don't know where she heard about it, because she was from a relatively poor family herself, in Portland, Oregon. She was a good student. Very smart girl. She had an older brother who had nothing to do with government or anything so I have no idea. She was of a family that had come originally from, I think, Michigan. And they were Scandinavian background, Danish. But no idea where she got that.

Q: Did you start picking up bits and pieces about the Foreign Service while you were at Whitman?

MURPHY: No, I basically studied political science because I liked the study of political science. I didn't think about the Foreign Service, until I was thinking about, well, wouldn't it be nice not to work in that factory again. So I applied for a job my junior year. It was a position in Washington to come back and work in the Department of State, for the summer. And the pay was good, better than what I was getting working in the factory, although I had to get to Washington. And I applied for that, and I didn't get it, and it was just an application. Then I was graduating from college. I was looking for a job. I was planning to go on to graduate school. I had applied to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. I had been accepted, but I didn't have money to go. My friend, my good friend also, she had been accepted there. The two of us applied, were accepted, but she did get the scholarship. Those were the days when you had to send a little picture. Now see, I wasn't even aware of that. One of my professors, who had come from New York, was quite a divisive type person when he got back there because he was Jewish. He was very aware of all the prejudice and whatnot that we sort of ignored and he created a lot of problems at the school. He said, well, blacks couldn't be members of any of the fraternities or the sororities. I couldn't afford to anyway. So he refused to be a chaperone at any of the events, because blacks couldn't be members. Nor could Jewish people be members of these. And there were a couple of people I suppose who were Jewish, who could afford to belong who didn't. I don't know if they were or not. So he created a lot of trouble. And I worked for him actually, as a student assistant. I had various jobs there, working in the library and I worked for him as a student assistant. Babysat for him. First time I babysat, lied, said I knew how to baby-sit, I had a little sister. (laughter). I learned about babysitting. But it was very divisive to have someone like that and that's when I sort of became aware of these problems. But they didn't exactly affect me because they didn't stop me from doing anything. He's the one who noted that he thought probably the reason that I hadn't gotten a scholarship was because I was black. And I said well I had no way of knowing that. My friend was very smart. And we were about equal in terms of

grades. But another professor a few years later told me that could have been the case, that he wasn't sure. He had recommended me because he thought I was a more all around student. She was a very quiet person, very smart but very quiet.

Q: How about you? Were you quiet?

MURPHY: No. I've never been quiet. My first grade teacher was absolutely right. I can remember my first day, in first grade. I had come out of kindergarten, going into first grade. I was put in the coat closet for talking twice. (laughter) And I said, "She set me right, I've been talking ever since."

Q: At Whitman, what about extracurricular things? Were you doing anything, paper or sports or anything?

MURPHY: Actually, I didn't do that much. I was pretty busy working. When I look at some of my old books, from the college, the yearbooks, I see certain activities that I was involved with. I was involved, I remember, in Young Republicans. And Whitman was probably about eighty percent republican, twenty percent democratic. The democrats were usually more active. They had a political union, and I was active in that, and that was for both parties, for anybody interested in politics. I participated in the debate a couple of times. But I spent most of my time working as much as I could.

Q: I was wondering, being on the Young Republicans, did you, you were there in 1960, I guess, you graduated in '62, about?

MURPHY: Correct.

Q: Were you caught up in sort of the Kennedy spirit of the election of 1960, it touched an awful lot of young people because it said, you know, government's great, be active, more active in government, and it really pushed a button. Did that push your button, particularly?

MURPHY: No, I remained a solid republican. As a matter of fact, I met Kennedy, when he was running for office. He came down to a little town near us in Portland, Oregon, because Walla Walla is on the very southeast corner of the state of Washington near both Idaho and Oregon. I can't remember the city now but this little city he came to campaigning, and we met him. And I was surprised, they were both very short people. Cause although I'm not all that tall, I'm 5'7", I don't remember him being much taller than I was. But he said he had come there and he was happy to have people from Whitman because he knew that they were basically republican, that he was happy to have a chance to talk to us. But we remained solidly opposed. In fact, I was probably the only one in my family who remained. We had been Republicans and I remember supporting him wearing Dewey buttons in those days. And I think one of my sisters, she wouldn't admit it now, and my father somewhat supported Kennedy, were impressed with him. My mother was not very active one way or the other. She's now a Libertarian, so you can imagine she would never admit that she'd even supported a democrat. (laughter)

Q: So you didn't get, the Fletcher thing, you couldn't get the scholarship. What happened? We're talking about 1962.

MURPHY: 1962. Well, I did apply again for this internship at State Department, but this time each college had to recommend a person. You couldn't just apply on your own as I had the year before. So what I did, I applied again of course through the college saying that I had applied the year before, showing a continuing interest in doing this. So I was selected by Whitman. And then finally I was also selected by the State Department along with twenty-five students who came here as interns. And we were supposed to be going on to college, back to college or to graduate school. And in the end I couldn't, I still didn't have any money. I didn't make enough money working at the State Department to pay for master's. And in those days it wasn't much about government loans. They had some, because I remember my professor got a loan for me to pay for my way to Washington, otherwise I had no money to even get to Washington.

Q: So what did you, you had this internship which would be summer of '62?

MURPHY: Summer of '62. I think it was Israel and Lebanon, were the two countries, it was part of NEA. I don't remember what that particular office was, but it was a desk officer for Lebanon and Israel, all in the same office. And I remember not getting much to do. We were supposed to be given jobs that would help us, interest us in the Foreign Service and see what kind of job a Foreign Service officer did. And we had a wonderful control officer, Thomas Carroll. He is now dead, but he said if you don't like what you're doing or if you don't think you're getting anything that's worthwhile, come back and see me. Well I did. I went back and explained that there's another student in there from Yale. It's a white male, I just thought they liked him because he was from Yale. Now probably I am a person of color, they don't know who I am, and this is a man whose background, 'cause the stud books were open in those days. I remember looking him up, he went to, I don't know the name of it, but it's the school, I was told it was *the* school for prep school for men and Harvard, that was his combination. So of course me, coming from Whitman college, I was nobody. Plus, a black woman. I was nobody. So they transferred me to another office and I was extremely lucky, it was to the Cypriot desk. Carlton Coon, Jr.

Q: Carleton, yes.

MURPHY: Fantastic person. He was so supportive, just absolutely wonderful. That whole office is called GTI.

Q: Greece, Turkey and Iran.

MURPHY: And it includes Cyprus. And he was the Cypriot desk officer and they assigned me to work with him. He gave me various projects. Then he went on leave for two weeks, and had me go to staff meetings every morning with the traffic from Cyprus and have to report. I'm trying to think of the name of the officer and how I could ever forget his name, because he was the head of GTI, absolutely fantastic person. I can still

remember his deputy, John Bolling. And he's dead now. I kept up with him for a number of years. I'll think of his name later. But he was very supportive. I'd said I didn't know what to do or say in these meetings. And he said, "Just report if you have something." I said, "Well, the others have so much to say." He says, "The others do too much talking, so don't worry Margaret." (laughter) Just continue what you're doing. If there's anything you need to know, I'll ask you. But they were very good, having me do a lot of writing. I remember seeing my first "eyes only" cable. I don't know what it was about now, didn't seem very important when I read it, but anyway it was an eyes only so it was important to me from that point of view. I spent the summer there, and then since I couldn't go on to college I needed a job. There were people in the office, and they helped me and got me a job in that same office working on the Turkish desk as a clerk-typist. I didn't know anything. I knew typing, but I didn't know anything about stenography. So I worked there for about six months. I had taken the Civil Service exam. There was an exam that used to be given to work in the Civil Service, anywhere in Washington. You could also take it inside the State Department. I just took it at the Civil Service commission at the time. And I applied for a job as an administrator intern that I saw advertised. And first my problem was to try to counter why I had been a Foreign Service intern. I wanted to be an administrative intern, someone who was guaranteed to remain, who would swear to remain in the Civil Service and not go overseas. There were six women in that group of interns. There was one other black person, a black male. The six women thought that the female Foreign Service officers, the few that we met, to us seemed very masculine. And we said this to our control officer, and he said, "Well, why don't you have a little cocktail party, or tea, and invite Mrs. Rusk. At the time Mr. Rusk was the Secretary of State. Some of the female officers were here. There weren't very many. But we invited them, had a tea. We couldn't decide whether they were masculine before they came in or became so in order to compete.

Q: Yes.

MURPHY: But we said in the end, it really doesn't matter. The result was the same. I mean, swears, slap people in the back, you know, we didn't want to be like that. So we decided anyway that the Foreign Service wasn't for us. I may have told that story as a reason why I was applying for this administrative job. But I was selected for the intern program, William Crockett.

Q: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: You remember he was the head of the administrative office.

Q: He was a very influential figure at that time, and trying to reshape the Foreign Service and the State Department too.

MURPHY: Well, his idea was to have a professional Civil Service administrative core, who were well educated, well trained, and who would remain stateside and administer the State Department from that side. So we called ourselves Crockett's Rockets. (laughter) We were in an intern program that lasted two years and we were rotated to different

offices, administrative offices throughout the administrative bureau. I went into personnel. We went into what was called ADP at the time, supply and transportation I remember that's one of the offices I went into and personnel and training, those were the places I went. And we each took four equivalent kind of offices and then we were to decide, partly our decision, partly what job we could find, what field we wanted to go into. In the end I went into personnel, into position classification. In the administrative support division for the administrative bureau. And I did that for about two, two and a half years doing management studies of training. Even when I was in the intern program I took a graduate course in public administration at GW (George Washington University). I was sent for some training to Rock Island School of Management, and worked for two and a half years in this office.

Q: While you were there, you were living in Washington. How did you find Washington? (laughter)

MURPHY: Now you ask an interesting question, because that was probably my first real knowledge of prejudice. I really didn't know at all. When I came to Washington for the intern program, State Department put us all up in the GW dorm. After that I had to find a place to live when I decided to stay here because I couldn't afford to go on to graduate school. I went looking for places that I could afford. I had been a GS4 as an intern. When I became a clerk typist I became a GS3, the salary kept going up. It was a pretty decent salary I thought at the time. I think, looking for housing, I think twenty-five dollars to make the applications, and if you were accepted for it, and you didn't take it, you lost your twenty five dollars. So I could only afford to apply for one place at a time. So I kept applying to these different places and I kept getting turned down. I would review with my money to see what the problem was, and I could never figure it out. No one ever told me that I wasn't getting places, because I was looking for places close by. I didn't want to go very far from State Department because I couldn't afford transportation, I didn't know much about Washington, and it's a big city. I was from a small town in Santa Barbara, went to school at an even smaller town, Walla Walla, and for me northwest Washington was a big city. And I kept being turned down. Finally, I applied for one, and nobody told me, not even the friend that I had been rooming with. I think she knew but she never told me. I applied for a room, a sublet of an attic apartment that said you must love classical music, and I loved classical music. I played cello from the time I was in third grade. I played a couple years of college with the Walla Walla symphony. I wasn't good but I enjoyed playing cello. My father loved music; he made us all play an instrument. And so I applied for that and I got it. It was a white couple, the woman was older, she was a piano teacher. Her husband was a struggling concert pianist, Dorothy and Eric Hillman. Lovely couple. They're the ones who told me the reason I hadn't gotten any place was because I was black, and didn't I know that. And I didn't. But no one had told me, they let me continue to apply and be turned down, and so it took a long time to find the place. I was really pretty stressed out about what I could afford. So that was my first inkling.

Q: What about social life?

MURPHY: Well, as an intern, of course, I socialized with the other interns and we had no

trouble every place we went. We walked. We had no other way to get places and we lived right there near Foggy Bottom. After the intern program I was living with Dorothy and Eric. My social life was quite involved with them, I didn't know anybody else of course in Washington. They had a great circle of friends, members of the National Symphony. They always had concerts at their home. They would have jazz sessions. Members of the National Symphony would come over and play with Eric. I mean it was wonderful. The best New Year's I've ever had in my entire life was at their house. I was a smoker in those days. My little home up in the attic, I thought was a great room 'cause when you come out of college where all you had was two small rooms which you shared with two other girls, this was all mine, this little room.

Q: Oh yes!

MURPHY: And they would use my room as a smoking room. Now it had no windows in it, it had one window that had an air conditioner in it. Well, I thought I was doing very well because I had the air conditioner. We shared the bathroom downstairs, our kitchen was a hot plate, a refrigerator, and a sink and an electric frying pan. And I had a little hot pot that I brought with me from college. A small little closet, no bigger than that bookcase. It was more than enough for the few possessions that I had. And they had balalaika players, opera singers, people from the National Symphony, a fellow who studied drama. But music all over the house, classical music which is what I absolutely adore.

Q: Oh yes.

MURPHY: I mean, adore. I mean, for me it was ideal. The other half of the attic was shared, someone else rented it. The first person who was there had been a student. Then a woman from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Sally, moved in. And she was a white girl, from Southern Rhodesia, who had never cooked or done anything, had been taken care of all of her life. She wasn't a furtive person even though she didn't know she was white. She was of British background actually, but from Southern Rhodesia. She had no clue about cooking, and I remember she wanted to borrow my little hot pot that heated up water. And I said, sure, any time you like. So I came home one day to find that little pot sitting on the heating pad, but she hadn't plugged it in. She didn't know it was an electric pot and you had to plug it in. "It was always so fast when you do it, Margaret. You know I've been here for half an hour and nothing's happened." I said, "You're gonna ruin my little pot. You have to plug it in." So I taught her all kinds of things. She wasn't very adept at cooking and things. My favorite story was how she took a can of peas, put them in the water, put hot dogs in there and cooked it all together. I said, "Why do you do that?" She said, "Well, it all needs to be hot. The taste doesn't seem to be very good." Now I'm a Virgo, I don't like things mixed together at all. That turned me off. So I learned a lot too. We both liked classical music, and I remember once, the first cellist of the Berlin Symphony came to Washington. He was a friend of Eric's. He came to buy a cello, and he carried a lot of money with him, I remember that, because I'd never seen anyone carry that much money, cash. And he was going to buy this cello. Well, we would entertain them with our music, 'cause I had a record player, and we would put this music

on. My friend Sally said, “You know, they don’t know anything more about music than we do, really. Let’s test them.” So we put a piece on that, say, we knew was Mozart’s symphony and say, “Now isn’t that just wonderful Beethoven?” And they wouldn’t say anything. It was true, they didn’t know anything more than we did. So we became quite confident in that. She was a person who had just gone to ___ it’s like the British system, where it’s something past high school, but she was always sensitive of the fact that she hadn’t gone to college. And I remember telling her, I said, you know, you’re smarter and more interesting than many people I went to college with. Who had very good grades, maybe, but they work. Really, that smart has nothing to do with your education. What you know, what you learn, and what you’re interested in. That’s what people want from you, not some formal education or a piece of paper. It doesn’t really get you a job. So we became very good friends. Another roommate, when she left and finally decided to go to California, a Chilean fellow moved in, his wife and child were still in Chile. They eventually came up and the three of them shared the other half of the attic. And we became quite good friends. But that was my first experience with a foreign person staying close to me. I wasn’t aware until later I had that luxury from, can’t think of his name.

Q: Bostain. Jim Bostain.

MURPHY: Jim Bostain. She would come and she’d sit down. My little room was a bed, a bookcase, and a sofa, and a big table across from it. She’d come and sit right down on the sofa and she’d sit right next to me. And I was always getting up to try to offer her something, because it made me very uncomfortable, because she would sit, not on the other end of the sofa but right next to me. And then, when I found out from Jim Bostain what it was. I said, “Well, isn’t that interesting, I experienced that, I know exactly what you’re talking about.”

Q: You might explain what Bostain was telling.

MURPHY: Well, yes, Bostain explained that there is a distance that Americans are comfortable with in talking to people. Other people, like the French, they get closer to each other to talk, right in each other’s faces. Americans, you have to be about one arm’s distance away in order for the person to be comfortable. Otherwise you can’t concentrate on what they’re saying. You see their nose, their mouth, and you can’t really talk to a person that way. And that’s why Americans will never sit right next to each other.

Q: We are, by the way, our conversation is taking place across the table. This is my, MY distance. “laughter”

MURPHY: It’s true, ‘cause if we were sitting right here, we wouldn’t be able to talk very well. And we’d both be distracted by the fact. One of the interesting things that Jim Bostain said is that many American women would think that French men were being over romantic, that they would get so close and talk to them. Even the distance of touching, which I learned when I went to Greece on my first assignment, you know, with a woman holding my hand, I was very uncomfortable with that. An older person, no problem, like this friend of mine, a mother, I would hold them by the arm with no problem whatsoever.

But when she would hold my hand I just felt very uncomfortable. And I explained that. And she understood, but it was hard for them to really understand what we were talking about. 'Cause I could do it with an older person, but not with a woman. And it had nothing to do with a sexual thing, at that point, for women, because in those days there's nothing that we thought of in terms of women. Men, yes. And the Greek men would go around holding arms. Everybody kissed everybody else, in Greece, when you met people. The men and the women, they all kissed twice on either cheek. That was the national thing to do. So I got used to that.

Q: During this period when you were one of Crockett's Rockets, this is what, about '63 to '65 or something like that?

MURPHY: Yes. '63 to '65.

Q: As you were doing the various administrative work, what was attracting you more then?

MURPHY: Well, I'll be honest with you first of all. Having a good job. You get promoted every year. (laughter). You can't knock that. We thought that was just great. I enjoyed all the experiences, ADP was very new at the time.

Q: ADP being?

MURPHY: Automated Data Processing.

Q: Oh yes.

MURPHY: Is what it was called. That was the beginning of – I don't know what they call it now, but that was then.

Q: So it basically is a computer.

MURPHY: 'Cause they still have an office basis. But it was very basic in those days. We used to even try to do programming, them teaching us how to program. Not that we really understood that much about it. I remember they were trying to find out a way to be able to draw data on Cuba. Cuba was very big in those days. And being able to get information, being able to program that in such a way that you could get all the information there was about some particular aspect of Cuba. And we were trying to come up with programs to put that into the system. I don't think we ever did manage to do anything successful. Personnel is what interested in. I worked with a fellow named Don Leidel and his assistant, Esther Rice. They were both personnel and its training program. I learned a lot more about the Foreign Service at that time because the training program was primarily for Foreign Service Officers. I also saw the political aspects of it. I can remember one of the officers who had been selected for this program. He had an interesting file. It wasn't a perfect file when you read it, but you could see he was very original, he was a very good officer. And he had negatives that were mentioned but they

weren't, in my opinion, true negatives because they were things he did that opposed the system, but were original, and therefore people opposed them, and that's why he was considered poorly. In one of his reports, an officer had mentioned, this goes back to the old days of the Foreign Service, of how he had arrived at this party, at his boss' house, and had left without thanking the hostess. And how he did not, coming as he did, if he came from Colorado or Arizona someplace, it was a horrible place to come from of course, because you don't learn manners out there in the west.

Q: Of course. Those uncouth barbarians.

MURPHY: Very uncouth person. Well, he had made a comment back that his hostess had been busy and he thought he wouldn't bother her and he had left. I thought this was very interesting, that was one of the negatives, and the kinds of things that would go on reports in those days. One of the other things he had done: he had been the administrative officer, I believe, or one of the officers anyway in charge of a visit by Lyndon Johnson to one of the Scandinavian countries and he had asked for a white Cadillac convertible. And in Scandinavia they don't exist. And he had said that was rather foolish to Johnson's assistants. They eventually got and flew one in that belonged to the Spanish Ambassador, or the Ambassador who was in Madrid, and they flew this car out to the Scandinavian country. Well, he thought this was absolutely ridiculous, and had said so. To make a long story short, he was initially selected for this program and when it went before this other committee that had to make the final selection and make sure that the people we had selected were good, they took his name off. Because they said it would be an offence to Johnson if he were selected for this program. I can't remember what his name was. And that was my first touch, knowledge about politics being involved in various things.

Q: While you were doing this, during this period were you getting any feel for distinctions between the Foreign Service and the Civil Service?

MURPHY: Except in that position, no. Because there weren't any Foreign Service people in supply or transportation where I worked; they were all Civil Service people. And one of the projects I worked on was a survey of what was sent in by the posts and determining what automobiles or vehicles should be replaced. So you knew the Foreign Service was involved. I didn't get any sense of feeling with people in the Foreign Service. I saw that people in the Foreign Service wore what we called homemade clothes. They would come to the States in summer to visit the Department. And they were always dressed differently. They looked different. The men had the light blue and white seersucker suits. And women had what would look like strange clothes, which are probably from some exotic country, or something that had been what we call homemade, we'd call "Made by tailors".

Q: Well they probably all went in those days SS Schwarz, in Baltimore was where one got suited up.

MURPHY: They were never very fashionable, they weren't in fashion. I understand that now, because I understand why you don't care about fashion when you get into the

Foreign Service. That was very clear in those days.

Q: During this time, how did you see the Civil Service side as a career?

MURPHY: Oh, I thought it was a fine career. I was getting promoted every year, you could do well, we were interested in making a good living. I never had known what I would do with studying political science, "What use was that?" As my father has said as well. So I was quite happy, I thought I had a nice career. What happened was that Crockett left. And we didn't have anyone really backing or supporting our program, although we were essentially off the program and assigned to regular jobs by that point. We still got together as a group that met occasionally. I kept in touch all these years, actually there's only one person that I know of who's left in that, Thomas Fitzpatrick, who had been on that track. A couple of the others are dead now, and some of the others had left after a few years at State Department. But when we were on that program we did socialize together a lot. I can remember one of the big discussions at the time. The men all thought that the women were taking jobs away from the men. They were very nice about it, but you know they said they couldn't help it, that's the way they actually felt. That we were taking jobs away from men who had a family to support, although not all of them were married, and didn't have families to support as a matter of fact. That was one of our topics of conversation. But we all got along very well, and I still have some pictures of some of us together at the time.

Q: So what happened after you finished this initial period? William Crockett had left. What happened?

MURPHY: Well I was still within the office and I was very happy doing that. But my very best friend, the one I sort of palled around with all the time who was in the intern program, she was from St. Louis and she said, "Well, I've heard that they need Consular Officers. And since Crockett's not here, so there's no one to make sure we stay in the Civil Service and they don't really care that much about us it seems. I think I'm gonna join the Foreign Service." And so that issue was raised again. I said, "Well, if my best friends is going, I'm going too." She went into this office and talked to someone, and he told her what to do, and she was going on a vacation to Italy. She said, "You should go and see this person" so we could both go in together. So I went in, and I don't remember the man's name, and told him what my friend had said, and that I would be interested. So she went off to Italy on her vacation and they offered me a position in Athens. And the interesting thing was that I came in, I didn't get training. I wasn't put in a class. I was given the course, the consular course which in those days was simply reading all the books and all the material and taking these open-book tests. And I did very well on the tests, they were open-book. And then I was shipped off to Athens. She came back before I was sent off and she was assigned to Naples. But she went into language training and went into a regular Foreign Service class. So I wasn't put in a class. I suspect that I was a shock to them, when I just walked in to the office like that, with this information from this other person, they couldn't say "Well no, that's not true" or whatever. And they probably didn't know what to do with me.

Q: Yes. Well, it may well have been.

MURPHY: I don't know, I have no way of knowing that. I can only surmise certain things when I think about them after. Because, I was unusual. But I didn't realize I was unusual, see I wasn't paying attention to that. And that makes a difference.

Q: Well, you went to Athens, you served in Athens from when to when?

MURPHY: I served in Athens from February of 1966 to about September of 1969. You get non-immigrant visas primarily. And then you get immigrant visas. One year you did non-immigrant visas and then I did immigrant visas. I was in Foreign Service Reserve. If after five years you wanted to, you would go back at the same grade level in the Civil Service. Or you could decide to stay in the Foreign Service, in which case you'd have to take an oral examination. And that's what I did.

Q: Can you talk about, how did you find Athens? This was your first time abroad, wasn't it?

MURPHY: That was my first time anywhere outside the United States. I had never even been to Canada or Mexico for that matter. I can say that Canada and Mexico are beyond the ten mile limit. So completely, completely foreign.

Q: How did you get there? Where did you live? And then let's talk about the life there.

MURPHY: Well, I made reservations, and I flew there. I was met by the Ambassador's Secretary, Marilyn Jackson, and another secretary, and both of them were black. They took me to the hotel where I was to stay and then took me out that evening, and it was during Carnival. So it was just wonderful, you know, and I didn't have any Greek at all. Didn't know one word of Greek. But you know how wonderful the Greeks are. You know that. And anything they would say, you know "Oh! How long have you been in Greece?" I said, "Six hours!" (laughter) And I was already speaking Greek, because I said, "Simiyasis" It was absolutely wonderful, the Greeks were just the most warm people that I think I've ever met. I mean they were outwardly and I found this out even more later, outwardly curious about a black person. They would come up and touch your skin, touch your hair. I used to wear one of these false _____ on the top of my hair. And they loved that, they used to take and put their hand on it all the time. And it was not, it was a curiosity. Very innocent, warm sort of curiosity, and not something antagonistic in any way at all. And I found them to be so warm that I, I learned the language in that way, by just going out with the Greeks all the time.

Q: The new Embassy had been built by the time you were there. You worked where, at first?

MURPHY: I worked in the Consular section. I worked first in the non-immigrant visa section. I remember being very impressed.

The guard said, "Welcome, you must be Ms. Murphy, the new vice consul." I was so impressed that he knew my name. And he said, "I'll show you where your office is, it's very nice." Took me back to meet my boss and I was assigned to do non-immigrant visas. My boss was Lois Day, wonderful person. And, we were assigned to look for our own housing. In those days you didn't have help. I started taking Greek classes, you know one hour a day, and everyone got to take classes like that. Most people did not come to Greece with the language. Later on, couple years later, they sent some people who initially were just English speaking. I remember trying to find a place. You would say two bedrooms and one eating room using hand motions for everything, and then find out that it wasn't a place that was for rent, but a place for sale. Cause we mistook the word, the word for rent was shorter than the word for buy. Or vice versa. I don't recall. I eventually found a place through one of the secretaries in the embassy who worked in the personnel section. Whom I still know, Candy Errols. Her husband was a teacher at the international school.

Q: Candy was my secretary for a couple years. She's a wonderful person.

MURPHY: One of her neighbors who lived on the top floor was going, he was an electrical engineer, he was leaving to try to work in the United States. He wanted to sublet his apartment and I needed a furnished apartment 'cause I didn't have enough furniture of my own. In those days they didn't provide furniture to you at the embassy, you had to have your own. And so I got this place from her neighbor; furnished. And I was her neighbor, lived two blocks from the embassy. I paid the same rent the whole time I was there, nearly four years. Just under a hundred and thirty-three dollars.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there? Did you have any feel for how he operated or?

MURPHY: Phillips Talbot was the Ambassador. And the girl who had met me, Marilyn Jackson, was his secretary. She was Civil Service, actually. He had brought her with him because she had been his secretary when he was in the Department. He was a very nice, calm person. We didn't have a lot to do with him. He did invite us periodically though, the junior officers, and there were at least ten of us, I would say, in those days. He'd invite us for lunch. They'd invite us to various events. They always kept us involved somehow and we would have opportunities to go to staff meetings. They had a fairly good and active program for junior officers to involve them to some extent. Most of us were all in the consular section. But some of the other officers I guess who came in through the exam would rotate into other sections, into admin or political section or economics section. But we, we didn't just stick together like sometimes the junior officers do now. I was friends with people of all age groups, the personnel officer, an older woman. Another woman who worked in the consular section, who had been in the Foreign Service from World War II. And who was a Foreign Service staff officer, doing mostly visa work. Late 50's or something. But she was a good friend. I can remember going to their homes after work occasionally for drinks and they're telling all the old stories about their experiences. It was very interesting for me, because my life was one which I mixed with Greeks a lot, not because I wanted to learn Greek but because I was

in Greece. And I really didn't have that many friends in the embassy. I was the only female officer, junior officer. My boss was the consular officer. Bartlett Wells was the consul general. Two personnel officers were both women. Then a woman was the budget officer. So there were a number, but they were all older women. And the women would always get together, in those days they'd get together for things like Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas dinner, someone's birthday. So we had a life that was involved with the embassy and one that was involved with people outside. I was invited out by two Jimmies who actually were receptionists. The younger one invited me out to go with his friends, they all spoke Greek. Here I am, single, only spoke English, and I'd listen, they'd order food, and the Greeks would love to feed you. You couldn't order what you wanted, they would look at the food and order.

Q: Yes. Go and look in the kitchen essentially. See what they have and then.

MURPHY: And they would order and I would eat whatever they ordered. And would listen. And I was taking lessons and I'd always be so excited when I'd hear a phrase that I had learned in class. I would hear that outside so I would get it reinforced, or they would continue to say things and sometimes I didn't know what the words actually meant, but I knew what the meaning was. I would continue listening and I would know the phrases usually before I would find out the actual meanings. So the individual words, I didn't think of them in terms of individual words, but in terms of a phrase. And so that's why I speak Greek to this day, not in terms of words and translating but in terms of phrases.

Q: Let's do the non-immigrant first. What was it like issuing visas and not issuing visas on the non-immigrant side?

MURPHY: An FSN (Foreign Service National employee), Tasula, taught me about the non-immigrant visas. I would sit there and interview and I had an interpreter, because I didn't know Greek. The Greeks usually never liked to be denied a visa. I usually had some kind of problem with somebody who didn't want to be denied a visa. One case I particularly remember involved a woman and her daughter from a village from an island. They applied for a visa. I denied both of them because they said they were going to stay, and they were very poor and it was clear. In fact there was a letter as a matter of fact the interpreter had read to me that had said, "See if you like it, we'll see what we can do once you get over here." And, actually the mother when she applied she said: "Yes, we're gonna stay if we like it." And I turned them down for a visa, they complained, and so then Lois said, "Well, I'm gonna interview them again and I want you to be there." So we interviewed them again. Lois talked to them one by one, talked to the mother and she repeated yes, that if they liked it they would stay. Lois said to the little girl, who was about eleven years old, she said, "Well, your mother says you're gonna stay and you say you're not, the two of you are only going to visit." "Well, she's an old woman from the village, she doesn't know what she's talking about." Lois and I were always impressed that the little girl was never embarrassed. Sat right there and could lie without any problem at all. (laughter) Impressive. This was new to me too. The ability to sit there and not be embarrassed if you were lying because Americans can't do that.

Q: I know. One thing I've found, as I'm sure you have as a supervising consular officer is that it's very difficult, particularly for Americans when they're first put in this situation of having to do this, to have people lie to them, and obviously lie and it sometimes triggers resentment, hostility on the part of the American because they just, a normal American just isn't used to being lied to to their face on something, and of course after awhile that would be if you were a good consular officer you would understand what the situation is and try to move around and not let it get to you.

MURPHY: Yes. Well, unlike now, in those days the Greeks were quite poor and they were an immigrant society trying to get to the United States to get someplace better and it was usually the United States if not Australia. I used to admire the ones who were very good at it. And there was at the time a policeman who was assigned to the embassy. He was a plainclothes policeman who sat outside in the hallway. The Greeks, when they would come out of your office, they would talk about what had happened. And he used to say, "Oh, but you're very good at pinning them down." And so I think my decisions were probably pretty good but I was very tough, as most of the junior officers are. I refused many more people than I probably should have. I remember the Greek seamen who would apply for visas. But they were usually very easygoing about being denied. "Huh. We give it a shot, we didn't make it. C'est la vie." But people who were more desperate, I think were much more upset when we refused them the visa. And, you know probably, and I don't know, they probably found it difficult for me to refuse them a visa. The Greeks were very warm, I found, and very nice to meet. I never had any feeling I was being discriminated against in any way whatsoever. Even this Greek tendency of staring, the Greeks do like to stare, for them it's not wrong. We're taught that staring is wrong. They're not. So we would try to stare back at them, to outstare them. They would just continue looking, it was no problem for them. So that didn't work.

I interviewed Melina Mercouri. And she was very nice; she sat down outside and simply waited her turn. Because often you got people who wanted to push ahead. I was very impressed with her. I did know who she was. And she simply walked around outside my office, and people came down from all over, of course to try to get autographs. And when her turn came I called her in. She came and my friend, Tasula came in to interpret. Tasula has always reminded me that Melina Mercouri said I had the most beautiful hands she had even seen and loved my hands. She said some people are leg people, some people are nose or eyes, I'm a hands person, she said. I really liked her, I was very nice with her, but I always did my job. I was always very formal about doing the job, getting the form filled out right, and I remember changing her address because she had given her address in Athens and I said, "Well, is that your permanent address?" And she said, "No, I actually live in Geneva so why don't we put that down?" So I had her put this other address down. Later when the Greeks took her citizenship away and she was in the United States the questions were where would she go back to if they took her citizenship away. Her actual residence was not Greece, but was Switzerland. So there was no problem and they knew that because I had put that in the form so I was really very proud of that. But Irene Papas, another famous Greek actress.

Q: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: I interviewed her, but she was very stuck on herself. And so I pretended that I didn't know who she was and did my job and she got her visa, obviously.

Q: When did you move to immigrant visas?

MURPHY: Well, it must have been something, a year, little more than a year it must have been.

Q: It was after the coup?

MURPHY: It was after the 1967 military coup sometime. I was moved to immigrant visas. I think they had new junior officers come in who had to do non-immigrant visas. Because usually you had one person at a time doing non-immigrant visas. And all the other people did immigrant visas. So some of the junior officers started in doing immigrant visas first. But I started in non-immigrant visas and moved to the immigrant visas. I did drafting of letters. I had to do congressional inquiries and things of that type.

Q: What was your impression of the people getting immigrant visas at that time?

MURPHY: Well, the people that we got were primarily poor. You didn't have the professional people. It was trade such as they were carpenters. Many went to work as painters in buildings or on bridges or as waiters for big hotels in the United States. So we didn't really get that many doctors, I never saw a doctor apply. I never saw any type of real professional apply.

Q: When did Pete Peterson arrive?

MURPHY: I remember when he arrived he took over as the American Services, head of the American services. Pete came after the coup, I think.

Q: I'll tell you the reason why I think he was there somewhat before the coup. He had apparently a good relationship with Pattakos before the coup.

MURPHY: They were from the same village.

Q: And this meant that he was kind of used as a point man, as a contact, and Pattakos was I guess number two. Papadopoulos was number one of this Junta. Did you find a problem in direction with Peterson as far as how to treat people who had Communist affiliations or suspected Communist affiliations?

MURPHY: Not really. He gave in more readily and got more involved in the visa process than Bartlett Wells had. He would get letters from Congressmen, particularly. And I can't remember, it was not a Greek Congressman, but it was a Congressman who had large Greek constituency. And he would even write little notes to Pete saying, "Well you

know, we're gonna get this visa issued, Pete, because my big constituency is interested," something really blatantly showing that he didn't care whether they were legitimate visas cases or not and Pete would sort of get into these things. So he and Lois Day were at loggerheads at times.

Q: Well I remember when I took over. For the record I arrived in Athens as Consul General from '70 to '74 so I sort of was there slightly after you had left. But one of the things that I found troubling was that Peterson, who was of Greek ancestry and I think very proud of the fact he was the first person to have that Consul General's job from that background, was almost death on anybody who had been in one of these villages which had been under Communist domination so there were a lot of refusals on grounds that the people were Communists.

MURPHY: But it was a bit like that in the Embassy. That's what I remember being taught. Refuse these people who were involved with Communism. You would write the cases up and send them back and they were usually denied visas if they were involved. I don't think that he had a different policy than the Embassy did; than the Department of State did.

Q: It shows you how personalities come. I had just, I came out of there after I was in Saigon, before that I was in Yugoslavia. And you know, I realized there were grades of being involved in the Communist business. We were kind of plowing over the same ground but being more liberal later. But it probably did reflect.

MURPHY: Most days that we would send files when we were in immigrant visas, particularly you would send the information and get their files from the Greek government. They would cooperate, and they had large files on Communists. And those were always provided to us and based upon that information it was difficult for a person to overcome information that was in the file. Sometimes to me it seemed a little unfair that they didn't exactly know what the information was. And they sort of had to remit blindly to this and then renounce it or say that they had renounced it in order to get the visa. (laughter)

Q: How did the April 21st 1967 coup affect you and the Embassy?

MURPHY: Well, I thought this really exciting myself. I used to go out late at night, because the Greeks ate late at night, at 11 o'clock so I was always late coming into the office. And I remember that particular morning hearing a knock on my door and I was in bed. Candy Errols said, "Turn on your radio, they're playing marshal music, something is going on." And so I got very excited, was up and got myself ready and I was going to go into the Embassy at all costs. Candy said, "Well, you're not supposed to go in, you're not supposed to go out into the streets." I said, "Let me try." I was only two blocks from the Embassy. So I drove around behind and went right to the Embassy and I never had to go through a roadblock that the Greeks had set up. We got to the embassy and a couple of the national employees had come in as well. There weren't many of us there because people couldn't get past certain lines where there was a block. I don't remember our

doing anything constructive that day except listening to the radio. Seeing what's going on. We had Greek employees who would help and were translating things. We had officers who knew Greek, knew a lot, but they helped with translating this and what was going on. We didn't stay for the whole day. I wanted to go through one of the lines to see what would happen. And I kept pretending I didn't speak Greek and I'd get to one line. They tried to stop me. I was trying to take one of the national employees home, he lived down near the stadium. And I eventually got her home, got back through at points speaking Greek and at points not speaking Greek. But finding that very exciting. It wasn't scary 'cause as you will recall only one person was killed during that coup.

Q: What about your Greek friends? How did they view this? What were you getting from them?

MURPHY: I would go out with the Greeks, and the Greeks were very political. And they talk about politics all the time. There was a taverna that we went to always, that was our place. You went to that same place every single night.

Q: Kolonaki or...?

MURPHY: Actually, no. This was in Polaka. It's got casinos, it's still there. And there was a standard group. They were usually people from the right; people who supported the monarchy who went to this particular taverna. And they would toast each other and someone who was not from the right group dare not come in there. And so everybody who went there basically were people who supported the monarchy who were from the right. On the 21st, because it stopped the Greeks from talking, I didn't like the Colonels. I didn't know that much about them but I didn't like them when they came in. And my friends didn't either, my Greek friends. At some point my best Greek friend, who was a teacher, at the embassy taught Greek. She did an about face, and I don't know how or why she did this, but she began to support the Colonels. 'Cause initially I know we didn't. We'd go there but no one could talk because if you said anything, people were being turned in, there were all kinds of stories going around. And of course there were all the jokes that they had about the Colonels. And she was always, told as many jokes as the next person and laughed at them. And somehow, I think it came from her parents, but even her dowry, the Greek government asked for their dowries back. That her father had worked for the government. And so he contributed her dowry to the government. That was showing his support for them, and that's what they had asked people to do. So my Greek friends were sort of divided, some were for, some were against. My very best friend changed, as I said.

Q: Well, you know initially, for the first couple months anyway, the colonels came out with all sorts of orders about how long your hair could be cut and what type of skirts people could wear. Very intrusive and kind of silly actually. It was trying to change the morals...

MURPHY: 'Cause miniskirts were in fashion. Miniskirts were in fashion.

Q: I know, and how did that... that must have caused all sorts of problems.

MURPHY: Well, not that many. What I found was there were some people in the embassy who were conservative like that who were already trying to get some of the young girls in the office not to wear such short skirts. And I said, "You can wear whatever you like in the Embassy. This is a Democracy, and we don't do that." But what was more interesting in a way, Stu, was the division within the Embassy, which I'm sure that you're aware of.

Q: How did you, I mean, this is I think one of the sort of major stories in our generations of the Foreign Service, the division within the Embassy. Could you talk about how you saw this as a young officer there?

MURPHY: Well, as a young officer I was shocked because it wasn't very professional. It got to be very unprofessional. The officer who was the political counselor was against the Communists. Some of his other officers, Bob Keeley was there, John Day, he was for the Communists. Pete Peterson was for the Colonels. The ambassador had left and the Chargé who's name I can never really remember...

Q: Yes, we interviewed him and I, it's not ringing a bell.

MURPHY: He was for the Colonels at least he supported Pete Peterson and John Day and those who were on the other side. These were the basic people I remember from the lineup. But how it affected the Americans. A Greek extraction particularly came to these would have lots of problems. Other Americans did as well and if they did arrest them, these were military arrests. Some of them because their visa wasn't good or they had stayed longer than they should in Greece or someone who should have registered for the military. These kinds of problems. And I can remember one particular staff meeting that the two officers really got into it. Who was head of the political section?

Q: Day?

MURPHY: No, he was one of the officers in the political section. I'll remember his name afterwards. He and Pete Peterson got into it because the Political Officer was saying that the Americans were afraid to come to Pete because he was too close to the Colonels and he would turn them in. They didn't feel safe. And of course Pete objected to that, being told that because that was his job and they should send them to him with their problems and of course he would help them out because that was his job. But they said 'You're such close friends and we all know that, the people don't trust you.' And so there was a big fight just in terms of responsibilities and what people did. I didn't see him beyond that of course. I was witnessing this very unprofessional argument between the two of them. That they would just really almost be ready to come to blows. And feeling sorry in a way for Pete, as well, but since I was opposed to the Colonels. He was sitting awfully close to them as far as I was concerned so I was on the side of the people, and it was everyone who knew who was on what side in the Embassy. And after our assignments were over to Greece it made a big difference in the initially people who worked for the

Colonels. Because that was U.S. policy. Did well. Then after they went into oblivion. And the Americans on the other side. Arch Blood.

Q: Arch Blood. Yes. Archer Blood, who's been interviewed. A very strong person. Later got involved in the India-Pakistan thing as consul general in Dacca.

MURPHY: I remember him and Pete Peterson being at loggerheads. Bob Keeley. I still know Bob and Louise Keeley.

Louise Keeley was very much opposed to the Colonels. And she let it be known, she always let her opinions be known about things. And some people didn't like that. I remember, and I don't remember his name, like I say, but the fellow who was Chargé said, "That's why Bob Keeley will never become Ambassador." And I can remember, I happened to be in Washington when Bob was assigned an Ambassadorship to some place in Africa. [Ed. Keeley was ambassador to Mauritius 1976-1978, Zimbabwe 1980-1984, and Greece 1985-1989] And I remember the party that they had when he was named and I went to that cocktail party. This is the man who's never gonna become Ambassador because of his wife, Louise. And she says, "Well, I guess he was wrong." And so we were all very happy of course, that was our side.

Q: One of the things that struck me when I got there in 1970 was the importance of the CIA. Did you feel that there that the CIA had more of a role from what you were getting say in visas or just in the atmosphere of the Embassy or not?

MURPHY: You know, the CIA was very secretive with us when I was in Greece. I had very little knowledge of them. I remember one thing that points that out. They had an officer who came and he was very handsome, looked like Gregory Peck we all thought. And he came to Athens and he was supposed to be going to with us to ____ but the Embassy presumably didn't have money. And we all said, "Well, that's all right, we don't mind him staying here." And my friend Peggy Herrick, the woman who had been with the Foreign Service since before World War II said, "I'll drive him up to ____ if they don't have money. I wouldn't mind spending a little time with him." She said. (laughter) So we all thought he was very handsome, we were happy he was there. Turned out he was with the Agency. And they didn't tell us. So they finally told us, because he kept going around making these comments, because he was handsome. You know you can't ignore someone like that. And had they been smart they would have told us he was with the Agency. So it wasn't that I wasn't aware of the Agency existing but I wasn't aware of being with them all. They never spoke to me, like I've had them since, when I've been head of the sections and whatnot, had them talk to my officers, explain to them what they do, they talk to me, and those, at that time they didn't. They never said anything and I know a few officers...

There was one man that was with the agency that we really liked. We had stories about how he, something wrong with his leg and he walked with a cane, so he was very elegant. We all had stories about how he got that leg. That were romantic, you know. And they made him sort of romantic, the fact that he sort of had this cane, walked very stiffly.

Q: His name escapes me now. Quite a well-known character.

MURPHY: The Greeks said that the Americans had engineered the coup and the counter-coup. I said, “Well first of all that doesn’t make sense, does it? For us to do both.” And I said, “And I’m sure that we didn’t engineer the coup, because there wasn’t anybody there in the embassy, very few people could get in. I would think that had the agency been involved in the coup they would have been in place in the embassy.” And so that’s why I knew that those stories had to be false. I thought so.

Q: This is one of the things that also struck me when I arrived there because I knew nothing about Greeks particularly. The Greeks would always attribute anything that happened to them to American machinations. When I knew that we weren’t very good at that, really. It was though that the President and Congress sat around and plotted every day about what they were going to do to the Greeks.

MURPHY: Exactly. And I always found that interesting, because they would say “Well, you know we like the American people but we don’t like your government.” I said, “But the government is the American people. The American government is very much like its people. They want to be liked, the American people want to be liked, I’m not saying that they never do anything, but it’s not something as negative as you think it is, like the coup was not our idea. I think, yes, we would have tried to protect the king, and we did when they had the counter-coup, and he decided not to proceed with his counter-coup because too many people would have been killed and he didn’t want that. So I didn’t completely understand that. And we did help him, yes, of course, and we would, but we were not involved and we were not behind all this, this is your own Greek politics.” But that never affected their relationships with individual Americans. I had no negative feedback whatsoever from my Greek friends or strangers about American involvement or whatever they thought about it. I got into a number of arguments about it, and discussions, but I never had them withdraw and think that there was something wrong with me.

Q: Did you get at all involved with either professionally or otherwise with the Greek-American community, which is mainly an older group of people.

MURPHY: There was a Greek-American club. And I think I used to go to that but I didn’t really get involved then, no. I spent a lot of time with Greeks, with the young crowd at the Embassy. Most of my friends were there for about two years, other than a few of the more senior officers. And we mixed a lot with people who were visitors, hippies in those days.

Q: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: I can remember having all-weekend parties. Making a big thing of sangria and drinking that the whole weekend. I learned to drink wine in Greece, but the one thing about the Greeks, they never drank without eating.

Q: I know it.

MURPHY: And I think that the whole time I was in Greece I saw one person that I knew who was drunk. I know people who were high, who would go to the bazooki maybe drinking and _____ the place. I used to dance at the bazookis. It was great.

Q: Of course this was the high time for the generation of what came as the '60s, the young kids, Americans and actually Europeans too. Who were going off and sort of taking off with very little money and the drug culture wasn't really nasty drugs, it was sort of hashish and things like that, but did that?

MURPHY: When I was in Greece I didn't see drugs and I wasn't aware of drugs. I was aware of people drinking, and these young people traveling with very little money. And maybe they did, but I was not aware of drugs then, of course until later.

Q: I got at the other end of it where I had to go see them in jail.

MURPHY: Well, I did when I was in Bombay. That was a big thing in my next assignment, but when I was in Greece, I don't recall any drugs at all.

Q: Uh-huh. Did you get put into any protection-welfare type things?

MURPHY: No, just as duty officer. And usually those were seamen, problems with seamen signing on and off ships, trying to get off the ship, one seamen tried to kill his Captain. (Laughter) He had come to me, because, you know Greek seamen, particularly of a lower class, they were Hispanic or something. We had great respect for women. But men, they were at daggers and he was ready to kill this captain. He had come to me combing his hair. Oh, madam consul, he would be so polite and apologetic, and the minute I would go away there he'd be, trying to kill this captain again. (Laughter) But that was the only experience I had basically with Americans with various problems. There were a couple of problems with Americans in problems with the law. A couple of American women who had trouble 'cause Greece had a very different law regarding accidents. The police never got involved with accidents, and this was something I was not aware of when I first went to Greece. I had an accident with my car soon after I had arrived in Greece. So I was aware that if you had an accident, what we'd call a fender bender, or even if it was a little worse, the Greek policemen were not part of that. They didn't have an accident police or anyone. No one would take a report, and you had to work it out with the other person.

After I'd been in Greece four months maybe, and had got in my car, just driving, had this little accident with this very old, old American car that had the big bumpers that were sitting up high. Came around, dragged my car, and you could see the lines on the street where the back of my car crossed the other side of a double line. Well, having come from the United States, you never drove on the other side of a double line. It just didn't happen, and that's what the cab driver said I had done. And he said, "No, it's your fault." And so this Greek came up to me and he said, "Can I help you?" And I said, "Yes, I want

you to tell him that it's his fault and he's going to pay, and he's going to admit that it was his fault because of these lines." There's a policeman standing here, with the rest of the crowd just watching, but not in the least bit involved. So this very nice Greek fellow who spoke English and French helped me.

So these two girls had this accident, where the cab driver was blaming them although it had been his fault 'cause he had hit them from behind, so they know that he's wrong. But the police do nothing about it. So the police tried to help them by taking them to the police station, and the girls kept trying to say "But it's his fault, he's going to have to pay, this is a rental car, he's got to pay." And the police could do nothing and say nothing. And they can't speak English. So by that time I think I must have been there at least a year, I spoke enough Greek, I went down and helped them. He said, "Well, we're trying to call the owner of the cab, this fellow doesn't own the cab." But the girls, in the meantime, because they were so mad, the cab driver saying "Well, these dents that you put in the car..." They said, "I'll show you dents." The girl picked up a stick in a construction yard and went around and beat his taxi all around and therefore they had charges against her. It was a Greek holiday and the only thing they can do is call the owner. And the owner owned lots of cabs and buses and so eventually they got off. But I told them "Yes, cry, keep on crying because the Greeks hate to see a woman cry." And they eventually got off, but they didn't get their car paid for either, unfortunately.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point? We're up to 1969. Where did you go?

MURPHY: Well, I went to Bombay, India.

Q: Great, well, we'll pick it up in 1969 on your way to Bombay.

MURPHY: Okay.

Q: Today is the seventh of October, 1999, Margaret, you're off to Bombay. You were in Bombay from when to when? I like to put the beginning.

MURPHY: Let's see, I went to Bombay in November, I think, 1969. And I stayed there until January of 1973.

Q: Well, good solid tour. What was your job in Bombay?

MURPHY: Well, I was Chief of the consular section. It was just a two-man consular section when I went there with eight national employees, but it was the largest consular section in India.

Q: Well I imagine it was quite busy. Can you give me a feel for, first India in '69 what your impressions were of India and then Bombay?

MURPHY: Well, when I arrived in Bombay, everyone at the post liked the place. So that obviously influenced me. I arrived there in the middle of the night and was taken to visit

people over at the Washington house, which was where most of the Americans lived. Subsequently I was taken on a trip around Bombay throughout most of the night. So I basically stayed up for about forty-eight hours straight and went on to work on Monday morning. And my impressions of Bombay were pretty limited because I arrived there very late at night, couldn't see much, rode around town, it seemed okay to me. After I'd been there awhile, though, what puzzled me about Bombay was that I thought everybody had tuberculosis. I saw red stuff all over the streets, like they were spitting out blood. Turned out it was beetle nut juice. So we had all this around the streets but at least it wasn't blood. I was very impressed with the Indian employees, they're probably some of the best I've ever had. Very intelligent, very well educated, very hard workers, always. You occasionally ran into someone who was more of an Indian-type worker who preferred people doing things for them, but most of them were really go-getters. And they had a lot of work. They had a two-year backlog in immigrant visa issuance.

Q: Good heavens.

MURPHY: And I had been told, that was my job, to get rid of that two-year backlog.

Q: Who was Consul General when you were there?

MURPHY: Daniel Braddock was the Consul General when I arrived. He was there most of the time I was there; later David Banes came.

Q: What was the immigration flow like from Bombay that you were seeing to the United States? Was it immigration or were these visitor visas?

MURPHY: We had some visitor visas, a lot of student visas, but the immigrant visas were of professional people. We didn't get the lower level type workers such as carpenters or people of that type that the British were getting, and that we had gotten in Athens when I was there. We had professionals, people who were engineers, they were doctors, and in those days doctors could get to the United States if they passed the correct test. So they were always very highly educated people and they spoke very good English, although when I arrived I didn't understand the Indian accent. And actually asked for an interpreter, the first time I found out that the person was speaking English. It took me about a month or two before I...

Q: It takes awhile to sort of adjust one's ear.

MURPHY: Now I don't know why I couldn't understand...

Q: Yes, yes. Was there a problem of issuing say, student or other, particularly just plain visitor's visas of people sort of slipping through and trying to get to the United States, to be immigrants using the non-immigrant process.

MURPHY: You had some of that, but no more than in Greece. Our refusal rate I don't think was even quite as high as it was in Greece. The Indians didn't seem to come to us

to apply; the bad cases didn't seem to come to the United States consulate to apply. They applied more to the British consulate.

Q: Yes, well of course there was a much larger British community as well. What about, you must have issued quite a few student visas, didn't you?

MURPHY: Yes, that was probably the largest category of non-immigrant visas, rather than visitor visas.

Q: Mainly engineers and that sort of thing?

MURPHY: Engineers, yes, and mostly graduate students. Some undergraduate as well. But the Indians, because it was hard to get jobs, even in their own country continued to go on to get many graduate degrees. I had a couple of people who worked for me, had a couple of master's degrees.

Q: What was your feeling as you started to move around Bombay? Was it difficult to adjust, was it as bad as I've heard Calcutta was, poverty and all that?

MURPHY: Well, I imagine it wasn't as bad. I never got to see Calcutta. I imagine it wasn't as bad as Calcutta but, like I say my impressions are formed from my colleagues who were already at the post. And it was very nice because it was a very mixed environment. We socialized a lot with the Indians, with our colleagues from different consulates and the Deputy High Commission, British Deputy High Commission. It was just a wonderful time socially. The Indians liked Americans generally. Some of them didn't care that much for the U.S. Government and many certainly did not care for Nixon, who was President at the time, but they liked Americans, and we got along very well with them.

Q: This is during the Vietnam war, were there demonstrations and all that sort of thing?

MURPHY: No, they didn't seem to be that concerned about the war. What I remember most was when Nixon was running for re-election.

Q: This would be '72.

MURPHY: Yes. And I was a Republican then. I was very much offended at their comments about Nixon that he could never win. All I could read was what in the Indian papers. We didn't have access to American papers, and it seemed like Nixon was going to lose. According to them, there was no way he could win. And they said, "After all, he's the son of a grocer." And I said, "Well, my father was a caterer, so I don't see anything wrong with it." His father actually wasn't a grocer; he owned a grocery store I understand. But they were very snobby in terms of class systems and that offended me to some extent. They didn't seem to include me in it, but I always liked to point that out to them.

Q: Well I, this is the thing, I think that for Americans usually, we don't belong to a class. So we're not players in it. This is true in other countries but India is particularly.

MURPHY: Particularly so. Yes, the Indians, well, they were class conscious and their caste system seemed to be broken along color lines as well. Although they vehemently denied it, you could see it when you went to the police station. All the officers were fair skinned, and the underlings were darker skinned.

Q: Did that ever impact on you at all?

MURPHY: Well, you know I think it did. I had quite a bit of ignorance about the color there being important. The first time I was aware of it was my vice consul had denied a visa. And the grandfather, who was applying for a visa for his grandson, asked to see the supervisor. So I went out and I talked to him. And it was a bad case. The parents were residents in the States. They were sending the young boy to visit the parents, so to speak. And I confirmed the denial. Later the Consul General received a letter from the man saying, "This skinny little black lady said that she was a supervisor, and she should be told that she shouldn't say things like that, and that it was wrong for her to come forth and say that she was a supervisor." (laughter) That was the first time I ever thought about color, but no one ever said anything to you, to your face.

Q: How did the caste system and all work in the Embassy under the local employees? Was this a problem or were we pretty much getting kind of the same class.

MURPHY: I was getting a reading mostly from the same class in terms of the professional staff of the Embassy. Where we saw it was a General Services Supervisor who worked at the Consulate. He also supervised the servants' quarters where we lived at Washington house. And there was an incident that pointed out very clearly that he was a Brahmin and that our servants were from one of the lower castes. And one of the servants, actually it was a servant of my Vice Consul who apparently hit this man, and that was a no-no. I mean, you never hit a Brahmin if you were from another caste. And he, the Vice Consul and the supervisor, General Services Supervisor asked him to fire, and refused to fire this young man. And so he came to me, the General Services Supervisor, claiming that my Vice Consul had hit him, and that I should do something about that. Well, of course I called him, asked my Vice Consul and he explained to me what had happened. And it turned out it was just the personal embarrassment of being hit by a lower caste person and then they're not firing that person, just letting that person stay there to continue to face him. The Americans were unhappy about the situation, not that we wanted anyone to fight, but just the fact that he had the nerve to do so.

Q: In Bombay at that time what was your impression sort of, was there a ruling class or the business class, was this an important group?

MURPHY: One of my very good friends, the Singanya family, they had large industries of, I don't know how many different industries they had but they had them all over India. They'd fly small planes around, someone would meet us when we arrived someplace

with refreshments, then take us to a little guest house that the company had. So they were elegant, but most of the Indians who were of that caste, or class I should say, were not very pleasant to be around because they were very snobbish. This particular person became like a brother of mine. He was just very much a Democrat with a small d, and accepted people of all different kinds, including Anglo-Indians who were sort of outside the caste system. But depended on individual people. I even met a man who had been married to Nehru's sister. Who lived in one of the only houses I think that existed in Bombay because Bombay was full of just apartment buildings. And he lived in a house that had been built by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. Very nice house. Strange, to see a house in Bombay.

Q: What was the impression you were getting from them about what was happening in New Delhi? Sort of, New Delhi was just not particularly, I think in the political life, did they sort of almost ignore it?

MURPHY: No, they were very much involved. I think they dominated the political life there, although Maharashtra State is one of the more important States in India, and Bombay is the cosmopolitan center. But the politics in Delhi were what controlled things even in the State, the State legislature. And things were all broken along the lines of the congress party and the parties that they had nationally.

Q: Who was Prime Minister when you were there?

MURPHY: That was Indira Gandhi. I met her, actually.

Q: How was she regarded by the people that you knew in India? In the circle you were dealing with.

MURPHY: Well, in the circle that I dealt with, of course she was very prominent and very well liked and they were all supportive of the Congress party and that would be the party that was in power at the time. They were all professional people -- doctors, lawyers, owners of travel agencies, heads of the Airline companies. So the level of people we dealt with, even some of the members of the State government were friends of mine. It was a pretty high level group of people but I also mixed with people who passed through. Those were the days of the hippies you know, '69 to '73.

Q: What about American Citizen Services? You know when I was in Athens, after you were there, we were catching them when they were coming back after having done their thing, and usually carrying some hashish or something from Nepal or Afghanistan or India. What about on the ground were the American sort of hippie types?

MURPHY: Well, we had a lot and it was interesting. Delhi probably had the most, and it got worse as it got up to Calcutta. Went from New Delhi to Bombay to Madras to Calcutta. And there were fewer up here but by the time they got to Calcutta they were pretty bad. Those were the worst cases. It was pretty easy taking care of the Americans there. They got into trouble a lot for various things, simple things like wearing Indian

dress. The Indians didn't like hippies, and when they wore Indian dress they were hippies and therefore the Indians didn't really like them. They had a lot of drug problems but not so much carrying drugs as using drugs. You had people who went crazy and I think it was almost a temporary type of craziness, from drugs. But I had a lot of cooperation from the Indian police. If I could get them to leave the country, they usually would release them from prison.

Q: What would you do, just so to get them off, I mean talk to the police, the police would present them at the gangplank, at the stairs to the airplane and off they go?

MURPHY: No, they didn't usually escort them. What they would do if they were arrested for something, they always let me know, they were very good about that. They also kept Americans in very clean, nice surroundings. Much nicer than most other places where I had been involved that are presumably more advanced than India. They're considered first class prisoners because they were foreigners. And they would simply _____ and I would arrange for a ticket for them, and they had agreed to leave, and they had reservations, then the police would let them leave. Without keeping them there and punishing them, whatever the charges were.

Q: Did you end up going to trials and things of that nature?

MURPHY: Only one. We had the longest term American prisoner in India, Daniel Walcott, who was a legend in India. He was a young man. His colleague was a Frenchman. They were young, they were fairly handsome young men apparently. And they were smuggling gold presumably. Those were the charges. And he was charged with various things throughout India. He had trials in Delhi, also Bombay and then Madras. But he ended up in Bombay, that was his last place, and that's where they kept him pretty much. So I visited him quite often. He was in the state of Maharashtra but outside of Bombay, and I did visit him a couple of times. And when he got out of prison that's where they released him, in Bombay. And the man who was in charge of the office was a good friend of mine. It was the office that controlled prisoners in the government. That was just one of his portfolios. When Daniel Walcott was released we put him up somewhere, in I think one of the little homes or Salvation Army, something of that type. But he would come over to Washington house to spend time with the Americans because he had been away from Americans for so long. Told us some of his stories and why they thought that he was such a hero. Because they maintained that when he escaped once from prison, he flew a small little plane, I don't know what kind of plane it was, but it was a small one that could fly low, apparently. Well, the Indians tried to chase him with their fighter planes, and he flew to Pakistan. And they said in leaving India, one, he flew over the prison and dropped food to his fellow prisoners, flew over to Pakistan, and they allowed him to land only because he was being chased by the Indian Air Force. And they were happy that he was able to escape from them. And he said he was flying low, they couldn't fly low for that long because they were in jet planes. But he was the longest term prisoner that I had. They followed him around until they allowed him to leave and they kept him there about two months because he had some tax charges against him for tax evasion and other charges that he had to settle before he left. But they were very

surprised when they saw this head of the government socializing with him. Some one that they were following. And he knew who he was. I explained, "You know, he's my charge." And he was a very charming fellow, telling us little stories that had been told about him, most of which were not true.

Q: Did the Bombay movie industry impact at all on you there?

MURPHY: Yes, it did. The best musicians in India were there, because they played for the movies. James Ivory used to come to India to make movies, he's well-known now of course for a lot of his movies with Merchant and Ivory films.

Q: Ivory and Merchant, yes.

MURPHY: They made a lot of films at the time. I met them at parties in Bombay.

Q: There wasn't much interchange between Hollywood and Bombay as far as movies, I mean each did their own thing.

MURPHY: Other than James Ivory, Merchant there wasn't any that I could see.

Q: Did you find in Bombay that it was difficult being an American or not?

MURPHY: As an official American? No, I didn't think it was difficult being an official American. I thought it was a little difficult for the young people who were traveling, who were really very honest, and by and large did not get into trouble. The largest majority of them were, I thought, pretty good. A few got in trouble only for drugs. I remember one young man they had put him in the mental institutions, they said that he was crazy. Well I went to visit him. Turned out most of the people that they said were crazy were Southern Californians, and that's where I come from. So I usually recognize a certain kind of sense of humor that they would have. And often they got in trouble because of that. The Indians did very strange things that were amusing to Americans. This one young man said that they said he was crazy because, of course he was laughing at them. He told me some of the things that they did. I said, "Well, they maintain that you're crazy and they're not gonna let you out of here until you act like they do, so you laugh when they laugh, don't laugh when they're not laughing." (laughter) And when I talked to him he seemed perfectly normal to me, although they could not determine that he was normal. And I think there is a difference in culture and that makes it very difficult when you have someone who is not quite normal who really does have mental problems. We did have one person, one American, who had been a mental problem but as far as they were concerned he was normal. But he would walk through the streets, marching through the streets preaching, throwing his money away. He kept all his money at the consulate, with me. I'd give him small amounts of money, to cash in at the time. He would complain about that but he didn't want to take all the money. But he'd say "I want my money, you're keeping my money." I said, "Take as much of it as you want." I'd give it to him and it would be gone the next day. But he was welcome to come back and get it whenever he wanted to, but I did keep it. And it had been kept by my predecessor.

Q: Did you get up to New Delhi at all or was there much interchange between Bombay and New Delhi? Embassies, Consulate Generals?

MURPHY: The Embassy was not supervisory over consular functions, as it is now. At that time I was considered the senior consular officer in India and went to a couple of conferences representing India. We did have consular conferences, with all of the consular officers from Delhi. They were held in Delhi. From Calcutta and Madras, they would go up there for conferences once a year. The most wonderful things about India, which anyone who had gone there in those days had, was a two week seminar in Delhi to orient you to India. And that's I believe one of the reasons why everyone was so fond of India. You learned how they thought about things. Such as when Indians go around and they spit in the streets. They walk in the streets and then they go into their houses, but before they go into their houses they take their shoes off. So Americans would say, "Oh, how dirty your streets are, how can you stand it?" And they said, "Yes, but we don't take that into our houses, we take our shoes off before we go into the house. You Americans walk in all of that and you walk into the house with it." Or the way that the Indians would, say, blow their noses. They don't use anything.

Q: Blow it out.

MURPHY: Blow it out. And we say, "Oooh, how nasty." And they say, "Well, usually, you blow your nose in a handkerchief. And you put it back in your pocket." (Laughter) Everything has an explanation on both sides and because of that it made it very interesting, and made it much more acceptable. People could understand India and the Indians whether they agreed with them or not. You weren't opposed to things because you didn't understand what was going on. Even in terms of being vegetarian, and there had been tons of vegetarians.

Q: How did you do in your two-year backlog?

MURPHY: Well, we, I came up with a way of getting rid of it.

Q: And how was that?

MURPHY: The first thing I did was stop all overtime, so I could see what the staff was capable of when they were rested and working normal hours, and to see where the backlogs actually fell. They had a very big backlog of correspondence. And I saw that there was no way they were ever gonna get to that. They had about six huge boxes of correspondence, and in those days no computers, no way to really handle that amount of correspondence. And so what I did was ask the consul general if I could destroy all except for one month. What I would attempt to do would be to get rid of the last month's and keep up with all the incoming, which he agreed to. I explained it was just going to be impossible to do otherwise. So I put the staff to work overtime doing that, and just that, a limited amount of overtime, because they were working so hard they were tired. They didn't produce that well during the day. Then to get rid of the two year backlog in

immigrant visas, what we did is simply trained the entire staff to do immigrant visas. They would come in two Saturdays a month, even my secretary. She was a fast typist. She learned to type immigrant visas. The Vice Consul and I did all the interviewing. We would handle maybe about a hundred cases on a Saturday. Interviewing and taking care of a couple extra hundred people every month, doubling our output, we eventually got rid of the backlog. First we had to convince Washington to send us the numbers that we needed, because they couldn't believe that we would use that many numbers in a month. We explained that we had our way of using them and we got rid of the backlog. They continue to do that rather than staff up properly to handle the backlogs. The Australians were in Bombay and they had very discriminatory policies. They let very few Indians in, even the highly educated and professional people, like doctors. And they needed doctors, they needed those people, but they didn't let them in. So one time their senior career government official in immigration came to visit. They had a cocktail party for him, and we were discussing our different policies of immigration. And I said, "You know it's too bad that you don't let more of the Indians in, the highly qualified ones that you need, because they are very good, and we get a number of them. We take as many as we can get, although we're limited only by our staffing. We don't have enough staff to handle all the people who apply." And he said to me, "Well, have you ever considered that that's why they keep your staff limited? So that you can't issue visas to the Indians? That that's the way they do it?" So in my consular package I explained that to Washington and I got an additional officer and two additional national employees. (laughter) So it helped me.

Q: Oh yes. Well, you left there in '73, must have left almost reluctantly, didn't you?

MURPHY: No, I was getting the feeling when I was there that I was stagnating, not getting anywhere. I had been there the whole time. I'd had one home leave and I wanted to move on. So I actually took a direct transfer via leave in the States to study French, to go to be in Vientiane, Laos.

Q: So you went to Vientiane in seventy?

MURPHY: '73. July of '73. I went to Vientiane, yes.

Q: You were in Vientiane from '73 to when?

MURPHY: July '73 to about September of '74. About six months before the fall of Indo-China.

Q: Well, what was Vientiane like when you got there in late '73?

MURPHY: They still had the war going on, and I did not get involved as my predecessors had in the support that they had for pilots. Somehow they took that portfolio away from the consular officer when I arrived. There had been men in that, and so I was doing just consular work. And it was not a terribly busy place because they didn't have many people who qualified for immigration. A few from other countries. I never saw a Lao person immigrate actually the whole time I was there. And that's a Lao. Although

some Lao friends of mine eventually did immigrate thanks to some help I gave them while I was there. They had a Thai national who had been the senior national in the consular section who had to deal with the Lao when they did come in to the consular section. And that's like the Indians and the Pakistanis; the Thai and the Lao do not get along. They used to call this national employee "Mr. Ambassador", because whatever he said sort of went. He had been there a long time. And it was very difficult to try to get a Lao employee in there and pay him a reasonable amount of money. I eventually got one Lao employee, and he was paid so little money that his salary did not even pay for the rice for his family. He had to go out hunting. I must admit this Thai employee did help him, took him out hunting to help get food for his family. But that's how little he got paid. And I could do nothing to get his salary increased.

Q: Why was that?

MURPHY: You know, I really don't know. They had very few Lao employees. We had mostly third country nationals. I started training him, so that he could, I would hope, eventually take over. We weren't planning on the fall of Indo-China, we were planning on staying there. That he should be well enough trained, and that the third country nationals were there only until such time as you could get people from the country sufficiently trained to take over those jobs. But I could not get him an increase in salary. And he tried his best, you know, the young Lao boy. Tried to read and learn. And he was very cooperative. It's just that he wasn't given much responsibility. And there wasn't a whole lot to do. And his English was not that good in terms of his being able to read and write English. So it was difficult.

Q: Vientiane is a pretty small place, wasn't it?

MURPHY: It was a very small place, but with a very large diplomatic community. It was one of my favorite places for playing bridge. In the early days of the Foreign Service bridge was much more common. So I met a lot of people through bridge, in my earlier posts and in this particular one. I played bridge almost on a nightly basis with a group of Ambassadors, actually, from the international control commission in Laos. It was the Indians and the Poles and the Canadians. The Canadian fellow did not play, but the Indian Ambassador and the Canadian Ambassador and their staffs played bridge, and we played bridge almost nightly.

Q: Was it a wartime atmosphere there?

MURPHY: Uh, yes, that you couldn't go outside of Vientiane. Outside the city limits. Likewise when I arrived there they had a curfew. And you had to be in by 12. But it wasn't a dangerous atmosphere, at least I never thought it was dangerous, even though when I was there once they did have an attempted coup. The Lao tried to take over the government. They had tried in the past. Interesting thing was I was completely unaware of this attempted coup. I thought it was a plot; there was a flying club, they were flying overhead. And I didn't know what they were doing. And I apparently, according to people I've talked to since, was one of the only people left in the embassy that day, cause

I had gone to work, thank you, not realizing anything was happening. But I was in another building. And so I didn't have that much contact with people where I was. So I simply went to work. And I only noticed the men with the guns behind the sandbags when I left the Embassy.

Q: Did you get involved consular work, particularly visas for third country nationals who were going to the United States for training and all, pretty international group there, wasn't it?

MURPHY: We did handle getting visas for the American couriers who were traveling to China which had just opened up at the time. And we had a Chinese embassy there. So I would go to the Chinese Embassy to apply for visas for our couriers. And generally speaking they didn't have too much trouble but my Thai employee, he got confused because he translated for me, unfortunately between French and English and Hebrew, and he'd be confused as to which language he was translating. I could tell from that that the Chinese consul did speak and understand English, but he never wanted to admit it.

Q: What about the war in Vietnam? Were people kind of watching that going on, this was part of this time you were there, was during the peace time, the supposed peace agreement and all that, but it wasn't working very well.

MURPHY: Well, see they had their own problems in Vientiane. They were supposed to form a joint government between the Pathet Lao which were the Communists of Laos and the Nationalist government. And the Americans kept pushing them to form this joint government. Of course they kept delaying, they were in no hurry. And I think they were very prophetic in that very shortly after forming this government they were out altogether. They did form the joint government while I was there. That made it difficult to do what little consular work we had. Two of the worst cases I've ever had in protection of American citizens abroad were there. One was because of that joint government. One of our citizens, who lived there with his Thai wife and had a business, killed three national people, two who were Thai and one who was Lao who attempted to rob him. And he was taken and put in jail, but presumably he would have been released by the nationals. But the Pathet Lao would not allow him to be released, and kept him. When I left Laos he was still in prison. The other case involved a Lao woman who had married an American. She had divorced him and left the child from their marriage with that American man who still lived in Laos. She married another, older American; she was a younger woman. And within one year she married the American, went to the States, became a U.S. citizen, and participated in his murder, along with her Lao boyfriend.

Q: My goodness.

MURPHY: And had been arrested. So I was responsible because she was an American citizen for protecting her, taking care of his effects. The Americans were very upset that I was helping her, which I was required to do by law because she was an American citizen. And Laos had the French system of law but they also have the traditional system of law where it's based upon how the people of the community think. Initially they did not arrest

her because the people of the community felt that she was innocent. Then people came and sensed that she did participate in this man's death, and so they put her under arrest. But it was not based upon any regular legal system, it was more upon how the community felt. And she was released before I left, as a matter of fact. And in the end she brought charges against the U.S. government for the death of her husband in a dangerous situation and won the trial, won the case, suit against the United States. Wrongful death, or whatever it was, working man's compensation act or some title. I'm not really sure what the law was but I remember I had to give a deposition when I got back to the States in the case. And we lost the case, which I thought was very surprising.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

MURPHY: When I arrived John Gunther Dean was chargé.

Q: When you left in '74, why did you leave so soon?

MURPHY: Well, actually I had trouble with the officers getting involved in the work. At one point actually there had been a threat against me because of some visa I had refused. Apparently it was a friend of someone's friend, and I didn't really know that much about it, and I don't even know who the person was. I know who the friend of the person was. They had made a complaint. But I had a very difficult time there because my supervisor was the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q: Who was that?

MURPHY: Chapman.

Q: I want to say, Peter Chapman, no, I know ...

MURPHY: Can't think of his first name now, Chapman. But he arrived at the post, and I knew a lot of people in Vientiane at that time, a lot at the British embassy, and I remember I didn't meet him until a month after he had arrived at the post. I made no attempt to hide from getting an appointment to see him, but I met him at the British embassy. I was introduced to him by the British Ambassador. Which I thought was very peculiar because he had no interest in meeting me. Mind you, I was in another building, but still. It didn't mean that I didn't go to the other building. For some reason or another, and so he basically put me on this division of some other officer, was one of the junior political officers, maybe he was mid-grade political officer. And we didn't get along very well. And I never saw Chapman. I had gotten along so well with John Gunther Dean, who went off as Ambassador to Cambodia. Wonderful person.

Q: You know, John Gunther Dean is known as one of those, known as those Imperial Ambassadors who...

MURPHY: I got on very well with him. I liked John Gunther Dean. Well, he was really a person who was happy to become an Ambassador. I heard people complaining about him

because they said, “Oh, he was going around and smiling like a Cheshire cat.” I said, “Well, of course, if your career, and the pinnacle of it was to become Ambassador, well, of course you’re going to be happy, you expect him to be happy.” For him to be blasé would be the ridiculous things to me. So he was simply thrilled to death to be going as Ambassador anywhere.

Q: By the way, it’s Chris Chapman.

MURPHY: Chris Chapman. Exactly. Chris Chapman.

Q: Well then, what happened?

MURPHY: Well, I’m trying to think what did happen. I had gone there on direct transfer, and either I had to go and take leave and come back or I could just leave on an assignment to Washington. And they asked, “Well, what do you want to do? We think you should leave and go back to Washington.” And so that’s what I did. I had been out by that time since 1966. I don’t think that was the reason. The reason was we really weren’t getting along at all.

Q: Well, particularly in a small post like that, you can’t uh...

MURPHY: And we had had an inspection. It was a pretty big post though, Vientiane. I guess in terms of State Department employees it was a fairly small post, but it was an extremely large post given all the other, AID and whatnot. We had an inspection while I was there, and it was an inspection that set the tone for my attitude toward inspectors thereafter. The post had not taken care of the consular work very well. They concentrated on their duties with the American pilots, the consular officers had. And so they had years of backlogs. They made a lot of really bad decisions regarding citizenship. It’s the only post I’ve ever been where I’ve had to take, at Washington’s instructions, take citizenship away from three people who had been determined to be U.S. citizens by predecessors. So that did not make me very popular, but these were instructions from Washington and these were decisions that I thought were poorly made. The records weren’t very good. They hadn’t filed or culled the records. They had old records going way back. They hadn’t sent records to Washington. They should have. So I was working through this process of trying to clean up the files. You know, I’m the file person. I do like to have nice, neat files. Well, the inspectors came. I explained to them what I was doing. And they wrote in my report that “Miss Murphy does not have a handle on the files at the post and we are encouraging her to work on those.” And I was not happy at all. I said, “Will I ever tell inspectors what I’m doing? They will find what they need in the future. I will never, ever discuss with inspectors, anything about the problems at the post that I feel I am dealing with.”

Q: In ’74, where did you go?

MURPHY: I came back to Washington for my first assignment back in Washington.

Q: Doing what there?

MURPHY: Came back to the visa office, worked in what was called at that time the Field Operations Division. I had Middle East, since I had been there, and at that time Greece was considered part of the Middle East. So that was considered my part of the world. And the East Asian bureau wasn't called that at the time, I think. I don't recall the initials, they've changed them all now, but it's basically the parts of the world that I had handled before, including Greece and the Middle East. Worked there for about a year and a half, maybe about a year. Then I spent a second year in what was called the coordination division, called to handle security advisory opinions. So I dealt with that for a year, where you coordinate with the Agency, FBI, people to get clearances for people, make determinations on cases. Then I started a year with Ron Somerville. I had worked with Ron many years before when I had been in the intern program. So he wanted me to come to work for him. It was the first job that they called the ... I'm not sure what titles they used, it's called post management but it was basically working in CA.

Q: He was the executive director.

MURPHY: He was Executive Director, right. There were only two of us at the time. They expanded it to be a larger number of officers afterwards but there were initially two of us who worked with Ron, helping with administrative matters with the posts.

Q: Well, going back to when you were the visa office, particularly when you were in sort of the coordination side, was there much concern about advisory opinions, were there sort of battles with the post on advisory opinions? How were these things working?

MURPHY: Well, there weren't really battles in those days. Communism was very important. The Greeks coordinated with the American Embassy in providing files and information about Communists and the post would send in, as they should, these decisions. I don't remember any fights between posts. The biggest thing was trying to get the decisions back in a timely fashion, was the hardest problem. I remember Guyana and I think Libya as well was one of the areas I handled. And at the time they had a number of people who were considered to be Communists.

Q: Did any cases come through your office and because of political sensitivity they kept bouncing farther and farther up the food chain?

MURPHY: No, I don't recall that happening. Now maybe it was because the supervisors took the cases that were more politically charged.

Q: Well, an advisory opinion would come in, and where would that go? Would it go to you, or would it go to the legal people or what?

MURPHY: The advisory opinions from the coordination division would go directly to whatever office was assigned to that country. One personal supervisor kept track of all the cases that went through his area. It was broken into two or three different groups. And

then what we did was parcel them amount to where they had to go to the Agency, FBI, and follow up on those clearances. Most of those, when they came in, they were already sent automatically via cables and our job was simply to follow up and make sure we got an answer back from the desk officers. And they had received the cases and our job was to make sure what their answer was and get a clear answer back and we sent a reply back.

Q: I would imagine time would be quite a problem.

MURPHY: Yes. Timing was a big problem, and if there was a question about it, writing it up and trying to get a decision, you know from the head of the office. But I think generally speaking I never felt I had any problem with it. I enjoyed it, doing that kind of work, and writing it up, didn't have to write a lot of opinions, trying to get decisions.

Q: Well, Ron Somerville was executive director of CA is quite a character, in fact we've just finished interviewing him finally, a long time, Bill Morgan interviewed him.

MURPHY: Oh, really? Bill Morgan I knew too.

Q: Could you talk about working with Ron Somerville and how he operated?

MURPHY: Ron, I told him, he was Byzantine to say the least. I said he was so secretive about what he was doing that half the time he didn't know what he was doing. He never wanted to let us know anything, and when he asked me to go to work for him, I said, "Now Ron, you know how you are, you don't like to share information, and without information you can't work. So are you sure you want me to come to work for you, and that you're willing to share, and give me enough information to do something?" Well, he insisted that he could. The one thing I walked into and I'm sorry I did just see in the paper, I think it was last week, that Francis Knight died. Well she was head of the passport office, when I was working for Ron. I wasn't aware of the problems between Francis Knight and the rest of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA). She really didn't communicate with CA. She didn't allow her people to communicate with CA. I kept putting them in the most difficult positions and no one wanted to tell me. I would call them, ask to have meetings, or go over to visit them, have them come over to visit me on some issue. Finally someone told me, "Don't you know that every time we come to see you we have to report to Ms. Knight about it? And that's very difficult for us?" I said, "Well, the work needs to get done if you want decisions made." I can't remember what some of the problems were now, but there were ones that needed discussion with people from the passport office. Ron simply ignored it, he went ahead and made whatever decisions he had to, he did not let that stop him. He didn't take things personally. Ron was smart, and he knew a lot, but he kept most of it in his head. He didn't put things down. He knew how to get money, you know in consular sections, and we needed money for additional consular offices. Congress would approve a certain amount of money for the consular sections, and the Department would take it away and use it someplace else. He'd write these letters for the congressmen to Washington asking where the money had gone for this particular function. So we got involved in a lot of politics of that type, trying to track down money, to get the money actually assigned to the consular sections

to be used there. And Ron was very good at that. He knew where the money was, he had information about people and things, he knew where to get help.

I enjoyed working with Ron but I didn't likely do that much working for him. And so when a chance to go out to Beirut came up I took it.

Ron was not a consular person himself. He was an administrative man, and that's how I had known him initially.

Q: Well, I take it Ron Somerville ran pretty much a one-man show.

MURPHY: Pretty much a one-man show. And I think that's what finally led to his downfall, was that he kept being so close to his chest, not sharing with others. I'm trying to think of the name of the administrator who finally, tried to get Ron to leave, and that under whom he left, was a female administrator.

Q: Well, I want to say Joan Clark.

MURPHY: You're right, Joan Clark. You're absolutely right.

Q: This is second hand because Morgan had interviewed Ron and it'll eventually be on the record. Essentially Congress came up and said we had been malapportioning visas. We had not given enough visas to western hemisphere people, talking about a hundred thousand or more, and you've got to issue visas to these people in a catch-up thing. And so Somerville said we need so many people, so many officers, so many clerks, and so they looked around and found that the European bureau was asked to supply something like forty bodies. Joan Clark was his counterpart with the European bureau and she never forgave him. That's his story.

MURPHY: Oh, I see. That makes some sense. But I think also being an administrator herself. And he was a department based administrator person. I think she was Foreign Service, was she?

Q: She was Foreign Service, oh very definitely. She came in as a secretary, worked her way into the Foreign Service, served overseas, was very effective, in fact these are two very effective administrators, and they both were very hard-nosed, and that at one point Joan was the superior to Ron.

MURPHY: Yes, that was the downfall of Ron. Because he had a heart attack I think.

Q: He's fine now.

So in what, was it about '76 was it, you went out to Beirut?

MURPHY: '77.

Q: '77.

MURPHY: '77. I stayed in Washington about two and a half years.

Q: And then you went from '77 to when?

MURPHY: '77 to '79 to Beirut, Lebanon.

Q: What were you doing there?

MURPHY: There I was in charge of visas. There was a chief of the consular section. At that time it wasn't called a consulate general. It was just called chief of consular section, and I was the deputy put in charge of visas, both the immigrant and non-immigrant visas. The chief of the consular section handled the American services, such as they were. It was a reasonably sized post and again I, going into my downfall, was an officer. We did not hit it off very well, we had a different style. I wanted to leave the officers to do their jobs and I would review cases, because that's the way I like to be treated. I wanted to let the officers see a case if I was going to overturn it, and explain why I would overturn the case. It was a war zone, definitely. I didn't believe in being that strict with people, I believe in giving them a chance, I wasn't the kind of person who said, "Well, don't do this, put this in your reading." Or something, that wasn't my style. And I had trouble with one of the officers there. He was a black fellow who was older and he couldn't help it, he was a male chauvinist. And he simply was having difficulty being supervised by a black woman younger than he was. And we had various discussions about it. Well one day he took off, in the middle of the morning. He was supposed to be doing his cases. I had spoken to him about something and my two minutes, as he says, were up. And I said, basically, we'll take as long as we need to to get this issue settled. And he decided to leave. Well, instead of just leaving and going back to the line and doing his work, he left the Embassy altogether. And unfortunately my supervisor heard about it, and wanted to ding him for this. I'm not saying I agreed with what he did, but I realized that he was having problems working for a female younger supervisor. To me this was early on in our relationship. You needed to get the person to work with you, and that wasn't the way to do it. To threaten him with a memo and this type of thing. So that started it off.

Then unfortunately that was a post where we couldn't have cars. I was allowed to take my car. I had told them I would not go to Beirut if I couldn't take the car, since I just bought this new car. Well they said, "Oh, no problem, you could take your car." I got there and they wouldn't let me use the car. I got the car put in storage. Aside from the problems with the car, what people did there, what my supervisor was doing was riding around, getting rides from a particular national employee, who happened to be my secretary. Well, to make a long story short, it was more than just getting a ride, although they continued to deny it, and it led to all kinds of problems. And they're married to this day, as a matter of fact, but it created difficulties. He would go after other employees who worked for this person. So I didn't know what was happening. I didn't know how he was getting all these stories about various things. A couple of the girls, who were very good workers, hard workers, maybe they would take off a little too long at lunchtime for

something. Well, I'm not the kind to sit on people. If a job gets done and it's pretty reasonable, I don't believe in being so hard-nosed about timing. I learned to be very hard nosed with regard to myself only because like I said I'm either early or I'm late, so I had learned to be early. But I don't believe in being that hard because if you can get your employees to work for you and do the job that you want done, that was the important thing. And I thought I was getting a fantastic job from the visa employees. But he kept riding them for little things and creating problems in the section. And it was coming because my secretary, who saw everything of course, because she was sitting right there, and would report to him. So it didn't work too well. I stayed at the post but I...

Q: Who was in charge of the consular section at that time?

MURPHY: That was the person I had difficulty with.

Q: Who was that?

MURPHY: Jim Budeit. Jim Budeit. He seemed reasonable enough at first when I arrived, but he had little things that I just thought they were too harsh for no reason. I'm a pretty strict supervisor, so I hadn't expected anybody to be stricter than I am.

Q: What was the situation in Beirut when you were there, '77 to '79?

MURPHY: Well, actually the fall of '77 was probably the best period they had since they had evacuated in '75. I had taken my mother with me. That was her first assignment overseas, and you had no police on the streets. You had militia groups roaming around and we did live and work of course on the Muslim side, which was the west side of Beirut. It could be dangerous. You had to pay attention to these roving roadblocks. They would move from one place. They weren't always in the same place. And they had no official status but they had guns that made them official. And sometimes our drivers at the Embassy would not pay attention to them. They would wave if they had their diplomatic plates and go on by. Not with me in the car. You just stopped. They will let us by, but we just stopped. We did have one person shot there -- it wasn't an American; it was a cook at a restaurant I used to go to -- because he was drunk. Apparently he didn't hear them, had his windows rolled up, and they shot him. So it was possible to be shot but we didn't feel like we were in danger much. I remember I was looking for a place. The Embassy had put me in a place that didn't really suit my mother and me, it didn't have any closet space, very strange apartment. Two women having no closet space, so they said, "Well, go around, look and see what you can find." Went off into the Druze area where we had some apartment buildings where Americans lived. This driver who was Druze who was part owner of that building, said, "Well, walk back in there I've got another apartment, I'd like you to see it. Walk in there and just say that Fullock sent you." Or whatever his name was, I can't remember now. This other friend of mine went walking back in there, and all these men stuck with guns, you know. "Fullock sent us, we want to see the apartment." "Oh, ok fine." And just let us through. So it was that kind of thing, guns were very much in evidence and used but not, we weren't threatened, really.

Q: There weren't kidnappings at that time?

MURPHY: No. At that time there weren't any kidnappings. The only thing that we had, someone had gone to Israel, or it appeared that they had gone to Israel and then tried to come back in. They didn't like that. And there was a young man who was rumored to have been killed by the Muslims, but I don't really think that happened. We never did find evidence of this. And people weren't allowed to visit, you know, Beirut. Americans were not supposed to come into Beirut at the time, nor were our colleagues in Syria allowed to come in. We were allowed to go to Syria, but they were not allowed to come to Beirut.

Q: Who was our Ambassador at the time?

MURPHY: Well, when I arrived there it was Richard Parker. And then John Gunther Dean came in after him. Both were wonderful. Richard Parker was a superior officer, as was John Gunther Dean, I've always had respect for him and the joy of being back working with him.

Q: Was the Embassy threatened? You know, later we started having car bombs and all that.

MURPHY: Well, while I was there twice they did try to blow up the Embassy, but we think the shells came from the other side. Arafat was still in charge on the west side of Beirut when I arrived. So whenever something happened it was Arafat who took care of things. He didn't want anything to happen to the American Embassy, because he wanted them there to blame them for whatever he wanted to blame them for. And if anyone was going to do something to them, he was. So no one else was allowed to touch the American Embassy. We were generally safe. I was surprised because the Embassy had been shelled many times during the heavy part of the war and yet they didn't have a system for where we should go, what we should do. So the first time it happened I didn't know anything about it. I was sitting in my office and I heard this noise so I went running to my window. Our building was an apartment building. So we had little balconies, and doors that opened onto the balcony. So I went around my desk, out to check and see what had gone on. And the senior national employee in the American services side came right behind me, came out as well. Well, when the second shell landed, I nearly killed her trying to get back, away from that. We had all these applicants in the building in the consular section. And so my first thought was we had to all get out of there somewhere and get someplace safe. They were telling us to go down to the, they told me to get rid of your clients and get down to the basement. And I said, "I can't get rid of the clients, they can't go out there while they're shelling." So I insisted they all came with us. So we all went down, including my clients who were in there, down to the basement. There were tanks of fuel. We said, "This is not a good place, let's get the hell out of here." Out we went, running trying to find someplace else. In the meantime, one of the marines, who had tried to shut these big heavy doors that they had, metal doors with glass, got blown back by the second shell. The gunny came running and was giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation, but they couldn't find their special first-aid equipment. Nor did anyone

know where the nurse was. She had gone someplace to try to help someone, so she wasn't in the central place. So I mean there was no organization to the whole thing. We didn't know where to go. This was discussed after, so the second time we had a shelling we more or less knew what do.

Q: Who was shelling you?

MURPHY: We believe someone from over on the East side. They had to be Christians. And they were targeting the Embassy. I was told that the first shell was one that's sort of a range-finder, and the second and the third are supposed to be the ones that do the damage. So that's what I assumed. It certainly couldn't have been the Muslims because the direction it came was from the East side. That was the first time. Second time I was very lucky when they shelled the Embassy because I had gone to lunch with a friend. So we heard this noise. We thought they were dynamite fishing, which is what they did. Since there were no police in Beirut people could do what they wanted to. And although it was illegal to catch fish by dynamite they would do that, and that's what it sounded like. And then someone said, "Oh no, we think that they shelled the Embassy." So my friend and I finally got our bill, rushed back to the Embassy, couldn't get near the Embassy because they had shelled it. And a couple of our friends were hurt in that. Lebanese Employees were hurt. I always felt safe.

Q: There's such a large Lebanese community in the United States, I would have thought that visas particularly with the unrest there would be a difficult job, I mean people wanting to go and not planning to return and all.

MURPHY: We had a lot of Lebanese who were not good applicants. They were well-to-do, but they simply weren't planning to come back. Our largest number of immigrant applicants came from the Armenians. They were moving basically because of the danger. They couldn't run their businesses. But the Lebanese would go all over the Middle East trying to get visas. After I'd been there a couple of months I spent one month in Damascus, replacing the officer there. I got a number of the Lebanese coming in saying that they were told to apply in Damascus because it was better for them not to go the Embassy in Beirut. I said, "That's not quite true, because that's where I'm from." But they were well educated. Spoke very good English. They speak a mixture of English, French and Arabic together. They never speak just one language. That's one of the times I had to learn French, also for Lebanon, couldn't use it. We didn't have that much trouble with them. I remember one time a friend of mine saying that George Trabash was very grateful to me for having issued a visa to his cousin. I said, "One, I didn't know I had issued a visa to his cousin, but what would have happened had I not issued one to his cousin, that's what I'd like to know." Because it was dangerous in that sense. We had no real protection other than Arafat.

Q: What about social life there?

MURPHY: Well, because the Embassy was much smaller the social life was very nice because we mixed a lot with the Lebanese, and with people from other nations. Before,

the Embassy had been a huge Embassy with two hundred some people, but it was down to about fifty including all the marines. There were about thirteen marines. I formed a lot of good friendships there amongst the Lebanese. One of the people that I became friends with that I wasn't aware of at the time was a PLO artist, a chief artist of the PLO. He used to go to this restaurant that I would go to, and we'd sit and talk and all variety, we sort of agreed on things. I discovered that he was the chief artist for the PLO when I attended a fair that they had, and I saw these calendars that had Communist-type propaganda pictures on them. Pictures of little children being bombed by American planes and this type of thing. And I said, "Oh my goodness, who is that here with the Communist-type calendars?" And this friend of mine who was a professor of anatomy at the American University hospital poked at me in the ribs saying "Quiet! Quiet, Margaret!" Well, it turned out it was this friend of mine, and a couple of his paintings were in this. His weren't the ones that had the children being bombed, but it was his booth. The fair was for everybody, whether they were PLO, Communist, it made no difference who and what they were. Everybody was included in this little fair. And he was a good friend of mine, in fact he gave me a wood carving when I left, and I have it to this day.

Q: It's a difficult place. When did the kidnapping start?

MURPHY: That was after I left. They didn't have any while I was there. Our problem was to be able to cross over to the East side of Beirut. There were times you could, times you couldn't, and you had to check with the marines whenever you traveled. I was good friends actually with the mayor of Jounieh, which is a main city on the East side of Beirut. Sometimes I would get over there and have difficulty getting back because they were shelling the port, and going up through town was dangerous. I socialized with everybody. I didn't try to restrict who I socialized with.

Q: Well then you left there in '79.

MURPHY: In '79. Went to Peru. Lima, Peru. And there I went actually as the American Services officer. They had a large prisoner program there of Americans who had been arrested for drugs. They apparently had more trouble from these American prisoners in Peru than they did from all the other prisoners put together in Latin America. It's just the way that Peruvians treated people.

Q: You were there from '79 to when?

MURPHY: '79 to January, was it January or March? Early 1983. So three years.

Q: What was the situation in Peru when you arrived there as far as government and relations with the United States?

MURPHY: They had just elected the first democratically elected president, Garcia, and so I was there for his inauguration. I can't remember the name of who the leader who had been there before, whatever he was, whether he was military or whatever he had been.

What impressed me was that the democratically elected president was from the class of the people who basically were the rulers of Peru who were Europeans, not Indians. Peru has a large Indian population. And reasonably sized mixed population as well, but a very large Indian population. And a significant black community as well. I said, "This is the first country I've ever been in where blacks were higher than someone else." Because the Indians were treated very, very badly in Peru. They didn't consider them as anything. I remember when I arrived I was trying to hire someone to help with my house. They said, "Well, be very careful because they think that they're somebody now, so it's hard to get them to do anything." I thought, well, yes they are someone, and I will manage by paying them for work. But they would mistreat them in ways like my neighbor would not let her servants open the refrigerator to get water during the day. And they would come to my house and my mother would give them water. Things of that type, just sort of dehumanizing treatment. I liked the country in many ways, but it was a country that didn't really accept blacks either. They looked at blacks as non-people. They looked down on the Indians, they accepted the culture of the blacks.

I think they had a hard time dealing with me in that they didn't really want to look you in the eye and talk to you. They sort of look away. If there was anybody else there they could talk to, they would talk to that other person, even if they might be aware that that person was your junior, someone who worked for you. They didn't make it that difficult for me because I found quite a number of friendships amongst key people that I needed to know were working with prisoners. But they gave our prisoners such a very hard time there. I was surprised, having been in India, which was a much poorer country where you expect they'd be mistreated, but Americans were treated as first class prisoners in India, because they were foreigners. In Peru, they were treated very badly. Just before I arrived there had been a riot at the Lurigancho prison where most of the American prisoners had been held. These were the male prisoners. Most of our prisoners were men, and they were all there when I arrived for just drugs, nothing else. They'd gone in, beaten all the prisoners including the Americans, stolen their money and their food and just really mistreated them. And our job had been to try to do something about that. So they had just moved the Americans and the Canadian prisoners, who were largely French-Canadians, to a small prison by themselves. It wasn't exactly a prison; it was sort of like a house that had been turned into a prison in their port city, Callao. But it was sort of an awkward little prison, had a couple of hidden floors, and they kept just the Canadians and the Americans there. And they were threatening to kick them out of that little prison, but they had gotten used to being alone without having the Peruvian prisoners around them. They kept trying to get them to leave. They wouldn't leave. So they finally moved them all upstairs to the top floor and moved in the worst Peruvian prisoners that they had, the murderers, not the higher class prisoners, which drug prisoners are considered to be. And so the Americans and the Canadians started having a lot of trouble. And they wanted to move them all out, and they said, "Well, let's go to any prison you want to, name your prison, and we will let you go there." Well, they didn't want to leave, so they had barricaded themselves in. I had not been there that long, had to go to the prison, had to try to talk the American prisoners out from behind their barricades. I didn't do it, obviously. And then I took one of the younger black officers who majored in sociology, figured he could talk to them. There weren't that many black prisoners actually, there

were only two or three. Most of them were white prisoners and they were not from a poor class. One was a university professor. We had an ex-policeman, all kinds of people. Well-educated, generally speaking. And finally we got them to agree to leave, and most of them went back to this horrible Lurigancho prison. But with promises that they would receive regular visits. Rather than the infrequent visits we normally made, we made visits every two weeks to our American prisoners. I established a system where they could get money by writing checks. If they wanted food they would write, I'd give them these little checks, they'd write the check, but they had to sign it exactly as the signature that I had on record. So if it was signed incorrectly, it meant that they were trying not to pay somebody, and of course we wouldn't cash the checks if they were signed incorrectly. Nor would we cash a check for over and above a certain amount unless they had told us on the previous visit, "Okay, I've got this large amount to be paid to my lawyer, and I want two hundred dollars to go out of my account." We wouldn't pay over, I think, about fifty dollars or whatever the amount was. So that worked pretty well, that helped them. They really did not have as bad a life as they tried to pretend that they did, because they actually had servants in the prison helping them. They would hire other prisoners to cook for them, to wash their clothes, and do everything. But there were times when they wouldn't let us in, on occasion, for some reason, or we were supposed to be taking medication to them, and they thought the medication was something else. So they gave us often a difficult time.

Q: These were the authorities?

MURPHY: The prison authorities, yes. Well, we had to have permission from the superintendent of prisons, the equivalent of superintendent of prisons before we went. So we went through this process. It was pretty routine, they way we did it, but it was a very involved system.

Q: Did you get much congressional oversight?

MURPHY: We got some. We had... you put things out of your mind when they're not very pleasant. I had two prisoners; one had been a university professor in Hawaii, the other was an ex-policeman from Oregon. They maintained that they were innocent. Well, they had been caught with the drugs actually on them. They were also maintaining that American DEA officials were participating in their interrogation and were helping to torture and beat them when they were arrested. I couldn't prove it one way or the other, but they all seemed to come out with the same story even if they were convicted prisoners. But the problem was with these two prisoners. They had a lot of congressional backing because the ex-policeman's wife was very active and tried to get support for her husband. She became friends with the professor from Hawaii, and they had gone to what we would call the golden ghetto, which is the prison inside the hospital. So they were hospital prisoners, that they were sick and had something wrong with them. And you simply paid more money to get that. And they didn't treat the Americans well and that you couldn't get a court date. Often people were left in prison long past the date that they would have stayed even if they had been found guilty of their crimes. So it was a very corrupt system. I always use the story that a Puerto-Rican American told me: that he was

used to people being corrupt, he was used to having to pay to get something, but he'd never been in a place where you paid your money and you didn't get what you paid for. That they were very corrupt. There was no system or hierarchy that you could pay someone higher up and he would take care of everyone else below. Each person was independent and they could break down the system, and he couldn't get anywhere. So our biggest problem for our prisoners was getting a court date. They were always going to be found guilty, but they couldn't even get the court dates, so they could see what they could work out. They eventually had a prisoner transfer program. [Ed note: A program to transfer American prisoners back to the United States to serve sentences in their home country.] They had to be tried, convicted and get their sentence before they could be transferred, and they had trouble getting even a conviction. It was a very convoluted and difficult system. Because of this, these two decided, I guess, they were going to try to break out of prison. They decided on New Year's Eve when they had this grand plan to get the guards drunk so that they would be not so threatening to them. Someone related, I think he wasn't actually related, he was a friend of the ex-policeman from Oregon. He came in, tried to get them out, was unable to get past the guard, killed one of the guards and then ran. He had this little Volkswagen he was running around in, and he was being followed. He apparently left the Volkswagen with the briefcase that had all the information about the plan and the letter from these two telling what the plan was. And so the police picked that up and of course realized that they had participated in this murder of this guard. So in the end these two prisoners committed suicide. And they had written that in their document that if they got caught, they would commit suicide, because they knew that they would have really been treated very badly, if indeed they were caught like that. And this young man was eventually taken away, but of course we were always blamed for their suicide. So that was a very unpleasant situation for me.

Q: Well was there an investigation or anything of this nature, I mean on the part of the State Department afterwards?

MURPHY: No. Not really, because it was pretty clear-cut, what had happened. They had this letter, in their handwriting. The young man had fortunately got out of Peru, was back in the States. I'm not sure he ever admitted to what he had done but they had the evidence. We were never blamed by State Department, by the family though.

Q: Oh, yes. Who was the Ambassador when you were there?

MURPHY: Oh, let's see. The Ambassador was Harry Shlaudeman

Q: Do you remember who was running the consular section at that time?

MURPHY: Yes, Cy Richardson was there.

Q: What about life in Peru, was the Shining Path going strong at the time, or did that come later?

MURPHY: Well, they weren't going strong then and they were not dangerous then.

Toward the end of my stay a couple of times they blew up electrical power stations. Once they threw a bomb or something at the Embassy. But they always did it at night when no one was there. Their objective was never to hurt or kill people when I was there. That's what changed. And I always felt that Sendero Luminoso could have been of help to the Indians. Because somebody could defend them. And I would have thought, okay, well this is the obvious route, but they weren't interested in that either.

Q: Is this basically anarchy, sort of a theoretical anarchy?

MURPHY: Yes, anarchy. But no power base. Which they could have had so easily, from the Indian tribes. No one considered them at all.

Q: Well, I supposed it was mainly a university created movement. You had mentioned Chileans and social things. Did you find it, how were Americans treated? We had some real problems with the government there at various times. Expropriations of American property and...

MURPHY: It blows down to what the individuals relations were. Their attitude towards the drug prisoners was that the Americans wanted them to get rid of the drug problem, the Americans are creating the drug problem by coming down there and buying drugs. But actually these were all small time deals or purchases, personal supplies, not large quantities. And many of them admitted that they had tried to take drugs out but they didn't realize the police were after them because tons of the stuff was going from Peru up to the United States. So they didn't realize they were after the small people like themselves. And they never caught anyone who had any large quantity. Whenever our DEA did not have money, they never arrested anybody, only when the DEA had money. So I think they were being paid when they did arrest people. Otherwise it wouldn't have stopped so suddenly.

Q: Did you ever find, sometimes there's a divergence of interests, people representing the drug enforcement agency, the DEA are out to get as many drug traders arrested as possible and when an American falls into that category it's the consular officer's duty as you were saying to make sure they're treated well and not beaten up and all that sort of thing. Did you ever find yourself having difficulty with the DEA people?

MURPHY: Yes. I often had a disagreement with them because they would sometimes find out about an American prisoner and not tell us immediately. I said you can't expect us to cooperate with you in terms of the drugs, whatever we might know about drugs, if you don't cooperate with us. And we need to know immediately if an American is arrested so that their rights are protected. And we don't expect you to be sitting in. "Oh, we never sit in." Of course they would deny it. I said, "But they had your name, they described you. And yet you didn't tell us." And a prisoner told us they were arrested at a certain time when you were there, and we didn't find out till the next day. That's too late. And we did have problems with them. Sometimes we'd cooperate, and they would help us. I remember trying to help them once. They were trying to get somebody, pick someone up in the United States. And that was always fine with me. They picked up an

American in the United States outside my consular district for carrying drugs, that's my responsibility too, so that was fine, yes, tell them what plane they were gonna fly on. Where they were going to land, that's fine. But I didn't want problems with them in Peru because of the way they treated, or mistreated, I should say.

Q: Were you able, did you find yourself fighting the equivalent to a rather lonely battle because, or did you get, trying to get better treatment, so often the people in the political section, the Ambassador and others, the other issues, and then a bunch of drug dealers, even if they're American, are not a very sympathetic crew. Did you find you got much support?

MURPHY: Well, you know, I'm trying to think of his name [Edwin Gharst Corr], he was only there for a year. The Ambassador who came, who was extremely good, he was from Oklahoma, went to my mother's church, which is why I remember him so well. He was probably the most sympathetic. He went to visit the prisoners a couple of times, and I appreciated that, and he also appreciated having those that told him the truth. "It was me, I'm the one who took these drugs and I was caught legitimately, but I didn't realize they were after me when they had tons of it going to the States." And he was very sympathetic and helped as much as he could. I had fairly decent relations with the supreme court there. The secretary at the supreme court became a friend of mine so I was able to get some things done through that. It's a case of if you know someone personally, but it was still pretty limited, because it didn't control that many people down below.

Q: Well, this is of course always the hardest thing when you're in a hierarchy that doesn't work.

MURPHY: Yes. They worked very independently. The Americans were in the small prison in Callao, and they had a situation where one of my prisoners was stabbed by a Peruvian prisoner with one of these little knives they make from a spoon that they'd carved. And he had a very deep cut in his thigh, just opened it right up. Well the guards would not go into the prison to get him out to treat him. One of the Peruvian prisoners told me that he was up there, Jeff had been stabbed, and he needed to get out, he needed medical treatment. They wouldn't go up and get him. So finding this little clerk that they had, he agreed to go up and get him. So he went up, and this one Peruvian prisoner helped him get up there and get the fellow out. And he had this horrible gaping wound. So I asked them to take him to the hospital. You could use the embassy car, take your guards, I'll stay here, I'll get a cab, I'll come later, just get him to the hospital. They refused to do it. Instead they called for their own car; this guy is bleeding just profusely, getting weaker and weaker. Waited an hour and that was really offensive, an American car had been given to the police, with one of these gates between, mesh between the seats. And squeezed him into that car an hour later. He was okay in the end. But they didn't care, they gave him no treatment, they didn't even look at him. And he was bleeding all over the place; the Peruvian prisoner was helping him, and put a tourniquet on him. For years after that I used to hold my right leg when I talk about it, it was his left leg but that's the way I was looking at. It was the most excruciating thing I'd ever seen because they simply didn't care. If he had died, they wouldn't have cared, really. And

there was nothing you could do to get them to move or to act in what I thought was a reasonable way.

Q: You left there in '83, then what?

MURPHY: Left there in '83. I went to Athens, about March of 1983.

Q: You were in Athens again from '83 to when?

MURPHY: '83 to '86. And there just visas.

Q: How were you received by Greeks at this point? Are you, I mean, I'm talking about American diplomats too.

MURPHY: Well, I think American diplomats were received okay, but they weren't as friendly to Americans as they had been when I arrived there the first time. I of course was treated very differently because I had been in Greece before, and once Greek, always Greek. Plus, I had married my Greek friend to her American husband, so I was a *cumbara*. So I am family, when I get back to Greece, so I was treated quite differently. But Americans I think were treated well although there were periods before I arrived back, people I had told "Oh, go to Greece, yes you'll enjoy an assignment there." Who had not enjoyed it at all because they were not as friendly to Americans. The Greeks did not socialize that easily with Americans when I got back there. And I realized certainly after my three years there that I really hadn't formed any new Greek friends. All the friends that I had were my old friends. Of course I was older then, I had my mother so my social life was quite different, but I think in part it was because the Greeks treated people differently.

Q: How about the Embassy, were there a lot of demonstrations against the Embassy while you were there?

MURPHY: No. We had more demonstrations when I was there in the early years during the Vietnamese war, the Indo-Chinese war I should say, and there were a lot of demonstrations and bombs and, well, not bombs, there were a couple of bombings at the embassy the first time. The second time no.

Q: How about visa business? Was it pretty much the same thing, or was it a different class of people, different type of visa?

MURPHY: Well, it had changed. The Greeks no longer had such a backlog of immigrant cases as when I first arrived there. Now we had immigrant cases from all over, a lot of cases from Lebanon, from Tehran, people from different countries, not just Greeks. And in terms of the non-immigrants, we had some attempts to penetrate the Embassy through the consular section when I was there. I remember we had to restrict all Middle Eastern people from the Embassy. We created a booth outside in what would have been the patio in the old days. It was a closed area, but it was away from the Embassy, and we did all

the applications and all the interviews in the afternoon. And we rotated the officers; all the officers took turns, because there had been threats against one officer who was doing non-immigrants at the time. And eventually he left the post; his wife was too scared to remain. What had happened was that they would come and apply for visas, and they didn't seem to care whether they got the visas or not. That's what we noticed, that they were maybe just trying to check things out, what the procedures were.

Q: These were who? These were...

MURPHY: I don't really know who they were at the time. I think they thought they would be from the Middle East, from what particular group I don't know. But the attempt was probably to try to do something to damage the Embassy somehow. And so that stopped it. I remember I had a Lebanese friend living with me, and when her two sons would come to have lunch with me or something at the Embassy they had difficulty getting in. I had to sign them in because they were Lebanese. They were staying in my house.

Q: Did you notice sort of the visa situation matured as far as the Greeks were concerned? Not so much poor people going?

MURPHY: Yes, there wasn't the desperation and there wasn't the level of immigration. I did immigrant visas, and we didn't have the problems that we'd had before. We no longer had the communists because there were no records kept of communists so you had no records on hand, you didn't even get involved in discussing that. You had normal cases of people who were married to Americans, a lot of second preference cases. Some of the old fifth preference cases came up. But there wasn't the desperation at all so you didn't have this difficult non-immigrant visa situation with the Greeks; you had problems with other nationalities.

Q: Which in a way are easier to deal with, since they're not, they don't have their families involved.

MURPHY: Well, except, we got a lot of pressure on the Iranians visas. They had a lot of influence in the United States. And the interesting thing was of course when I was there that Ann Swift came. She had been one of the hostages in Iran, and she was probably more liberal with the Iranians than the rest of us were. She didn't bear them as much ill will as we did. One of my national employees who would handle immigrant visas had come from Iran. She was Greek, but had worked for the American Embassy in Iran, and had left. People said it could be dangerous, get your family out of there, and she had fortunately left and gotten her family to leave. She worked for us in Athens, so many of them tried to find their way to this young lady because she spoke Farsi. And so they had someone they could communicate with very easily in terms of the immigrant and the non-immigrant cases. Because there were a lot of Middle Easterners in Athens we took over the Lebanese files, bringing them to the national employees from Beirut to take care of their cases. So we ran two visa sections, with one side being the Lebanese and one being the Greek.

Q: During this time, how was Athens, had it gotten pretty crowded?

MURPHY: Very crowded, much more expensive. When I was in Athens the first time my rent remained the same for the three and a half years I was there. When I was in Greece the second time it went up every year. And it was difficult to get around. It changed. Before, the Greeks had a siesta every day. When I got there, there was rush hour throughout the day, throughout the night, two or three in the morning was like two or three in the afternoon. In the old days, between two and four and five o'clock in the afternoon, the streets were empty. You'd get around, get your errands done, do anything you wanted to. Not anymore. Everything was just outrageously crowded. They had a system where only odd number license cars could drive one day and even numbered the next day. They couldn't let all the cars in the street at one time. People just bought two cars and had one with even numbers, and one with odd numbers. (laughter) Greeks always find a way to beat the system. But it was terribly polluted. You could no longer even get in to see the Acropolis, which before you could walk in, you could touch the throne. You couldn't get near it. You were standing outside. And that was sad. All those changes, even in Delphi. Going to Delphi was no longer the same. You couldn't sit in the stadium, look into the moonlight and drink wine. You were locked outside the stadium and the antiquities there. Just a complete change in what you could get near, what you could do. The food was changing. I used to enjoy the Greek food. They now had a lot of the American, I guess it was American food, I wasn't that familiar with it myself, fast food type, useless food. Also things had changed, well, that had changed earlier, in terms of the bouzouki. Those were not that popular the second time around. The nightclubs had changed, become very Plaka. Almost invariably all the places in Plaka were very touristy. No longer the eateries that we had had before.

Q: Well, who was in charge of the consular section when you were there?

MURPHY: Dick Williams was there most of the time. He arrived about two or three months after I did, and he was in charge.

Q: I thought this might be a good place to stop. You left there in '86, and we'll just put at the end, where did you go?

MURPHY: I went to the Philippines. Manila.

Q: Today is the fifteenth of May, the Ides of May, 2000. We've now reached 1986 and you're going to the Philippines. Was that at your request, or how did that work out?

MURPHY: Yes, that was on my bid list. I loved Asia. I was very happy to be in Manila.

Q: Well, you were in Manila from 1986 to when?

MURPHY: To 1988. At that time it was a two-year tour since it was a hardship post.

Q: What were you doing there?

MURPHY: Well, I was in visas. I was the deputy chief of the non-immigrant visa section. And so we handled all the more difficult visas and helped supervise the junior officers.

Q: Well before we get into the actual operations, what was Manila like, the Philippines like during this '86 to '88 period?

MURPHY: Corazon Aquino had just come in about six, seven months before I arrived there, and it was, I thought, very peaceful, everyone was happy with the way things were going. But still the Philippines has always had a very, very large number of people who tried to get to the United States. So the thing that I think characterized the post the most to me was the fact that everybody, from the top to the bottom, government to the lowest level clerk in the country, was interested in going to the United States.

Q: Well you must have felt really under pressure, I mean Athens you have a little of this, but really it was not that big a deal, but the sort of people are trying to circumvent the visa regulations of immigrant by going the non-immigrant route, I mean this was big business and I mean that literally in the Philippines, wasn't it?

MURPHY: You're quite right. Big business. I mean everyone, from the President on down, would do what they needed to do to get someone to the United States. Including giving false passports, giving them assignments to different consulates in our country, knowing that they were not part of their diplomatic service, but just to get them to the United States.

Q: How would you deal with this? I mean, normally we, almost our whole ethos is based on the fact that if you get a diplomatic or an official passport and you're going to another country that that person is either legitimate or we weed them out because they're a spy. In the old days of the Soviet Union, but I mean here is a friendly country lying in their teeth in their official capacity. Would you find this out, what would you do?

MURPHY: Well, a lot of them got through us and we'd find out afterwards when they came back applying for new visas and we'd ask them for something like their income tax returns to show that they could support themselves, and they would show an income tax return from the United States. Which as you know a foreign diplomat would not need. So that would sort of give them away and lead to an investigation. I had one, which I consider an infamous case. A woman had won the lottery in the United States, and the Philippine News based in San Francisco needed money to keep it's operation going. They made a deal that this lady's son, who was married and could not get to the United States at all, would go as a diplomat because he was friends with someone in the foreign ministry. So they gave him a diplomatic passport. He applied for the visa and it was passed to me directly. And of course I knew that it was a false one. So I handed it over to Bert Krieg who was consul general. He had a wonderful way of handling these things. He put them in his drawer; he just left them there. Now, the interesting thing was that

periodically the chief of protocol would call me, go out to lunch, we'd talk about that visa. I said, "well, I've given it to Bert, check with him." But he would never check with Bert about that visa. And this went on for at least a year until I left. Finally the foreign ministry or the Embassy in Washington complained to State Department about all these visas we were holding up. And they were all sitting in Bert's drawer. And so he pulled them out and wrote about each one of them. So they raised it. Then Washington restricted visas and wanted to have every single person who was coming to the States for the Philippine government to be checked by them before they would come. So they could assure that there was a position that they were actually going to. There was one case of a doctor in Chicago. And he had a diplomatic visa as if he were at their consulate.

Q: Oh boy.

MURPHY: I wanted to stay in the Philippines and retire from there. I always told my friends this. They said, "What happened?" I said, "After two years of that, and I loved the Philippines, the people are really wonderful and the food is great, nice living conditions, everything was wonderful, except you become very jaded with the constant thought that you could never trust anything or anyone.

Q: How about dealing with the local staff? I'm talking about the Filipinos who were working for the Embassy, they must have been under a lot of pressure.

MURPHY: I'm sure they were, but it often happens in a country like that you have the people of a higher level. We didn't have problems on our staff in terms of quality. In fact they were excellent employees. Very well educated, they speak English naturally. Very competent.

Q: Did the Foreign Ministry come to you and say they had special cases, that oh, the President of the country or a Senator or so and so wanted, really was interested in a case, and could you please expedite it?

MURPHY: Well, normally we were pretty good about expediting visas anyway. We had a very good, fast operation. No one would come to me directly, no, because I was really number two in the non-immigrant visa section. We had about twenty-six officers altogether, in a place like the Philippines with a consul general, deputy consul general, chiefs of both the NIV and the IV sections and deputy chiefs..

Q: Who was chief of the NIV section when you were there?

MURPHY: Lynn Curtin.

Q: In a post like that you often get people on their first or second tours who are coming as visa officers working as sort of line counselor officers, and sometimes if you have a place where there's an awful lot of fraud and attempts that it's kind of hard to get the officers to maintain their objectivity and just not either get mad or complacent or something like that, and a lot of particularly young Americans are not used to being lied

to. And to be lied to on a daily basis could do things for the soul. Did you act as sort of a psychiatrist or something?

MURPHY: I see you hit the nail on the head, but this is true of junior officers everywhere.

Q: Well did you find yourself spending quite a bit of time in a way counseling, you know, talking about, would you let people talk it out, I mean your officers talk it out?

MURPHY: Yes because I had been a junior officer, and I was one of the tough junior officers who felt exactly the same way they did. I could entirely sympathize with them. And I'd say "Yes, you can scream about it, fight about it, and there might be a reason not to issue them a visa, but it simply can't be 212 A 19. But don't try to find a number just because they've lied. Because it doesn't pay in the end. It's more trouble for you than it's worth, and I'll give you every leverage, let you write it, in addition to your other work. If you want to handle that, okay. Now if you really think the person doesn't qualify I have no objection to your refusing the visa. Sometimes the reason why people lie about something, is because one, they don't think it's important, they don't want you to know information. I had some very good friends from an extremely wealthy family, the Adamson family, who had given this Adamson University to the government of the Philippines. He filled out an application form. He didn't put down how much money he made or that he had businesses in Hong Kong and Canada and the United States because he thought that was irrelevant. But he lived in one of the most expensive areas in the Philippines, one of the gated communities, one of the biggest houses there, and one of the wealthiest men in the Philippines. And he was a Philippine citizen, a Greek citizen, and a Canadian citizen because his wife was Canadian. So no reason to lie except it wasn't important. And I tried to show them cases of that type to help them understand that it didn't always mean...

Q: What about cases particularly of nurses and all this? I would think this has always been a problem, hasn't it?

MURPHY: Some of the cases I saw in the Philippines of the temporary workers such as a nurse were incredible. We had one woman and it was very sad. She had been in the States and worked for as many years as she could on the non-immigrant visa petition. Then she had to leave. She wanted to maintain her status, and what she did was leave and pretend like she'd never been to the United States before, stayed in the Philippines two years, and reapplied. Indicating she had never been in the United States. And of course she had. And we were able to identify her. When she did break down, she explained that she just couldn't manage in the Philippines, that she had too many debts and she had her children. And you felt sorry for her, but lying in the face of all evidence to the contrary. And they helped us with that kind of visa. You know most posts you get a petition in, you notify the person that you have a petition and what they need to do to apply. She didn't do that. It was announced in the newspaper. All the petitions that were approved for the week were printed in the newspaper. People would get that newspaper or go to the labor office and find out whether their petition had been approved. We didn't even have the

information. And that's the way people found out if they had a petition. They would come in with that notice and we would handle their cases.

Q: How well was the consular section able to handle the crowds by this time? It's always been a big problem.

MURPHY: We tried different things. It was always bad. There was nothing you could really do to get rid of it completely. We tried the appointment system, we were giving people appointments for certain periods of time. We also, to restrict the number of people who were applying, we put in a system of making people wait for at least three months before they could reapply. When we decided to do that, we thought we were really gonna have a lot of problems with the public. One of the, our main _____ one who was not particularly friendly to the Embassy but handled a lot of cases said, "Well, wasn't that nice of the U.S. Embassy." Because we were giving them a chance to get their paperwork together and still come back and apply and they would take a look at the case. So it came out as a very positive thing and that did help reduce the numbers.

Q: Did you find that there were the equivalent of visa brokers, people who had small shops and large shops would accept the documents, I'm talking about fraudulent ones and all that.

MURPHY: I think we had one or two officers working in the fraud unit with two or three national employees who were investigators. The interesting thing was is that they would try to implicate anyone they could in the Embassy. One time they had even accused me of having ... If you dealt with Margaret Murphy and were able to get visas through her. And I said, "Oh, you mean that lady with the bright red hair?" "Yes, uh-huh. That's Margaret Murphy." My being black. But they would use anything they could, thinking that they could get a handle on something. And maybe get a visa if they reported fraud.

Q: I would have thought that you would have found your job would intrude heavily into your social life, that every time you turned around you were meeting somebody who was very nice and next thing you knew they were asking for a visa for the family, something like that.

MURPHY: You know, I didn't have problems like that at all in the Philippines but I think because the people I associated with were the type of people who wouldn't do that. They were of a very high economic position. Socialized with people who lived in my living area. So I didn't really have problems of that type and I had a big number of Philippine friends who were bridge players.

Q: Was there concern by you all about corruption of the visa officers? I mean this is something that crops up again and again in our business, the Philippines is a place where it can happen. Did this happen during your time?

MURPHY: Not during my time but it wasn't too long after we had a big scandal before with the consul general. I can't remember his name, but anyway, after that I don't think

so. You know our junior officers, generally speaking they were always impeccably honest anyway. And these certainly were. And we didn't have any of that kind of issues. And there was no question of it amongst any of our officers, which was good. It was never raised. The previous consul general who had had trouble, he made approaches. And unfortunately although I don't think he was really dishonest, they didn't give consideration to what he said. I tried to because I thought that he, generally speaking he had done what the Department wanted done. He wanted to facilitate and improve our operations in non-immigrant visas and not make it so difficult to get a visa that someone who was a legitimate case that they had to lie or do something fraudulent to get into the United States. And that's what the previous consul general basically tried to do along with whatever else he might have done, I can't speak about that.

Q: It's always a thin line in a post like that. Most posts you don't have a problem. But we have some, we just had a recent case in Haiti where some officer has been arrested selling visas.

MURPHY: I read about that in the paper.

Q: I would have thought, this is probably a good period in the Philippines because with Aquino in she had strong support from the United States at the time of the overthrow of Marcos and all of that. The United States was on the right side of this wasn't it?

MURPHY: Yes. But while I was there they had a number of attempted coups and problems, different groups. One of the major political leaders was living in the apartment building where I was living. And they had a guard system. You couldn't get in or out for hours and people who didn't live in the area couldn't get in. And I recall they had difficulty just the political leader's assistant forced their way in. And I was on the security committee so I would get these reports every day. I think about things of that type had happened.

Q: Who was the Ambassador while you were there?

MURPHY: Let's see. We had two different ambassadors. Stephen Bosworth and Nicholas Platt.

Q: Well after '88, wither?

MURPHY: After '88 I went to Bridgetown, Barbados.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

MURPHY: I was there from 1988 to 1991. And I went there as deputy in the consular section. Primarily in charge of visas was my responsibility. The consul general handled the American services side.

Q: Was there an Ambassador?

MURPHY: We did not have an Ambassador initially. But I think my last six or eight months Philip Hughes a political appointee was ambassador. But when I first went there it was Joan Clark who was chargé.

Q: Was this a pretty small post there?

MURPHY: It was a good sized post, because the post was responsible for about six or seven Caribbean island countries. So it was as good sized embassy as any, nothing like Athens, but it was a good sized Embassy with maybe sixty people. So it was good sized and they had regional responsibilities.

Q: What was life like on the island?

MURPHY: Well, it was rather isolated. There were not many other diplomatic missions, maybe three or four others, maybe five at the most. Other than the British and the Australians. And the Barbadians, they were friendly but they don't socialize much. So I think people find it quite isolated. Pretty far away from any other island, so it's expensive to go someplace else. The island is very small, fourteen miles wide by 21 miles long. Their last census in the 1990s was two-hundred eighty-five thousand people. So it was very, very small. I was fortunate, the last part of my tour at least, the second half to meet some Barbadian women that I had done business with. One was head of the child welfare organization of the government. Another one was a judge. And I became very friendly with them and met a number of other Barbadians through them. They explained that they simply don't have time to socialize that much and maybe they see their best friend four or five times a year. I said, "I'm only going to be here for a year and a half, we'll never become friends in four or five times a year." So they took me at my word and we became very good friends. They would stop by my house after work or something, and have a drink or go out. They became a bit more informal when I explained that Americans don't find it very nice here because they don't meet people from the country and can't socialize with them. And the one friend of mine who was the judge was very nice about it because she had been in the United States and had been treated very well, and she really wanted to pay that back. And I explained that this is how you could pay it back. Even our ambassador, when he came, had difficulty. The man who was the minister of tourism spokesman I think it was Wes Hall. He was a very nice man, and I knew him. He was invited to the ambassador's for a small dinner party. This was after the ambassador had had this large reception to meet most of the people. Hall said, "I've already met him, why does he want to meet me again?" He asked, "Are you going to be there?" I said, "No." I said, "He wants to get to know you better and he couldn't in a large group." But they have a hard time understanding the American approach. The ambassador was a very friendly ambassador who did a lot, I think, to help our relations with the Barbadians. He went to all the churches and he socialized with people who were all different levels. And churches very important to the Barbadians.

Q: What churches are these?

MURPHY: Well, I think probably the Anglican primarily. But there were lots of churches. There must be forty, fifty churches on that little island or more. And he would go around to a different one each Sunday, which I thought was good.

Q: How about the consular business? What was the consular work like?

MURPHY: Well, the consular work we had very, very good officers. Those were the best officers I think I've ever had. We had four wonderful junior officers. And the consular work, because the people were basically very honest people, but like others, you know, many of them still wanted to go to the United States and stay there. And then they'd have a number of people from Guyana who'd come to Barbados and marry Barbadians in order to get Barbadian residence. Because Barbadian visas are easier to get. So that was a broad system that was developed there. We had to learn to pick out those Guyanese who were actually married and intended to remain in Barbados and those who were just trying to get to the United States.

Q: How could you tell?

MURPHY: Well, we worked very closely with the immigration service there. They would call us to the airport when they got someone who they thought had a false visa. So they were very instrumental in helping us detect people with false visas either from Guyana or if they knew someone who had just arrived on the island and then got Barbadian citizenship after a couple of months meaning that really they didn't have any intention of remaining. But for me, initially I had difficulty because I'd come from the Philippines where you couldn't trust anything. I remember once questioning a diplomatic note and wondering if it was really true, what they were saying. "How could you question that?" my colleagues said. "This is from the Minister. Of course it's legit." "Okay." I said, "But I just came from a country where there wasn't anything that you could trust." So there was a period of adjustment for me. That's why I knew it was best I left the Philippines when I did because it changes your whole point of view.

Q: Oh it does. Did the Barbadians tend to go as tourists and come back and that sort of thing?

MURPHY: Generally speaking yes, the Barbadians did. Our difficulty was more with people from the other islands that we handled. We had to adjudicate cases of people from other islands on paper. Barbados was so far from the other islands...

Q: What were some of the other islands?

MURPHY: Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, we also handled Martinique.

Q: Grenada?

MURPHY: Grenada was one, yes.

Q: Was there a general exodus from those islands trying to go to the United States?

MURPHY: Not really. Antigua had some of the biggest problems. Although it was a nice island, I don't know why. I had one parliamentarian from there. He would come off with a lot of bad cases from his island because he would bring the cases instead of going to a travel agent. They gave quite a bit of money to have a fellow interested in the case. But it would cost even more if they traveled to the island themselves to apply for the visas. We just didn't find any way around that. I think some years before they used to travel around the islands periodically and accept applications. But we were coming back at that time from dire financial straights in the State Department.

Q: The people from Antigua and Guyana where were they going in the United States, there most usually are pockets of where immigrants go from a particular place.

MURPHY: Well, let's see. The Barbadians were going to the Virgin Islands. That was a very popular destination for the Barbadians. But New York, Florida, that's all I recall. The Virgin Islands was considered major.

Q: But the Virgin Islands was not a place where they would go to stay.

MURPHY: Well, some of them had stayed. Apparently they had some kind of rule where they could stay there before, and I'm not sure how that worked. Some of our employees had lived in the Virgin Islands because that was something that they were allowed to do when we first had the islands I guess. So I'm not really quite sure how that worked but they were allowed to live and work in the Virgin Islands. And some of them for that reason thought that they could go very easily anyway.

Q: In '91 where then?

MURPHY: '91 I went to Brasilia. And that was my last overseas assignment.

Q: You were there from '91 to...?

MURPHY: '91 to '94.

Q: What were you doing there?

MURPHY: There I was consul general. I was supervising consular post. Coordinated the activities of all the consular sections in Brazil. It was like most of a consular post and what we would do, I would supervise the other posts.

Q: Who was our Ambassador while you were there?

MURPHY: Richard Nelson was there when I first arrived, and then Mel Levitsky came my last six or seven months.

Q: Brasilia being so far removed from everything in a way still maybe it wasn't by this time, I thought the people were there when it was first carved out of the jungle, but I would have thought that the consular work would not have been as much say as in Rio or Sao Paulo or something like that.

MURPHY: Actually we had a reasonable sized amount of visa workload and American services. All of the immigration work was handled by Rio for all of Brazil. We got visas from all over. We probably had the largest consulate district although it was pretty scattered around and the visas were done primarily by mail. We did nothing like a post like Sao Paulo which handled large numbers of business visas. The size wasn't necessarily the important thing, Sao Paulo was administering a very large work load. But a fairly easy work load. You didn't have the problems that you had in a place like Rio where you have a lot of fraud. In Brasilia we didn't have that much fraud but again we were adjudicating a large majority of cases by PEKOR by mail or through travel agents. And that made it difficult because in order to deny someone a visa under 214B, you had to have talked to them personally. So all you could do was make them a 221G and they said well, "pending what?"

Q: A 221G means?

MURPHY: A temporary refusal pending presentation of other documentation or some other action and for us in Brasilia most of the time it was for personal interview. But we tried to discourage them from coming in for a personal interview and traveling so far and paying so much money when you basically thought the person didn't qualify. Nine times out of ten a refusal was a 214B intending immigrant would be confirmed. So it made it a little difficult. We tried our best not to... working with the Department to see what we could do, not to have to invite them in. But the inspectors had been there before I arrived. They had complained about the whole system of refusing people in all the posts in Brazil. We were refusing people as intending immigrants under 214B without personal appearances. And they all felt they had to. As a matter of fact, when I arrived in Brazil I found that they were discouraging people from coming in. And even if a person came in they didn't interview them. They'd have them drop the papers off and adjudicate the paperwork and then give them an answer. Then if indeed the person wanted to come back and make an appointment for them to come back and apply and then be turned down face-to-face.

Q: Well, I think it was some years later I think it was in Sao Paulo. But there was an officer who sued the Department of State. But his basic complaint was that we were profiling people. And saying well this somebody is obviously working class and they can't go and this fell disproportionately on the Indian or black. I'm not familiar with it, but was this ... I can see where this makes sense.

MURPHY: Well that was done during my tenure. Although I wasn't aware that there was a problem at the time. I knew that the head officer there was having a problem with the junior officer. He was an attorney and so he had this idea. You can't blame a lot of people. They come in understanding the American system of justice; innocent until

proven guilty. So when we say you're an intending immigrant and therefore ineligible until you prove you're eligible for a non-immigrant visa it sounds backwards and contrary to basic American law. So this is a problem that he had. Certainly in Sao Paulo he couldn't have been talking about there being a discrimination against blacks or Indians because there weren't very many in Sao Paulo. But they were in Rio de Janeiro. They were in Brasilia. Other places, but not in Sao Paulo. But there may have been a handful. I think what created a problem for this young man was that one of the officers who had become a Foreign Service officer had been a consular agent for the U.S. for many years. She took the Foreign Service test, became a junior officer, and was assigned to Sao Paulo. She was simply trying to help the other officers by giving them some hints as to the kinds of things that make a person ineligible. You know, how much money do you make in certain professions, what kind of background, that they lived in certain places, what did that mean. Just to help them adjudicate cases. But they were adjudicating on paper. And I think this young man objected to the fact that they were denying visas based on economic abilities, things of that type. And its very true in Brazil if you're black you're poor. To the point that the Brazilian standard is interesting. Take the soccer player, Pelé -- who, you know, is a soccer player.

Q: Great soccer player.

MURPHY: Black as the ace of spades is white by their standards. And he's white because he's rich. You can not be black and be rich. And they turn and look at us and they say that you have someone who isn't white but looks white and you call them black because they have black blood. So we can call someone black, white. And you can call someone white, black.

Q: Yes. The whole situation, I've never quite figured it. It's called general agreement in the United States. It doesn't make any sense at all. You look at me, and I'm Irish, Scotch, German and God knows what else in there. Somebody asks and I say I'm this or that. And we are obviously a mongrel race.

MURPHY: Well in the Brazilian town, many people think what a great _____. But it's an interesting place because the color can and does play a role at times. But it has the economic basis along with it. So it's a very strange place. The political officer used to tell a great story in Sao Paulo in how do you tell the difference between the different races and who was considered acceptable and who was not by three different people who walk into a restaurant.

The black man walks into the restaurant and he is shown to the back somewhere no one can see him. Then a Japanese-Brazilian walks in and he is shown to a reasonable table but the owner of the restaurant doesn't make any big to do over him. The third man comes in. He's shown to the front. And the owner sits and talks with him and offers him a free drink. The interesting thing about it is that third person that he considers to be white, in the Untied States we would consider to be black.

Q: So how about you. Here you an American diplomat. How does that work with you?

MURPHY: Well, the Brazilians were probably the most prejudiced people I have ever run into. I have many Brazilian friends. Because there are always exceptions in this large country. But generally speaking it was a very discriminatory and prejudiced country that I think really had a lot of trouble as a result of it. We were required by the State Department to send all the diplomatic visas in before we issued them. And Washington had to approve them. So that solved a big problem. But I was very, very fortunate to have Dick Nolton as the backup. He really supported me. He was a big help. Without him I wouldn't have stayed.

Q: Well, how about socially? How did you find Brasilia? It's sort of isolated gentleman enclave still or is it changed?

MURPHY: Well what we have was a lot of foreign missions. So the social life was very nice for most people there. I had some Brazilian friends from the foreign ministry and I had friends among other diplomatic countries. A particular group were the African and Caribbean ambassadors who were black. They really felt the discrimination a lot and how much trouble they were having because they were black.

Q: That's interesting. You always see how the Brazilians always tout their color-free thing.

MURPHY: It's called the South Africa, Latin America. And the interesting thing is that very few people were aware of that outside Brazil. That they had been able to maintain the character despite the fact that it's probable one of the worst countries for ...

Q: Would you find for example that going into a shop or something, would you find sort of one attitude and then when you said, "I am an American diplomat" the whole thing would change or not?

MURPHY: Not particularly. But I remember when I first arrived there I was not given language training. The Spanish I had from ten ears before was supposedly going to be sufficient. And it was not a language designated position which it should have been. And I'd gone shopping with a friend who was American but from the Dominican Republic. She had been in Sao Paulo with the worst discrimination. She had tremendous problems which I won't go into there. She was in Brazil and we went shopping together one time. And I don't know what happened. The shop people had used a term in referring to us that was very derogatory and because she spoke Portuguese she understood it. She flew up and I didn't know what was going on because I couldn't understand. My Portuguese was lousy at the time. And then she explained to me what this woman had said.

Q: I have been in enough countries and I've heard people look at me and murmur something and I wondered. And I say, "Oh, my God." It's probably just as well we don't know.

MURPHY: I didn't have that many problems I'd say personally. It was more officially

that I had problems. There were articles in that paper about visas I had denied. And the Ambassador was checking at the time and he was really getting criticized at himself because each time he would check, the story wasn't true. And then one of the national employees wasn't very good. She caused a lot of the problems just because she was not capable. I don't think it mattered in the past. It was a difficult post. It was a post in which it was so difficult. I probably did this more because I was irritated with the people. But I went after and got visas of the ____ with Brazil. Reduced the length of their visas and see there was a lot of work in Brazil. But what had happened was a friend of mine, Diane Dillard, was Deputy Assistant Secretary for visas. And she was not backing me in the desire to establish strict reciprocity with the Brazilians to try to force them to relax the visas for Americans. We had a number of complaints about visas that American obtained. And they were charging them for it in. The American businessman didn't care about the money; it was the hassle of getting the visas. Diane came, she was just making a run through. I took her over to the foreign ministry and the head of their consular section was such a pill. He really made a big mistake and was extremely rude and as nasty as he usually was to me. And he came and he was extremely rude to Diane. He thought, I think, that she was coming trying to push this issue of visa reciprocity. Actually she didn't want it; nobody did in Washington. But after that I had her backup and she supported me. I got full reciprocity and it did help because it did relax a lot of the abuses. They'd pretend they had this law, it was just ready to be passed. And that law, they had had in congress for four or five years and they weren't doing anything with it. And they pretended just give us a little more time.

Q: It's interesting. Countries have their own reputation. But actually getting close and seeing it.

MURPHY: There are a lot of very, very nice Brazilians. But I certainly wouldn't want to characterize Brazilians as people that you wouldn't like because there were some people like that.

Q: In '94 you came back to Washington?

MURPHY: In '94 I came back to Washington. I opened the POL/MIL trade bureau actually in a temporary position to help the bureau prepare for an inspection. Apparently their former executive officer of the bureau was trying to do it but he couldn't in the end. So they needed someone for that so I took on that job and worked there for about eight months. I went to the Board of Examiners. Each year I was going to retire and the last year I stayed I traveled to a couple of cities in the United States I'd not been to.

Q: How long were you with the Board of Examiners?

MURPHY: Four years.

Q: Four years.

MURPHY: And we examined three of the four years. One year we didn't examine.

Because we didn't have enough money to hire junior officers. But we did a lot of studies in that time about different ways of bringing people into the Foreign Service. Different testing.

Q: On the political military side, what was your impression? This is really your first time out of the consular branch. What was your impression?

MURPHY: The political military bureau is one of those that has a large number of Civil Service employees along with the Foreign Service. I found that conflict especially being in the executive office. The conflict between the Civil Service and Foreign Service employees is a different work ethic.

Q: When you say it is a different work ethic, what do you mean?

MURPHY: Well, Foreign Service people will work the number of hours they need to work to get the job done and they'll not necessarily come in on time all the time, but they'll stay until whatever hour. Whereas Civil Service employees will come in on time and leave right on time. When you want them to stay for five minutes more then you're going to have to pay them. So this was a big conflict and there was always fighting about this. I found this also with the Board of Examiners with a similar type of thing. Other than that I thought it was a very good bureau. But it was one that was difficult for Foreign Service people because they were outside the main stream. A lot of them were political officers and political military was considered secondary. Therefore it wasn't advantageous to their careers. Officers from other different cones were more successful in not having it hurt their careers. But political officers had a very hard time so they had a very difficult time getting people to fill all the jobs and certainly they had difficulty getting the best officers. So they often opted for officers from other cones even consular cone.

Q: Let's talk about the Board of Examiners for a bit. What was your impression when you came on of the examination system and how it worked?

MURPHY: I'm impressed particularly because they tried to be very objective. They had worries about treating everybody exactly the same. Everything is a timed exercise and you've got to stick to that exactly. They were very professional. What I particularly liked about it was the fact that you had officers from all different cones go through together. Closely together doing the same kind of work. Plus I had an interesting experience, a breath of fresh air. Not to be just a consular officer but people of all different cones and that I enjoyed. And I thought they worked well together.

Q: What was your impression of the candidates?

MURPHY: I thought the candidates were very good. But I also found it was difficult to really be a good judge of whether or not these are going to be the best officers from one day of testing. And it's not one day of testing, although we spent eight hours there. We were probably not in contact with any one junior officer candidate for more than three

hours at a time. Three hours altogether. So trying to judge somebody in terms of their interpersonal skills. Anyone can be good for a couple of hours. Writing, you wouldn't need to see them to judge their writing; so we didn't judge their writing during that day. It was very difficult, I thought, to judge people. I thought we did a very good job of it. And I understand and have had some compliments from people I've seen since that. And most of the officers over there are very slick. I started handling the staffing of the Board of Examiners. You know, accepting the applications from people who bid on the job and choosing, making the initial selection. Usually they accepted anyone I said was okay. And trying to get a good mix, which I did, of diversity of women and minorities. They didn't feel they were unique in any way. I thought that in the end we did a good job but I'm not sure if it's the system or just that we had good candidates generally.

Q: This is actually true of universities. If the university has a fancy reputation, fancy people apply for it. And once you have that mix it's pretty hard to go wrong.

MURPHY: We hurt ourselves by the one year we didn't examine at all. Certain years of taking very few people. It hurt us in terms of total numbers of applications. Therefore we have a smaller pool to select from and that always hurts your reputation. They used to get maybe 14, 15,000 people. When they bring it down to 8 to 9,000 that is a smaller pool. So obviously they won't be as good as from a larger pool.

Q: One of the goals has been, I was on the Board of Examiners in the mid-'70s for a year. It's been a goal for a long time to get diversity, essentially to get at one point more women than had been selected. I think that's pretty well been taken care of now. But also from the African-American, Hispanic communities.

MURPHY: Native American.

Q: Native American.

MURPHY: You can count on one hand.

Q: How did you find we went about it?

MURPHY: See, that's another side of recruitment. And that's a constant battle in that office. The office of recruitment, employment and examination. Therefore we had Civil Service people doing the recruiting. And I find that very strange because I don't see how a person who is Civil Service can recruit people for the Foreign Service, something that they're not even interested in doing themselves. How can they be enthusiastic about a career that they themselves are not interested in. And they can't attract people to it. I don't think that upsets whether or not we can increase the diversity of the pool that applies for entry into the Foreign Service. One of the problems that we have is we don't pay that much. The Foreign Service is nothing like when you entered and I entered. The advantages that we had. We were one of the strongest countries, our money went on and on and on. Blacks, Hispanics have other opportunities to make more money and do better elsewhere. I just came back from a few days at my college, Whitman College, which is

primarily a white college, but they also are trying to make the college more diverse and they have a handful of black students and Hispanics and some native Americans and Asians. But the problem that they have is the same as the Foreign Service has. It's still primarily a white dominated school. You find that your higher economic lever, better trained American black certainly, they don't want to leave what they call their zone of comfort. So that's why they'll go to a black school. And choose a black school over Harvard. The very really high class blacks refuse ever to go to some place like Harvard. They want to go to a black school, like Spellman. They hardly socialize with other blacks, let alone with a white dorm. Therefore, how do you get them? You spend a lot of money playing to the troops. We're having that trouble. I ran into a woman at another recruiting fair who's trying to recruit black teachers for Denver, Colorado. A very good school where they had a number of blacks and she wanted them to have role models, blacks. But you can't get them to go to a white city. There are lots of blacks in Vail. Denver is a white city and they don't want to go there. I met the former mayor of Seattle who's black. Who was elected as a mayor in a predominately white city. Everyone has this same problem. I maintain, when I was still at the Department, that we can do better by including a place like the state of Washington, pacific northwest, we have a number of blacks who are used to living in white environment. Because they're not concerned with that.

Q: Well this is only in it's infancy. When I was involved with looking at recruiting, there was great emphasis on the black colleges. Our feeling was hell, let's go to the where the elite of everybody ends up. These are people who are upward mobile, are more used to dealing in a mixed society.

MURPHY: At Spellman they're not. I went to Spellman to recruit and talked to a number of students. I don't think even one of them applied for the Foreign Service. Also, we don't do a very good job ourselves of advertising about what's needed in the Foreign Service. A school like Georgetown where they really counsel the students. They know that they have to take the test, maybe more than once. At Spellman they had a student who'd taken the test, one of their brightest students. He took the test, failed the test. If he didn't pass it nobody could pass it. It's not for them. And that's not the way it works.

Q: No, it's not.

MURPHY: It's a cut score. It has nothing to do with that. I said if you're really interested in the Foreign Service, and I also said the same thing at Whitman, for one of their brightest, Phi Beta Kappa students had taken the written exam, passed it, failed the oral exam. I said don't let that worry you. If you're really interested you've got to take it again. And I gave them stories of people who had taken it four or five times and finally passed it. It was no indication of how good an officer he would be. And that's when our country says, well, there's no correlation between the exam scores or written with ability.

Q: When I was on the Board of Examiners I think 70 was passing the written exam, and I'd gotten something like a 69.8 and I was averaged into the Foreign Service. I had cards going way back to the 60s and there was George Kennan; he didn't get a very high mark.

MURPHY: And the scores have changed over the years. It is much lower now. I don't know what it's is at this moment, it's 56 or 55 or something. So they keep lowering the score. I don't know if it's getting harder. The exam has changed slightly. It is nothing like when we took it when they would have all kinds of tricks and things.

Q: I remember even in the seventies, this is when three people sat down and gave the exam. It was pretty free-flowing. But we were very careful not to do tricks. We would tell people that there weren't any tricks. We tried to put them at their ease. Because the tricks don't prove a damn thing. And it's so childish too, frankly. But the stories persisted.

Well how did you feel? One of the standard things is okay, you pointed out the same things that have been pointed out again and again. State Department doesn't pay enough, we're not that attractive to the black community, and it takes too long to give somebody a clearance. There are a lot of reasons. One of the things is we have to meet the figures, we have to lower the standards for blacks and Hispanics. Was that going on in your time?

MURPHY: Not at all. There was no way to do it.

One of the things that I think they've done is make the written exam a lot easier in that they're trying to exclude information that is not really necessary for people to know by heart or to know when they first enter the Foreign Service. They're trying to make these questions more relevant. So I found it easier myself to take this test. When I took it, there were all kinds of weird things. And across the board, music and art. Quite different than now. And I think it's an easier test to pass now for a well educated college student who pays attention to what's going on in the world around them. They can pass it. It's a little heavy on the economic side. "Their problem is they're supposed to be economic officers that are needed that they test for. That's the only downfall. And one of the students I talked to. I diplomatically told him I said take a course in economics. You have to pass that in order to get into the Foreign Service.

Q: While you were there did you feel that the board of examiners was concerned about suits, about discrimination, that the blind people couldn't pass the exam and that sort of thing?

MURPHY: No. Not at all because everything was done to accommodate any person who had a handicap. We certainly weren't concerned about people from different racial groups. I remember one time, in New Orleans, there was a young man, he is one I use as a success story. He had taken the exam three times before and he had not passed it and he had a very strong southern accent. So he finally passed it and he did very well. When we were debriefing him it was interesting because he said he thought he hadn't passed before because of his accent. I told him, quite the contrary, you're accent would help you because yours is such a strong accent you can't ignore it. Anyway, we have to make sure we don't discriminate against you because of that. If it's just a slight accent you may unconsciously ... This is a very conscious thing to hear your accent when you speak. And

there was nothing wrong with it. He was an excellent candidate and he passed with a very high core the fourth time. So persistence paid off.

Q: How about Hispanics? Was there much success or was this a problem?

MURPHY: Hispanics have difficulty sometimes writing I found. It is interesting. One of our staff directors, who himself was Hispanic-American, did a number of studies of the different groups of candidates. Blacks do very well with interpersonal skills as well as writing. Hispanics had difficulty, more difficulty in writing. And often with interpersonal skills and sometimes it was because there are certain things in the Spanish culture which would be impolite. We just feel you look at them in the eye when you talk to them in the American culture, but for a Hispanic that's impolite. You don't. You look down, you look away from the person. You do that to show respect. So how is that discriminating against them? I personally felt, my first year or two on the board of examiners, that Asian-Americans from California, which is primarily where they came from, were discriminated against. Because in California we were a strong people. We were outgoing strong people. It doesn't matter whether you're Hispanic, Japanese, typical Asians and other people. Asians in California, they are simply people with all the same characteristics of any other Californian. So an Asian person was not unique. She's an American. I thought perhaps they thought that a person was rude or abrupt. Only because they were Asian they were doing that. And I felt they were unfairly treated. But there is nobody to really prove or say that. What they were saying, what they were doing was no different from anyone else, but it was coming out of the wrong mouth. And it's not something that I think is really talked about. It's difficult to judge that. We do tell our consulates how people should act. And looking them in the eye, do you trust them or do you don't. Or looking away. It's hard.

Q: How about women at that point?

MURPHY: I think women did just fine. I didn't know there were any problems with people being discriminated against. Women were good. They were very good. Sometimes when they were already aggressive or continued to be overly aggressive they might be judged more harshly than a man who was overly aggressive. But these are things, what can you do about that? You can't change that. I think by having the right mix on the Board of Examiners where you didn't have all men on a particular board or all women. So that they got at least a fair chance. It was the only thing you could do. And I think in the end we even decided you didn't need that mix of cones as much as we needed the mix of different nationalities, men and women on the board who were good. So we dropped the idea of having to have a certain number of people from each cone if necessary in order to get the best people. And to get the mix we thought we should have.

Q: My experience and other people have said, but again I'm going back to the seventies. This is when we had three people on the panel. We'd sit them down for maybe an hour and a half and talk to them. It was a good solid look at a person. And we could pretty thoroughly, we had a set of standard questions, but we could take them around just to see how a person responded. The woman who was usually on our panel, if we had a woman,

was usually tougher on the women than the men. We don't have to talk her around and this would be the same if we had a black coming up. It was almost, I made it and I'm not going to make any special concessions for you. This may have been a period that is no longer true. Did you find this at all.

MURPHY: Not particularly. But I did find that we had certain attitudes on the board that would either make it easy, very easy, or very hard I think across the board. There was one officer who never, ever, gave someone, even when you had a perfectly written demarche. He never, ever gave someone even a six. A five plus or six. And we're talking about scores seven is top. And seven wasn't necessarily impossible. It was supposed to be the very best and this person would deserve a seven and maybe they would get a five plus. And from a person who wasn't a bad writer, but he wasn't a great writer. But you always had to account for that. So I found people trying to adjust their scores to make up for people who they knew were trying to hold the person back and no one would pass. As an example, a friend of mine just came back from New Orleans, three weeks in New Orleans, and talked to me about examining six candidates a day. They passed a total of six in three weeks. That is now enough. And that's very expensive to have five officers in New Orleans for three weeks and you get only six who can move on.

Q: It's difficult. Then you retired from the board of examiners?

MURPHY: I retired from the board of examiners at the end of August last year.

Q: That would be 1999.

MURPHY: In 1999.

Q: What have you been doing since?

MURPHY: You know I don't even know what I've been doing. I've been keeping so busy. The only thing I point to that I've done is take my trip to Greece which I had always intended to do. And I've taken, just recently, a real estate course. That's one thing to add to my pension income and still stay here in the United States. Be freer to have a dog which is what I want. I really miss the dog I had before. I think it's difficult if you're traveling all the time.

Q: It is.

MURPHY: If you have that WAE (when actually employed) work. And I was thinking of doing one of those and if I get one before I get a dog I'll go, otherwise I think I'll stay. Get my dog, stay home and sell real estate. You keep busy. You don't realize how much you put off. Particularly when you're a single person like I am, you keep putting things off; well when I'm retired I'll do that.

Q: Do that, absolutely. You know this is true of all of us. One question I haven't asked you about in this, we've talked about the quote black unquote experience and all that.

What about being a woman? There has been a lot of talk about harassment, glass ceilings and all that. Looking back on your career, how do you feel women have been treated from your personal experience?

MURPHY: Well you know this is an asset because I couldn't know whether it was because I was a woman, young, or black. This is what sequence I would guess. And remember I came from southern California. So I was never as sensitive to discrimination as I should have been. You may not believe this, but only recently I've been in touch with my freshman roommate who was white. I was the only black woman at a white school. There was one black who was a senior, a man. And I think I was the first black woman to go there and they kept asking me when I was back there recently, "how did get to Whitman and why did I go?". I didn't know not to go. I simply chose two schools. I was going to major in chemistry, small schools, major in chemistry. This one had snow, was further away from home. So I chose Whitman. And that's the only reason. Well it turns out it is a very fine school, one of the best schools. But I never thought at that time, and only recently did I think about it, the fact that they must have had difficulty getting a freshman roommate for me. I never thought about it until recently. The same thing was true in the Foreign Service.

Q: But in the Foreign Service, technically sort a blackness, I hate these terms, but being a woman, what was your impression? Not just yours, but in general, the female mafia where the girls sat around and talked about things. What was your impression?

MURPHY: I came in in Athens and I was the only female junior officer. There were a couple of other officers. My boss was a woman, Lois Day.

Q: I replaced Lois in Seoul.

MURPHY: Lois Day and there were three other woman. There was a personnel officer, budget officer and another consular officer. Foreign Service staff, a couple of them. I got along fine with everyone, I thought. I got an officer later, and I don't know but maybe he had a problem and maybe I didn't know that and I was insensitive to that.

I thought the same thing in Bombay. I was the only female officer. But I never thought about that. I can't even answer your question. Looking back on it I can think of some things that probably were a result of my being a woman, of being black, but I was never aware of. I remember that once the consul general got a letter from an Indian citizen whose grandson had been turned down for a visa to go the United States by the vice consul. I had confirmed the review when I talked to the man about it. The mother was arrested in the United States actually. The man wrote a letter to the consul general saying that he should chastise this skinny little black woman who had maintained that she was the consul general and she should not be allowed to say that. So I had never even thought at that point about being black in a country where a good part of the population is pretty dark. But they do, they are color prejudiced in addition to the class system.

Q: Oh, yes. Everybody is trying to put everybody into categories. I remember people used

to talk about oh their little Irish sewing woman, all such little people, very small people. Or they call people little.

MURPHY: They're demeaning...

Q: We didn't even think about it. These are usually what they would term serving people. "My little player" or something like that.

MURPHY: I think one of the reasons I probably mix with people from other countries more than I did Americans mainly because of that. When I was in Laos I didn't even meet my boss, who was the DCM, when he arrived. The first person, I arrived there, John Gunther Dean, wonderful person. I've always gotten along very well with him. He was ambassador in Beirut when I was there. The one who had come there, he didn't even bother to meet me at all. I met him through the British ambassador at the British ambassador's house. He introduced me to my boss, three weeks after my boss had arrived. And I thought that's pretty bad. I think there probably was a female prejudice. I have a feeling that because I was so ignorant about prejudice and worrying about that they probably thought I was much more challenging the system or something when I really wasn't. I was simply in effect ignoring it because I wasn't aware of it. But it was something I had to deal with.

Q: Also you're getting on with the job and I think that a certain point one, when you start looking too hard this can eat at you.

MURPHY: Well, I think I probably should have been a little more alert. You have to look at things from some other people's point of view. I think often I wasn't seeing other people's point of view. I was challenging something on an issue, and I think they may have felt I was challenging it otherwise and I wasn't. And they looked at it, who does she think she is. What is she doing. See, I never thought of it that way. So I agree with you one shouldn't have a chip on one's shoulder. There is a happy medium here somewhere that I think I have a feeling a black who has experienced prejudice in growing up in our lives and aware of it did better than I did because they were aware of it. They knew to look behind what someone said so they wouldn't challenge things in a certain way. Whereas me, I just thought, you're wrong I'm right. And I would be just as straightforward as someone whatever their color. And that's not exactly what they did in my life and I wasn't aware of that.

Q: It's one of these things, I think the United States is working on the problems.

MURPHY: As you know the days when we had the communist countries how they would think they could convert blacks. And blacks are probably the most loyal people. They don't have any other place. Africa is not home to them. There are a few of them who pretend like it is, but when they're there, the Africans know the difference. Even the Americans they like, but they're still Americans.

Q: Overall, just one last question. Did you have a good time in the Foreign Service?

MURPHY: Yes. I would not have changed anything. Even with all the things, the way I approached things, I would not have changed that. Because it made all the difference in the world to me. I've got friends from all over the world. Different kinds. Former communists. It doesn't matter. I basically accepted people for what they were and judged people as individuals. I think certainly by my friends I'm judged that way. And I do have a lot of friends. My mother used to say, "Margaret had the nicest friends of anyone I know."

Q: It's wonderful.

MURPHY: And that's the way it is.

Q: Thank you very much.

End of interview