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

AMBASSADOR RICHARD W. TEARE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Can we start? Could you tell me something about when and where you were born and about your family?

TEARE: Cleveland, Ohio, February 21st, 1937. My father was an architect at that time working for the government, later for most of his career in private practice. My mother had taught for a little while but did not work while my sister and I were growing up. I lived from age three or so through high school in the suburb of Lakewood which is the first one west of Cleveland. I graduated from high school there.

Q: Could you talk about your early schooling?

TEARE: Well I don't know that there is a lot to be said. It was essentially like everyone else's. One of the interesting angles though was that the high school I went to was brand new in 1918 just at the time of the flu epidemic. It had a lot of newly hired faculty and some of them who had taught my parents and my parents' siblings were still there when I got there thirty years later.

Q: During the war, World War II, did this cross your horizon or were you too young?

TEARE: Oh, no, very definitely. I entered kindergarten I think right after Pearl Harbor. So I remember stepping on cans for example to conserve metal for the war effort and I remember ration books. I particularly remember on the morning of D Day my mother... we must have been out of school already because it was a weekday... and my mother woke me up to tell me that Allied forces had landed in Normandy. That was pretty exciting!

Q: Oh, yes. In elementary and as you moved into high school did you do much reading?

TEARE: I did of various kinds. I remember the Mariette novels.

Q: Oh, yes, Richard and Jack?

TEARE: Yes that sort of thing. And I read some more serious stuff. I remember reading Schlesinger's Age of Jackson.

Q: Good God!

TEARE: Well by this time I was a junior or senior in high school.

Q: Still, we studied that in college!

TEARE: Well, I don't know how I got into it. I worked on the school newspaper. That was probably my most time consuming activity or the activity to which I devoted the most time. I became editor of the front page, there were four pages, and chairman of the editorial board by my senior year.

Q: Your senior year would have been '52 or so?

TEARE: '53 to '54.

Q: The Korean War was over by this time but had been going on while you were in high school.

TEARE: Yes in fact I remember vividly also the day that the news came out in church, it was a Sunday, that the North had invaded the South.

Q: June 25th, 1950.

TEARE: Precisely. Certainly that colored the thinking of everyone who was coming up toward draft age. That led me in fact to apply for a student deferment. I think it led a lot of people to apply for student deferments during the latter part of the '50s. As it turned out I don't think I ever would have needed one because my draft board had a good cross section of people to draw from and they always getting people volunteering for the draft as opposed to enlisting which meant a shorter commitment. So I don't think they would ever have gotten around to calling me.

Q: At Lakewood High, other than the war did you get involved at all or interested in foreign affairs?

TEARE: I think I was to some degree, but certainly not spectacularly. I also liked American history. I didn't take world history for some reason but I remember reading a book on world history, skimming it, on the evening of the College Board examinations so I would be a little better equipped for that.

One teacher who had some influence on me was a woman named Margaret Warner, who did teach the whole range of social studies. She just died this year in her mid 90s, I read. My mother sent me a clipping about it. She was one of those people who had built up a lot of money and I think she donated several hundred thousand dollars to churches and charities.

Q: When you applied to college where did you want to go and where did you go?

TEARE: I applied to five places, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Dartmouth and Oberlin and Oberlin was really to please my mother and her family because they had all gone there. I didn't want to go there, it was too close to home. I wound up being accepted at all of them and my father's income was such that I was above the line for scholarships. But I had the point that this income fluctuated and Harvard offered me something called a National Scholarship that was honorary. It carried no money at the time, but could have brought a stipend if the family's situation had changed. That sounded very appealing. Also Harvard, I thought, had the classiest literature of any of the five, including its acceptance letter, so that is where I went.

Q: You were at Harvard from when to when?

TEARE: From '54 to '58.

Q: What was Harvard like in '54, when you got there?

TEARE: I think it was pretty square compared with what it later became in the '60s. In fact I think the whole country was pretty square. This was the Eisenhower era, after all, and we wore jackets and ties certainly to lunch and dinner, and I think even breakfast, although we wore chinos with them. Everything was pretty buttoned up or buttoned down, depending on how you look at it. I don't think there was any great political ferment on the campus. I think the cutting edge people were those in the arts and I was not really one of them.

Q: Did you major in any particular thing?

TEARE: I majored in English and in effect minored in history and this was in keeping with my journalistic thoughts or interests. And in fact I went into the competition for a position on the newspaper, The Harvard Crimson, in the fall of my freshman year. I had barely started on that when I got the grades from my first mid term exams and they were not very good so I thought I had better drop out of the Crimson competition and concentrate on my studies. Before doing so I talked to one of the executives of the Crimson, I forget his precise title, but it was David Halberstam who later went on to much greater things.

He said in effect that they'd like to see people like me stay in the competition but also our first duty was to get educated and if that was the only way to do it so be it. That was essentially it. I guess there was some possibility of going back to the competition in the spring or in your sophomore year but very few people did that and I didn't try.

Q: Were there any other activities that you were involved in?

TEARE: Not too much. I did a little intramural sports but did a lot of reading as an English major, and the history carried a lot of reading, too. I went on and wrote a senior honors thesis on one aspect of the works of Joseph Conrad, comparing one of his books with one of Dickens' novels. This was an idea suggested to me by my tutor. It was not anything I would have come up with on my own. I enjoyed it. By the time I had finished that the one thing I was certain of was that I did not want to go on to graduate school in English. I wanted to do something else. If it was going to be journalism, then straight on through the school of hard knocks, or something.

Then in the fall of my senior year a high school classmate of mine who had gone to Cornell and had been pointing for the Foreign Service ever since junior high sent me a postcard. It said that the deadline for applying for the Foreign Service exam was coming up in a few weeks. Sort of on a flyer I sent off a postcard or whatever it took and asked for an application. I went on and took the written exam in December, I believe it was, the oral the next spring and then they did the security check and I did the physical. The irony is that my friend, who scored higher than I did on the written exam and I am sure aced the oral exam was then disqualified on the physical exam because he had only one functioning kidney.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

TEARE: The other one had atrophied. So this was the guy who had been aiming at it for maybe ten years and he was out and I was, without ever having thought of it very much, I was in the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you recall any of the sorts of questions that were asked of you during the oral exam?

TEARE: I've thought about that and I can recall very few. I remember though that I had been reading the New York Times every day for a month to get up to speed and one of the topics then in the news, this would have been in March or April of '58, was the Rapacki plan for doing something in Europe. He was the Foreign Minister of Poland.

Q: Yes, I remember there was a Rapacki plan, but I'll be damned if I can tell what it was.

TEARE: Well I'm in precisely the same situation now forty years later. But I knew on that day and I think I gave a pretty good answer on that question. No, I can't really remember most of the others, or indeed any of the others. My wife, she was not then, we were dating, but she also had passed the written and she took the oral exam. She remembers very distinctly that they asked her about the national debt and her answer managed to confuse it with the unemployment rate. At the end of it they said to her that she was a charming young woman, but they didn't think she was cut out for the Foreign Service. And that sounds so sexist and so patronizing today. On the other hand she admits that although she was a history major she did not have the sort of preparation that met the examiners head on.

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

TEARE: Another little story in itself. I went back to Cleveland. I started some part time non degree graduate work at Western Reserve that fall in economics and Russian and I took a political science course now having become rather intrigued by all of this. In those days as you may remember people were being brought into the Passport Office, particularly in the latter part of the fiscal year which in those days ended in June. The Passport Office thanks to its Director, Frances Knight, had money when the rest of the Department didn't. So a common ploy was after the rest of the Department used up its funds for bringing people on board in the second six months of the calendar year would be for them to offer appointments as Reserve Officers by way of the Passport Office. They did this for a number of years. So long about Thanksgiving I got a letter asking me if I would be willing to work for the Passport office for six months and then go on into basic Officer training and become an FSO.

Being very much at loose ends I said why not and signed up for them. But I swear and I'm sure I'll find the letter when I start cleaning things out, I am quite sure that they promised us that no one would be sent to A 100 any earlier than we were.

Q: A 100 being?

TEARE: The basic Officer training course. Well in any event I got to Washington in the very beginning of 1959. I went through three weeks of training in the Passport Office. Then the single people were sent out to the field agencies and I was sent to the agency in New York.

Q: You were single at the time?

TEARE: Yes, which was fine, and we were there I think precisely six months and then we had acquitted our obligations to the Passport Agency and came back to Washington to start the basic training course. But meanwhile another course had started ahead of us, in May. I knew a couple of people in it. My class didn't start until the end of July, 39 years ago this week I think.

Q: In the Passport Office in New York, what were you doing?

TEARE: We were what were called agency adjudicators and we were on the line, as you would say in terms of a visa line. That is we had counters and people would queue up behind us. On busy days there would be some screening outside so the people would not get into the line if they didn't have their photographs, for example. We would take them as they came, in turn. We would examine their applications. We would ask them questions if necessary. We would fill in missing answers if they had not provided them. We would make sure the photos were the right size and quality. Polaroids were not allowed. We would collect their money, usually in cash, I guess we could accept checks also. And we would determine whether they wanted the passport mailed or whether they would call for it. That sort of thing. And we would administer the oath of them..."Do you swear that the statements in this application are true and correct and do you swear allegiance to the United States?"

We got pretty quick at it. They tended to space us so that each of us new kids was next to an experienced agent. So I would frequently have to lean across the divider and ask Harmon Spies, the guy I usually sat next to, how to handle a particular case. We got pretty fast and I remember days when we took 200 to 250 applications, including renewals. Renewals were very cut and dried. You could do those in thirty seconds but an application might take somewhat longer. We had people who didn't speak English. We had...you may remember this...the classic case of women who had expatriated themselves through marriage between 1907 and 1924 and didn't know it. And I remember a couple of them saying that they were voters, and they would show me their New York voter cards. I would say, "Well, I'm sorry Madam, but you are not a citizen of the United States and if New York chooses to let you vote, well, that's fine but for our purpose if you have to go out, get yourself naturalized" which could be done expeditiously.Q: For the record, I might point out that that law was changed. I mean, it was highly discriminatory.

TEARE: Oh, it was, it was.

Q: A man could marry a foreign woman and there was no problem.

TEARE: That's right and if she were a foreigner in the United States she acquired U.S. citizenship thereby and we had plenty of those. Occasionally you were in the position of having to tell people unhappy things. I had some prominent customers. One I remember in particular was Bert Lahr.

Q: The famous comedian.

TEARE: The comedian. And Bert Lahr's name, or his family name, was Lahrheim, they had dropped the 'heim'. But his birth certificate read Lauheim and he had a court order changing his name from Lahrheim to Lahr, but nothing about Lauheim. So I got this one and I was looking at this well known face from The Wizard of Oz.

Q: You were looking at the cowardly lion in The Wizard of Oz.

TEARE: That's right and at this document in front of me which said Lauheim. Strangely, he had never had a passport and was off to perform in Europe. So I leaned over to Harmon in the next booth and showed him the two and he gave me a big wink and we issued under the name of Bert Lahr and took it on faith that Lauheim and Lahrheim were one and the same.

Q: Did you ever have any dealings with or hear other people talk about dealing with Frances Knight?

TEARE: Yes. She came to visit the agency at least once in the six months that I was there. We all expected something, some fireworks or a pep talk from her to us as a group but all she did was walk through the office rather slowly, rather like a white glove inspection. She seemed particularly interested in the artificial plants that were in the window boxes behind us. They were all made of green rubber. She spent the rest of the day so far as we could tell conferring with the agent in charge, Joe Callahan, in his office.

Now, a couple of other stories from then. One is that usually by mid afternoon the customers would slack off. In that case we would be pulled off the line and sent to the production area in the back room where we did such things as gluing the photographs, putting them on a page and then putting the iron on them. That shows among other things how primitive it was still in those days. We had the typewriters with the special platens hollowed out so you could put the passport book in and all that. But that was pretty menial and we as Foreign Service Officers probably tactlessly made no secret of our distaste for that sort of work. And the experienced agents, the civil service types, usually didn't have to do that sort of thing. They in turn, I'm sure, regarded us as obnoxious college kids.

I think the typical agent on the line was a GS 9. Our supervisor, sort of the straw boss under Callahan, was a guy named Mattie Earl, who had a shiny bald head and I think a 30 or 35 year pin in his collar which I now realize is not all that long! But he claimed to have been there forever and he also said in the hearing of several of us more than once that if he did not get his long sought promotion to GS 13 we were all going to get bad reports out of him. That is the sort of thing today that you could hang someone for. You could grieve on for years. But we just sort of rolled our eyes and laughed it off.

The other story I want to relate has to do with Alger Hiss. Hiss had been in prison. He had come out and I remember reading in the paper in early 1959 that he had applied for a passport, which was quite a test case. Had his rights been restored? In theory they had. Was there any basis for withholding a passport from him? Probably not. But we were still in the aftermath of the McCarthy era.

Q: And Frances Knight came out very definitely on the right wing of whatever you could think of.

TEARE: She did and she had close ties to a number of right wing senators. In fact that is why she always had a budget when nobody else did in the latter part of the fiscal year.

Well, anyway, one day I came back from my mid morning break and I inherited the line next to me. We moved entire lines at a time, people went out in rotation. So it was purely a matter of luck that the first person in line was, I realized, Alger Hiss. So I took his application in what I thought was a normal and courteous way. I said at the end of it, "Mr. Hiss, ordinarily you would get your passport in a couple of weeks, but I have a sense that your case is going to set some bells ringing in Washington." He smiled and nodded and said he knew that and would see what happened.

In passport training they had told us whenever we had a controversial case they would follow it through to completion, keeping in mind our interest and would let us know what happened to it. This was another fiction. But I set Hiss's application aside and as soon as I got my next break I carried it to Callaghan. He nodded and off it went to Washington I suppose on a special telex. All the names went by telex for clearance. Several weeks passed and I didn't hear anything. Then one morning I read in the paper that Hiss's lawyer, who was one of the Bodines, either Leonard or Louie, I forget which now, had given an interview to the paper. He said he had written to his old friend, Christian Herter, then acting Secretary of State, to please issue a passport to his client, Alger Hiss, or refuse him the passport so that Bodine could take him to court. Shortly thereafter Hiss was issued a passport.

And then this, I think, is perhaps a measure of the man. A few days later he came into the agency, came to the head of my line beside all the customers, just reached over and thanked me for the way I handled his case. I said I would have done the same for anyone and he said, "Yes, I know, but you were nice to me." So I was rather touched by this.

There was also another connection. My wife, we were still dating at that point but not married, comes from Baltimore where he was from. I think her mother was driving his mother to church or something from time to time so there was a slight connection but he had never met me. I believe we got a wedding present from him and his mother.

Anyway that was the Passport Agency.

Q: In a way I would have thought there would have been a certain carry through later on of understanding how large operations work and all that.

TEARE: Yes, large, menial for the most part, and during my first tour overseas a year later I did passports and then visas, so the training was germane certainly. But at the same time there was always this feeling that we were somehow being treated as sort of second class....

Q: Sure, cannon fodder.

TEARE: Yes, and apprentices. For example I brought a passport typewriter to New York from Washington in the trunk of my car at the request of Passport Agency people. I arrived on a Saturday morning. The office was not open, it was in Rockefeller Center, and somebody came down to meet me to carry the typewriter inside. I mean, we went out of our way I thought to help them. We were not sticklers about hours. We stayed until work was done for the day. On the other hand, there wasn't usually any overtime.

The original Passport Office was down on Broadway in lower Manhattan. I think it had stayed open until very shortly before we got there. Probably the Rockefeller Center one opened before the other one closed. A lot of people who had been used to going downtown would grumble about having to come to mid town.

Q: Actually Frances Knight was very proud of herself. I think she got the space in Rockefeller Center for free.

TEARE: I don't remember that but it could well be.

Q: I interviewed her a long, long time ago and this was one of her accomplishments. She was able to parlay things!

TEARE: Definitely.

Q: So you came into the actual A 100, the basic Officers' course when?

TEARE: The end of July 1959. I can't remember the number in the class but its most notable member, certainly, was Tom Pickering. And there were several others who rose quickly, much more so than I did, Tom Boyatt, Bob Fritts, and one of my closes friends out of the class although I haven't seen much of him in recent years was Pierre Shostal.

Q: I've interviewed Boyatt and Shostal. Bob Fritts I keep trying to get hold of. He is down in Williamsburg.

TEARE: Yes. Well, kidnap him!

In fact, Shostal and I briefly shared an apartment in Rosslyn and then I was married that September so Pierre moved out and my wife moved in, all over one weekend.

Q: What was your impression of the A 100 and how it worked?

TEARE: Oh, dear, that's a long time ago. The Chairman I remember was Mike Gannon. There was one woman in the class of I think 28 and no minorities, I would say. It was a very 1950s sort of group. It seems to me that we had long blocks of instruction. The caliber was pretty good. We were rather reticent when it came to asking questions. I felt a lot more respect, I think, for the program that we got than for the passport training I had earlier. One of the guys was a lawyer named Jochamo Cacciatore, so of course we knew him as "Chicken." He and the other lawyers from the Passport Office were up in arms at that point because the Supreme Court had recently ruled that there was a right to travel. This was a passport case earlier than Hiss; I forget which one now.

Q: It might have been Paul Robeson or something like that?

TEARE: Possibly. But anyway they were infuriated..."We defy you to find anywhere in the Constitution a reference to a right to travel." Well that was sort of close minded and dogmatic. It seemed to me that the training we got in A 100 was generally better. But, gee, I can't remember specifics.

Q: Do you recall, here you are married, a full fledged Foreign Service...well maybe not full fledged.

TEARE: Yes, we were FSO 8s.

Q: Did you have the wisdom of knowing where to go and what to be?

TEARE: Gee, I don't know that I can answer that comprehensively. I think most of us, including the people I mentioned all thought of ourselves as what we would call today substantive Officers, political or economic cones. I think that almost all of us were pointed in that direction. There may have been a couple of who were interested in administrative or consular matters. But maybe I'm inferring that from where they wound up rather than....

Q: I'm not sure. I came in '55 and there wasn't a cone system.

TEARE: There wasn't a formal cone system as such but embassy sections were divided that way and jobs went that way.

Q: Where did you want to go?

TEARE: I didn't have any strong feelings about it at that point. I was really open to most anything. We got our assignments I think before the end of A 100 and I was assigned to Barbados, which I knew of as a name and a place, mainly from my stamp collecting in grade school. My wife had never heard of it. So we had to get out the Atlas and so forth. But also at that time, maybe still today, you got training in a foreign language to get you up to the S:3 professional spoken level, no matter where you were going. So I was going to an English speaking post and I had a pretty good reading knowledge of French but I had done, I don't know, 1+ or something in spoken. The professor had asked me "Quel temps fait-il"...what is the weather like. And I looked at my watch! In other words I had never had to really speak French in order to make my living and had almost no training in the spoken language. So I needed it. So I went off to sixteen weeks of French at FSI, which was then in the basement of the Jefferson Building in Arlington Towers. A grim setting. That is where we had A 100 and also where the language school was.

Q: It was basically the garage.

TEARE: Yes, yes it was. No doubt about it.

Q: You had to be cleared out from time to time if the carbon dioxide got a little too heavy.

TEARE: Maybe so. I don't remember that it ever happened in my time. Tom Pickering was also taking French. I forget who else. But we used to eat lunch together in the cafeteria all the time. I specifically remember that as we got to the end of the calendar year in '59, Tom and Alice were gutting it out. Alice was pregnant and they very much hoped that the child would be born on or before December 31st so that they would have the tax exemption for the full year and, indeed, she was.

1989 fast forward...I had come back to Washington and was working in the East Asia Bureau. We had the need for a lawyer from the Legal Advisor's office and they sent over a young woman to give us legal advice on this particular matter and it was Meg Pickering, Tom's daughter, the girl born late in December of 1959.

Q: I would imagine Barbados would have been a little bit disappointing wasn't it?

TEARE: Well it was all new to me at that point and I didn't really know. I had traveled a little bit in Europe one summer but hadn't seen any of the rest of the world. Yes, it didn't sound like the front lines and indeed it wasn't. On the other hand it sounded like a pleasant place and a lot of people said we were going off to a two year honeymoon and so forth. In many ways it was not exciting but it was a very good training ground.

I sometimes used to say that I thought they sent me there because anything I did wrong wouldn't have very far reaching repercussions. It was good particularly because in my first year there was a change of principal officers and I was put in charge, although there was another Officer precisely my grade who was two years older than I was. We had arrived within a week of each other. So he did the visas the first year and I did everything else which was citizenship, passport, trade promotion, economic reporting, welfare whereabouts. Then when the boss left in June he put me in charge. So I was acting Principal Officer after four months at post and I drew Charge pay, half the difference between my salary which was $5,225 and whatever the consul's salary was. So I learned a lot in particular that first year.

The second year we switched jobs, which was only fair, and I ran the visa mill and he did all the other stuff. But it was valuable.

Q: So you were in Barbados from '59?

TEARE: It was 1960, February, by the time I got there. I was by then 23 years old and I stayed until July of 1962.

Q: What was the situation in Barbados in those days?

TEARE: It was a British colony. In fact it prided itself on having the oldest parliament in the Western Hemisphere. It had been settled in the 1620s, I think. It was a member of the prospective West Indies Federation.

Q: You might explain what that was.

TEARE: Yes. This was a promotion really by the British to try to get most of the Caribbean colonies into a single unit and to shove them off into independence sooner rather than later. The winds of change I think had already started to blow there. They came along shortly afterwards in Africa. There was a large body of educated people although the islands were essentially rather poor and some of them had internal selgovernment with elected parliaments and premiers. I think the British thought they were ready and furthermore could be governed by themselves as a unit; that is they could govern themselves but in a Federation format. I think this was rather naï¿½ve on the part of the British. I think they didn't fully appreciate the local pride, local animosities, and self interest of several of the entities. Also there were big disparities in size. Jamaica had I think three million people. Barbados had only one quarter of a million. Some of the smaller islands had not even a hundred thousand people.

There were inevitable jealousies. Trinidad was a fairly distant second to Jamaica but it was important nevertheless. Trinidad resented Jamaica and Barbados and the smaller ones resented the two bigger ones. They had a Federal Prime Minister by that time and he was a Barbadian, Sir Grantley Adams, and he was really the grand old man of politics there, the equivalent of Nkrumah in Ghana or Eric Williams in Trinidad. He was older than Williams. Of course, having a Barbadian as a prime minister meant you didn't have to give it to either Trinidad or Jamaica, compromise and so forth.

There was a federal senate that had representation from each of the islands, equal representation, and there already was a Lower House, I guess, that was weighted in proportion to population. But the whole thing was really imposed from outside, or encouraged from outside. There was never any ground swell of support locally for it because each of the islands kept its own government going and that is where the intense, active political life was. No one got excited about the doings of the federal government in Port of Spain, not even the feds themselves.

But the United States had made a commitment to the British to foster this development. So among other things we decided that we would elevate, if that's the right word, the consulate general in Port of Spain to the title of United States Mission to the West Indies Federation. At some point, I guess by this time it was 1961, we assigned a senior career officer, Ivan White, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary for EUR and DCM in Ottawa, I think. He was going to be Chief of this U.S. Mission and Ambassador, waiting in the wings to the entire Federation on the day it should become independent.

Well, when Ivan arrived in Port of Spain there was nobody to meet him at the airport from the federal government, but there was the Protocol Officer of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. That was illustrative of the way things were. The federal government never really got up and running. Island governments prevailed. I left Barbados in '62 and I think Jamaica became independent in '64 and Trinidad also, and Barbados itself in '66 and most of the rest later in the '60s, although a couple of them never have. The Federation quietly faded away. We were left, I guess, with a little bit of egg on our vest.

One incident that came back to have more significance later in my career, later in the '60s, was an occasion when there was something being considered by the federal parliament in Port of Spain that was of interest to us. The Deputy Principal Officer from Port of Spain came over to see Florence Daisch, one of the federal senators at her home in Barbados. This was done without the knowledge or prior consultation of my boss, the consul in Barbados. In fact this had happened before my time but he still talked about it frequently. The officer in question who made that unannounced trip was one Philip C. Habib who was deputy principal officer in Port of Spain at the time. I later wound up working for him in Saigon. But my Barbados boss' attitude toward him was so bitter that I remember being skeptical that he was coming to Saigon about the time I got there.

Q: I take it that even at that time there was considerable immigration to the United States, or attempted immigration?

TEARE: Oh, there was and that was our biggest problem in the post, visa fraud attempts. The traditional outlet for population from the West Indies is to the UK. That was the case and is still true today. Barbadians used to come back from trips to London and say, "I did think I had never left home. All the railway trainmen there are Bajans." That is not a good accent. But they felt at home. The London Transport was full of Barbadians.

Q: Oh, yes, and the busses too! I think all the conductors on the busses.

TEARE: Yes, yes, exactly. A lot of them also went to Canada. Not too many were able to go to the United States in any given at that time because there was a sub quota of the Western Hemisphere...a sub quota of the British quota. There was supposed to be a hundred per year for quota immigrant visas. Now people have been going to New York, particularly, since at least the 1920s and there was a body of people already there who were petitioning for relatives some of whom had gotten on quota status. So we would issue several hundred immigrant visas per year even though we were on that line of sub quota. But then there were a lot of people trying for NIVs through all manner of subterfuge. And when I think back on it now I think they were pretty amateurish compared with what I've heard of since.

There was an affidavit of support for them, for example, from a particular travel agency that catered to the Barbadian trade in New York. We would get several of those a week in both NIV and IV cases and when you saw one of those coming you automatically became suspicious. A good case, we always used to figure, didn't need that kind of help and a case that had that kind of help was prima facie suspicious. Well the law tells you in fact that you operate on a guilty until proven innocent basis on visas and that is the way we were. Applicants would say...I would say... "Well, Miss Kumberbash, it says here on your application that you are going to visit this Mrs. Bravid in Brooklyn for six months." And I would say, "That seems like quite a long visit. Why should Mrs. Bravid give you room and board for all this time?" And then I would ask, "Are you related to her?" And she would say, "Well I just call she Auntie." And I would say, "Does that mean she is really your Aunt?" And the applicant would say, "Well, I think there is some family connection."

And then the applicant would say, "Besides, I can't stay any longer than six months because you will throw me out." I had to explain that the Immigration Service really didn't have the capacity to follow everybody and that was why we tried to screen them at the beginning rather than so forth and so on. You know after you've said that six or eight times in a morning your vocal cords are beginning to fray. I don't know what our refusal rate was. I don't think it was 40 or 50 percent but it was certainly in the double figures. We would have some people coming back again and again.

We would have the usual batch of congressional letters and so forth. We ran a visa mill. Not a huge one, but that was essentially what we did. That consumed almost all of the time of one Officer.

Q: This was not yet at the high time for tourism was it? What about tourism?

TEARE: Tourism was growing. There were some winter residents with very nice places, including Marietta Tree whom you may remember, who was later a delegate to the UN.

Q: Yes...a friend of Adlai Stevenson.

TEARE: Yes, and in fact I once delivered a telegram to Stevenson at her place. The place belonged to her and her husband, Ronald Tree, the Marshall Field heir who had grown up in Britain and become an MP. I think he was later knighted. I took this envelope to... Heron Bay was the name of the property...and I asked to be taken to Governor Stevenson. This must have been very late '60 or early '61, after the campaign...not his campaign but after Kennedy was elected. In fact the message may have had something to do with his appointment to the UN. I don't know.

Anyway he was sitting on the beach and he got up and brushed the sand off his hand on his bathing trunks and shook my hand and received the envelope I brought him. He read it and said there would be no immediate answer and thanked me and I went away again.

But there were some other people who had fancy residences up and down the Gold Coast there. One was Claudette Colbert. Another was the stage designer Oliver Messel. So there were some high rollers, year round residents. Tourism was growing. When I first went down there were no jet aircraft flying in but by the time I left in '62 the first jets had reached down there. We had come down from San Juan by DC 6.

Q: Was there any political activity that we were following?

TEARE: We paid attention to the local politics. There was an election there in my time. Sir Grantley Adams' party, which had been in for years and years, was turned out and the opposition came in. I had already come to know the leader of the opposition who then became Prime Minister, Errol Barrow. I would have met him in due course but saw more of him than otherwise because his wife at the time, they were later divorced, was an American citizen, a Pastor's daughter from New Jersey named Carolyn...I forget her maiden name.

So we reported extensively on that election. I remember more than it deserved ...more than the Department wanted. Ian McCloud was the Colonial Secretary at that time in I guess Macmillan's government. He came to Barbados and talked about constitutional status and I suppose, although I didn't get any insight into that, he might have talked about what would happen if Federation didn't succeed, although Britain very much wanted it to.

I remember also that Government House did not invite me, as Acting Principal Officer, or my colleague to the reception they gave for McCloud. I thought that was pretty shabby and I think I let that be known in official circles. I don't know if it did any good.

We were the only career consulate in Bridgetown and there was only one other post, well it called itself a career consulate...and that was Venezuela. It was just across the alley from us. The consul was a woman named Marisa Jimenez de Ward. Her father was a cabinet officer in a previous Venezuelan government. I think it was one of those that had been turned out altogether. She had married a white Barbadian named Ward and had already settled in Bridgetown and got the appointment as consul. I think they were open two hours a day, three times a week or something like that. They were sort of a joke. We were the only real post and then there were a few honorary ones, Sweden, the Netherlands, that sort of thing...businessmen who did that on the side.

There had been only two Americans up until my time, the consul and vice consul. The post had been a consulate general before the war. It was downgraded during Federation and then it quickly popped up again to be a consulate general and then an embassy. But that was after my time.

The Principal Officer was a guy named Knox Lamb, who was born in 1902, so he was already 58 when I got there. He was a lawyer, first in the Army and then in the military government in Germany. Then he switched over to State at some point as an FSR but still doing legal work in the military government and under McCloy and whoever else was there. He was integrated into the Foreign Service as a Reserve Officer and was told, I guess, that either he could retire or go to Barbados and so he went to Barbados for three years and enjoyed it, particularly given that he was from Marks, Mississippi. I'm sure all of his friends and relatives were segregationists and here he was in a majority Black country. But he managed that all right.

Why don't we stop? You look glazed.

Q: No. No, I'm really not. When I look glazed it's only because I'm thinking of another question.

TEARE: Oh, okay.

Q: No. You mention that it was a majority Black island. How did this fit? Were there racial tensions and all? Was there a good modus vivendi would you say?

TEARE: I would say it was very good. There were some tensions certainly and there would always be talk about inter racial couples or percentages of the blood in the mixed population that was quite evident. I mean there was a sizeable mixed population is what I mean and you could make your own guesses about somebody's ancestry. But at least in local and Federation terms it was all settled. The Blacks had 21 out of 24 seats in the House or Assembly, something like that. It was dominant.

There were three main political parties: the Barbados Labor Party of Sir Grantley Adams, the Democratic Labor Party of Errol Barrow, he became Prime Minister with full internal self government while I was there. The third party was called the Barbados National Party and it had the two white MPs and one guy of mixed race who was also the mayor of Bridgetown. We knew them all.

Q: This is '60, '62, the beginning of changes in the United States regarding civil rights and all this. Was there much interest in what was going on or was this just another world?

TEARE: I think there was quite a bit of interest. Of course the civil rights movement got hotter still in this country later. I wasn't there in Barbados to see the reaction. But there was always, I think, some interest and pride in the achievement of African Americans. Althea Gibson came to play tennis in some sort of exhibition while we were there. That was a private promotion not a government one. I think in many ways Barbadians thought that they were much farther advanced given that the Africans were in the majority there in descended people. So I think for the most part they were fairly relaxed about it.

Now a lot of the economic power was still in the hands of whites and in those days it was respectable work to cut canes in the field. I went back there on vacation in 1993 and found that the sugar industry is in serious decline. Nobody wants to work in the cane fields anymore. It's hard and furthermore, nowadays I was told, people associate cane cutting with slave days. So it sounds to me although this 1990s update was very superficial, it sounds to me as though there has been more politicization or radicalization or it's more politicized now than it was 35 years ago.

Q: Was the popular entertainer Harry Belafonte from there or was he from somewhere else?

TEARE: I think he is from Jamaica. I'm pretty sure he is. He was known. The real entertainment stars however were the Calypsonians from Trinidad, Mighty Sparrow, people like that.

Q: Oh, yes, Lord Invader.

TEARE: Yes.

Q: Well having had this taste of a very difficult, hardship life and all what was in store for you in 1962?

TEARE: One more word about Barbados, if I may. Knox Lamb left and we heard, in fact I think he told me this himself, that he went back from his medical exam here. They couldn't find anything wrong with him physically but he got the doctor to say that it would be better for his mental health if he did not return to Barbados. So they scratched around and I think they would not have had another post for him except that the then consul in Brisbane was killed in a plane crash. And so Knox Lamb and family went off to Brisbane and he spent the last two years of his Foreign Service career there, and very happily I understand.

Q: Was he happy in Barbados?

TEARE: I think he found it limiting and maybe he didn't like the racial situation but if so he never let on. Again I was only with him for about four months but I learned a fair bit from him. Then we got a new Principal Officer, Eileen Donovan.

Q: Oh, yes, I've interviewed her.

TEARE: She arrived straight from the senior seminar. I think she was in the second such seminar. I think she was the only woman in it. She had known I guess for some months that she was coming to the job. She knew that her two Officers there were brand new O 8s and she did quite a good job in fact of running us and getting along with the local people and so forth. She also was dismayed to discover that the other vice consul and I had both joined the Royal Barbados Yacht Club, which discriminated on racial lines. I must say we had done so on the invitation of people we had met when we first got there and without any real thought and probably should not have. We did not resign and in fact she joined the Club herself, as I recall, but she also joined, and so did we, an adjacent club which was open to all races called the Barbados Aquatic Club. So there was a bit of balancing. But I think that my successor and other junior Officers who came to the post thereafter were told not to join, which was probably wise, in fact definitely wise.

The one other point that I would mention is that we had a senior FSN named Agatha Barnes who had joined the staff of the consulate a few months before I was born! And therefore was in her 23rd or 24th year when I got there. She was a white Barbadian, or mostly white, a maiden lady who knew all the regulations and had, I guess, gone to Washington once or twice for training but anyway knew all the right people in Washington. She knew precisely where to send vouchers and monthly reports of passports issued...just everything. The longer I think about it the more I see in retrospect that she really ran that post. She was taken ill, a malignancy, and had to stop working and spent her final few months at home or in the hospital. Eileen Donovan quickly realized that we were in trouble without her and arranged to get a staff corps American assigned, a woman named Millicent Funk. She arrived sometime in mid or late 1961. Milly Funk was good but she hadn't had Agatha's breadth of experience, although Milly had to learn too. Anyway we kept the place going.

We were in rented quarters, part of a floor of Barclays' Bank Building and we had an incinerator on the roof and the duty rotated between the other guy and me. Every week or so we'd go up on the roof and burn Current Foreign Relations which had come to us by pouch. There was a U.S. Naval facility, Ocean Graphic Research Station, quote, unquote, up at the other end of the island. They had an FBO and we got pouches through them.

Q: By the way during this time were you at all impacted by the arrival of President Kennedy on the scene?

TEARE: We heard about it, we followed the speculation about his marriage, you know, that his father in law allegedly promised Jackie one million or two million or something if she wouldn't divorce him until after the election, that sort of thing. We were in the position I think of anyone else in the public at large; we didn't have any inside...

Q: I was just wondering particularly about many people who were in Washington when Kennedy came in or in college, who were caught up in the idea of government service being a good thing.

TEARE: Oh, yes, that. I think it was an exciting time and I think for somebody like me newly in government this was very ennobling and we felt some sense of mission certainly. There was also a lot of anti Castro sentiment going on, then the Bay of Pigs occurred.

Q: The Bay of Pigs occurred while you were there. Was that sort of a difficult time?

TEARE: Yes, it was very embarrassing. Although the Barbadians, I don't think, paid much attention to it. In fact they didn't pay much attention to anything Latin. Unlike Trinidad where there is a certain amount of interaction with Venezuelans in particular, Barbadians had very little interest in the Latin American world. Venezuela to them might as well have been Pakistan or something, maybe more remote because Pakistan was in the Commonwealth! Their orientation was all to London, New York, Toronto. I remember, it must have been Princess Margaret who was married while we were there, and the local wire broadcasting called Rediffusion carried the BBC account of the Royal Wedding and so forth. That is what really turned them on.

Q: So after this time where did you go?

TEARE: From there I went to Manila as consular officer and I think the assignment was totally at random and I didn't get the orders until the very end of June, the end of the fiscal year in 1962. My wife had already planned to leave at the beginning of the new fiscal year for medical reasons so with the orders in hand she was able to travel and I followed a couple weeks later. That was the only full home leave I ever took in my life as well as Area Studies.

Q: Where was your wife from?

TEARE: She was from Baltimore.

So we headed out to Manila and I think we were on a ship, it was the only time I ever traveled by ship any part of the distance to post. We took the Matson Liner, Lurilee, from Long Beach or San Pedro or wherever to Honolulu and then we flew the rest of the way on Pan Am first class, after a couple of days in Honolulu. It was right at that time that the Cuban Missile Crisis was looming, but I was totally ignorant of that, blissfully unaware.

Q: You were in Manila from when to when?

TEARE: From October of 1962 until July of '64.

Q: When you went out what were the Philippines like at that time?

TEARE: The Philippines at that stage was we thought in pretty good shape. Of course we had coddled it as the first and only democracy in Asia. It had weathered the insurgency movement, the Balahap, in the '50s. The famous President, Ramon Magsaysay, had largely defeated the insurgency and cleaned up the government to some degree. Then he was killed in a plane crash in 1957 while campaigning for re election. He was succeeded by his Vice President, Carlos P. Garcia, who let things slide back into corruption. But in 1961 a new President had been elected, Diosdado Macapagal, who was honest, at least relatively and maybe absolutely. Not very skilled politically, unfortunately as it turned out. But there was a sense of some hope and promise. The population was growing fast probably outstripping the economy but basically things were pretty good in the Philippines at that time.

The U.S. Ambassador was William Stevenson who had been President of Oberlin College. We got a very royal reception from the Stevensons and it turned out that he was under the mistaken belief that it was my mother and father who were coming to post. My mother had been active in alumni affairs at Oberlin and I guess that's how he knew the name and I guess the confusion was part of that. Anyway he was a nice guy but I'm not sure a great Ambassador. His connection was that first of all he was related to Adlai Stevenson by marriage as a distant cousin. His wife, Eleanor Bumstead was more closely related to Adlai. They were third cousins whereas Adlai and Bill were fifth cousins or something. But their daughter, Helen, was married to Minor, the governor of New Jersey, who had delivered his state for Kennedy against Johnson in the 1960 nomination race. So I think Stevenson's job as Ambassador to the Philippines was in part a payoff for the family.

Q: Not Stevenson...was his name Stevenson?

TEARE: Bill Stevenson was the Ambassador.

Q: What was the Adlai Stevenson connection?

TEARE: A distant cousin. But Bill Stevenson's wife who was not a Stevenson by birth was more closely related to Adlai Stevenson than was Bill Stevenson. At least that is my recollection of it.

Q: When you got there were we still running top dog almost like pro consuls or not or would you say that things had changed?

TEARE: Well I'm not sure to what extent we had done that immediately after independence. Certainly by the early 1960s we were the biggest single foreign influence but we were not dominant in any way in the sense of getting the Philippine Government to do what we wanted it to do. Ed Lansdale had been out there in the '50s and I think we had done much more behind the scenes. We had specifically sold Magsaysay on the value of a land reform program and helped him do it. I think there were Certificates of Title printed on paper with the Philippine flag bordering it. Lansdale tried the same thing in Vietnam a few years later.

In general what may have helped in the Philippines did not necessarily work at all in Vietnam. But what we really wanted I think was for Macapagal to succeed, to get agrarian reform legislation and other things through the Congress and so forth and that wasn't necessarily going to happen and we couldn't make it happen. I think in foreign policy matters that the Philippines pretty well followed our lead. They had troops in Korea and they sent a noncombatant engineer battalion to Vietnam by '65 or '66. So in that sense, yes, there was still tutelage on our part but it was not automatic and furthermore there were signs of nationalism growing. It was during the time that I was there that the Philippine Congress passed legislation changing Independence Day from July 4th to June 12th, the hundredth anniversary which we celebrated last month. They celebrated. I celebrated it with them.

I was thinking just a moment ago of another example... Oh, yes, up until that time, from their independence in 1946 to 1962 or '63 we had represented their interests anywhere in effect that they did not have resident diplomatic representation. Usually this didn't amount to very much but occasionally we would hear from Liberia or Ethiopia or someplace that somebody wanted a Philippine visa, could we issue and so forth. In my job in Special Consular Services in the Consular Section I was the guru of all that, custodian of the agreements. In many cases there were specific agreements, for the Netherlands or for Portugal or someplace but then as new countries achieved independence we were never specifically asked but it was assumed that we would do it until instructed otherwise. Finally, again, in my time the Philippines said "Okay, thank you very much but we are now going to look after our own interests. " Even though in many cases this meant that an embassy in Bonn covered the Low Countries and half of Scandinavia or something. So we relinquished and formally handed back our responsibility for representing the Philippines. That was one project I worked on.

Q: What were you working on? What types of jobs were you holding?

TEARE: Well I was in the Consular Section. There was a consul general. There were three mid grade officers, one for passports, one for visas and one for special consular services. Well maybe there wasn't for Special Consular Services...that I think was with a junior officer. The guy doing it when I got there was Charles Steadman who left to become a Peace Corps country director not too many years after that and is now out of the Service.

That was a one man operation part of the time anyway. And then when I was there it was usually the two of us working at it. That also supervised the anti fraud which was two local investigators, both lawyers, both Ilokanos from the northern part of Luzon Island where most of the Filipinos in the United States come from and where consequently a lot of fraud originates. So the main thing is that the whole time I was in the Philippines, nearly two years, I never had to do visas, which was a grueling job. I sometimes filled in at passports and I took over the Passport and Citizenship Unit the last three or four months I was there. But most of the time I was Special Consular Services and supervision of the anti consular fraud investigators. I thought that was the best job in the section.

Q: Who was the consul general or consuls general?

TEARE: Throughout my time one man and for several years after, Louis E. Gleeck, Jr. A few stories about him, too! But anyway Gleeck was consul general and he was frustrated in ambitions for higher rank there or elsewhere. Furthermore he had good deputies, the Passport and Visa people. Gordon Furth for visas and Faith Andress for Citizenship and Passport. As a result of which Gleeck could spend a lot of time out of the office and he did. He played golf early in the mornings, often with Ferdinand Marcos who was then a Senator. Marcos left the Liberal Party, Macapagal's party, after it was clear that Macapagal was going to run for re election.

Marcos thought he had a promise that Macapagal would stay only one term and then he, Marcos, could move up. Well, when he saw that promise if it had ever existed was not going to be honored, Marcos switched parties, went over to the Nationalist party and very quickly became its President. It is the sort of thing that simply could not happen in the United States but could and did happen there. Of course Marcos went on to get the nomination and was elected in '65, Macapagal turned out to be a one term President.

Anyway, Gleeck would play golf with Marcos and other politicians and he would often go over to a coffeehouse quite near the Chancery called the Playa de Oro, Cup of Gold, where a lot of newsmen and sometimes politicians gathered and it was a hotbed of political gossip. Gleeck was always bringing this home. He studied Tagalog I think formally for awhile and picked up some more. We didn't have any Tagalog language officers or Filipino language officers in the embassy at that time so that was quite a useful function that Gleeck performed. I think nowadays we keep at least one trained Tagalog speaker in the embassy.

So the Consular Section sort of buzzed along on its own with Gleeck's rather detached guidance and it worked pretty well. The visa load was heavy and that is where the real grief came. As a Visa Officer if one follows the law and the regulations one turned down a lot of applicants. This being the Philippines it was often taken personally and junior Officers, I can think of a couple of them, Bob Myers, Ann Swift, were mentioned in the newspapers, typically one editorial one column as being anti Filipino because they turned down so many visa applicants. There was real pressure in those jobs of that nature. As I say I escaped all that and I had I thought a much more interesting caseload visiting prisons, getting people out of jail, long-running welfare cases, these fraud investigations. I made a couple of trips up country with the fraud investigations.

Q: Well the fraud was tied to the visas wasn't it?

TEARE: Fraud also involved citizenship to a considerable degree. In fact, we investigated citizenship cases in considerably more depth than visa cases because citizenship was a lifetime entitlement. Of course, a visa could become that. A lot of Filipinos had gone to Hawaii in the interwar years. Some of them had come back and been trapped by World War II. Others were coming and going all the time. There would be substitution of children.

We would get an applicant that said this kid was born in Hawaii in 1948, let's say, so the kid should have been 14 years old but he only looked to be about 11. So we would put the case aside for investigation and every few months one of the investigators would go up, taking a photograph, to the kid's home barrio and ask whether anyone could say who the boy was. They'd say that it was Menato. Well, the application was in the name of Rodrigo. So then the investigator would ask whether the family had a boy named Rodrigo and they would say that Rodrigo died soon after they got back from Hawaii; this kid was born here. Well, there went the whole case! So we would get simple affidavits from them. We weren't trying to deny people for the sake of denying them but we were looking at cases that didn't smell right and there were plenty of those. Quite a few of them had to do with citizenship.

We would not have had time to investigate the typical weak visa case in any depth at all. There were simply too many of them. We would go after visa cases more when we began to see patterns, letters from the same employer or letters that all looked alike from the same travel agent, something like that. Although I don't think there was any inside fraud discovered in my time, one of the guys who worked for me in Special Consular Services was later caught and fired. I think he had been doing some very low level scam telling a kid who had a U.S. passport but no money that he would get him a work away passage on a ship if he paid him ten pesos a month or something. It was small scale stuff but it was the sort of thing that shouldn't have happened. I suppose it was going on in my time and I might have been able to detect it but it was difficult to keep track of it.

Q: I do know that later on there were real pressures and we lost a number of Officers who succumbed to probably more sex than bribes, but both. Or favors or something...was this a worry at the time?

TEARE: Yes. I think we were always on the alert to it. It would have been very easy, for example, for a Visa Clerk simply to pull our notes of a refusal out of the file so that when the name was checked a few months later there was no record of anything. But you are talking about the American Officers?

Q: Yes.

TEARE: Yes. I know that there was quite a bit of that later on. I don't remember any in my time. In my job I didn't have direct dealings with a lot of Filipino applicants. I do remember though that once a bolt of cloth was left in my office, a few yards of cloth, and I couldn't figure out where it came from. None of my staff knew and so forth and I let it sit around for some months. Nobody took credit for having given it to me or tried to get anything out of me as a result so eventually I took it to a tailor and had a suit made! But that is about the only incident of that kind that I can remember.

Q: One always thinks back to when the Marcos' regime really got going about how it sort of absorbed so many of our particularly higher Officers and all, I mean, what about the social life there?

TEARE: Well, it is hard to say. I was very junior. I went there as a brand new O-7, I think, and I was promoted to six just before I left. Our social life consisted mainly of fellow junior Officers in the U.S. Mission, a few Officers from other Missions, and then some Filipinos of our own age or a little older who were typically Magsaysay leftovers or government employees, a couple of lawyers in private practice. Quite a few of the people we got to know socially we met through another FSO Frank Tatu, who ought to be interviewed if he hasn't been.

Q: How do you spell his name?

TEARE: Tatu. He remains a good friend after all these years. The Tatus and we arrived in the same month, October of 1962, about a week apart. So we were thrown together in all the newcomer events. But he was several years senior to me and had already served in Vientiane and Hong Kong by that time and had had Chinese language training.

Q: Did you feel a certain amount of discrimination or something between the Officers of this huge Consular Section and the rest of the embassy?

TEARE: A little bit and I suppose if I had been more alert I would have felt more. We were actually in a different building on the same compound; maybe you've seen it. It's a thirty second walk from one to the other. On the other hand, I was on friendly terms socially with the guys in the Political and Economic Sections and the CIA Station and the DAO, so I didn't feel particularly left out of things. I began to notice that a lot of people knew things I didn't and if I had been more assiduous about going over to the telegram read file I probably would have known a lot more. I sometimes cleared things with the Political Section and had good working relations.

The first DCM when we got there was Jack Kubisch who left soon afterwards and then Dick Service arrived. Both the Stevensons and the Services were good about including junior Officers in representational events, not only big ones but sometimes small. I think they did it alphabetically so the S's and T's and W's were invited one time and so forth. I don't think I really felt out of it but my political awareness was sharpening and I think I was getting impatient with consular work.

Q: So you finished there in '64 and what was up then?

TEARE: Well particularly I think because of the example of Frank Tatu who had studied Chinese, I having never yet set foot on the Asian mainland, decided I wanted to be an Asian hand. I applied for hard language training in an East Asian language. I was thinking that I would draw either Chinese or Japanese. I was, I thought, still young enough to do something with either one of those languages, my French having atrophied by this time already. I once had to call the Cambodian embassy and could barely get through a simple conversation in French.

So anyway the letter I got back said they were sorry but Chinese and Japanese were both filled for the classes starting in September 1964, but they could offer me a place in the Vietnamese language training course. I wrote back, again this was by letter in those days, that gee, this was a one country language, wasn't there anything with wider utility? And they said no, not really, but they could offer me either Burmese or Korean language training instead. And so I said thanks but no thanks, I would stick to the Vietnamese.

By this time I had done a little bit of work with Saigon. There was an AID family based in Manila of an employee who was over in Vietnam and he was...I don't know if he was kidnapped by the Viet Cong or had disappeared for a few days. I bugged the embassy in Saigon about his whereabouts and the family was grateful to me. So I was on the phone a couple of times and I was getting more and more interested. And as I say, Tatu's experience I think had some influence on me.

So Vietnam it became and that governed the next several years of my career. It was no more directed than that!

Q: Where did you take Vietnamese?

TEARE: At FSI in the basement at Arlington Towers. The program of detailing Foreign Service Officers to AID for the field operations program was just getting started. Well it had already started but it was becoming big business by that time. So a bunch of us showed up all at once. Three of us were assigned to regular Vietnamese language training for State, that is ten months straight through. All the others, including Frank Wisner for example, were detailed to AID and they had language training interspersed with some area studies and a trip to Fort Bragg and the countryside. They did rifle range and that sort of stuff. So their language netted out at about seven months.

There were two other people in the class with me originally, Dick Barnum and Joel Ticknor. Ticknor may have been another agency although he was certainly integrated. Barnum did not regard Vietnamese as a serious enterprise and he was dropped from the course and somebody else was taken from the AID group and put into the full time State. He was the most promising language student among us, better than I was. David Lambertson. He went on to become Ambassador to Thailand and with whom I shared a house in Saigon, becoming a close friend. But anyway the three of us went through the straight language training and came out in, I guess, June of 1965.

Q: How did you find Vietnamese?

TEARE: Well it's a tonal language. It's difficult I think for Westerners. The principle advantage over Japanese or Korean or Thai or Chinese is that it is written in the Western alphabet now, thanks to some Portuguese missionaries four hundred years ago. And it is relatively accurate phonetically with a few ringers in it. The tones are indicated by diacritical marks. So from a fairly early stage anything you can say or understand you can also read and write in Vietnamese, which is not the case with the others. Vietnamese was taught in one year, ten months actually, whereas the others were and still are taught in two years, that is the Japanese and Chinese and I think Korean, too. Typically one year in Washington and one year in field school.

So we came out of Vietnamese speaking like educated foreigners with limited vocabularies I guess is the way to put it. Furthermore at least in my case very much a hothouse sort of thing. I could understand everything the tutors said to me but when I first got into a real life situation in Saigon, hey, there was traffic going by, horns honking.... I find this in any language, people hear you say a couple of words and they think you understand full speed so they make no concessions anymore and that was pretty hard. I am only a middling linguist.

Q: You arrived out there in '65, I take it with your family?

TEARE: No. No. Families were no longer allowed to go to post because in early '65 there was the incident in Pleiku. McGeorge Bundy was visiting, being run around the country and was at a Vietcong border town and he took it personally, or Lyndon Johnson did and thought hey, this is a dangerous place. So from that time on I guess families were evacuated, families already there. Certainly no new families were allowed to go. That is when we got into the safehaven business in a big way.

We had I think a couple of hundred families, mainly AID, some State and CIA in Manila. We had about as many in Bangkok, maybe even more.

Q: So where did your family go?

TEARE: When I left for Saigon my wife was pregnant with our second child, the first one had been born in the Philippines. And so we decided that she would stay in the U.S. through the birth of the child at least and then see how things stood. And so she went to stay with my parents in Cleveland and that is where our second child was born and that was in October of '65. In early January of '66 she and the two children came out to Manila. And of course we had left there only a year and a half before. I had made a trip over and managed to rent the very same house we had occupied while assigned there. So she knew exactly where she was going and what to take and so forth.

And so she and the children stayed there from January of '66 until the end of my tour which was April of '67. I would come over and visit every couple of months. For the first several months where was no money for such travel so we did it space available with the military or else paid out of our own pocket. I did Space A which was sometimes pretty grueling. Go to Tan Son Nhut airbase outside Saigon, get a military flight over to Clark and then to get from Clark to Manila was something of an ordeal. A couple of times I took the Philippine Rabbit Bus which is about as reliable and safe as it sounds and go tearing down the highway to Manila at high speed and get to the Manila bus terminal and get a cab and go to the house. But I did all those things. I'm not sure I would do them again today!

Then sometime in mid '66, I guess, they introduced visitation travel at $2,400 a year. That was the maximum and was the same for everybody. And that would finance I think six round trips to Manila and twelve or thirteen to Bangkok, except you had to be back 28 days or 30 days between trips so the Bangkok people couldn't use all their money. So I made four or five trips to Singapore and so forth. So that made life easier. Although I remember on one trip coming back, must have been in the beginning of '67, Pan American was in a dispute with the Government of Vietnam. We were the guinea pigs, the first flight in after the agreement had collapsed or whatever. We were kept on the tarmac for two or three hours and not allowed to get off the plane. I believe it was the Deputy Ambassador, Bill Porter, who intervened with Ky, the Prime Minister, to get us off. We were reduced to little pools of sweat and were mightily annoyed at the Government of Vietnam.

Anyway that was the basis on which the visitation program worked.

In Saigon we lived in the houses previously occupied by embassy families and typically it was two Officers or more sharing the quarters. Lambertson and I shared a house. The house had previously been occupied by Jim Rosenthal, the first chief of the provincial reporting unit.

Q: I've interviewed Jim.

TEARE: Well he can tell you, I'm sure has told you, how all that got started. The second chief, who inherited from him, was Bill Marsh, who'd be worth interviewing if you haven't, and I was the third. I took over when Marsh left which was after I'd been there nearly a year. That was a unit within the Political Section, alongside the Internal Unit, the External Unit and the North Vietnam Communist Watcher Unit.

Q: First, what was the situation when you arrived in 1965?

TEARE: At that time the first U.S. combat troops as opposed to Advisors had been on the ground since March, I think. Just as I went out there President Johnson had announced a big increment which I think took it up to 128,000. In those early weeks there were some very encouraging signs, or at least encouraging as we read about them in the papers and in the newsmagazines. I'm sure there was a lot of White House spin on it. In particular Operation Starlight on a peninsula up in ICOR where U.S. Marines trapped a Vietcong unit and pretty well did away with it.

This was the early surge of there was nothing the United States can't do and now that our guys are getting in there directly this is going to be it, we are going to save that country! That sort of spirit lasted for a number of months but it rather quickly wore down as we failed to repeat that success very many times. We wanted an enemy who would stand and fight and of course that is what the Vietcong and North Vietnamese wouldn't do, they realized it was highly unprofitable. So they would strike at times of their choosing, to their advantage and then disappear. And we would go chasing them all over the countryside and sometimes, as at Que Son later on, get ourselves into a real fix. So it was not a totally satisfactory undertaking in that respect.

But the part I saw more of was really the Advisory effort because I was supposed to go out into the field and judge how well the Government of Vietnam was doing, particularly on the civil administration and political organizing side. We had an Advisory Program, military, that was paralleling the Vietnamese structure not only in the units, corps, division, regiment, battalion on down to company, I think, but also in the administrative structure. We had U.S. Military Officers advising the Province Chiefs who were all concurrently Sector Commanders. We had more junior U.S. military, almost all Army, advising the District Chiefs who were concurrently Sub Sector Commanders. So we were cheek by jowl with the enemies down to a fairly low level. But, whereas we went out there gung ho, full of enthusiasm and on our, in the case of the military twelve month tours, thirteen months for the Marines in ICOR, the Vietnamese had no similar motivation.

Some of them had already been fighting this war for ten or fifteen years and for them it was a 40 hour a week proposition, five days a week, which is of course not the way to fight a war, particularly not in one's own country. But it was a different kind of war and they had been brought up under the French tradition and then I think some of their worst talents were ingrained by us, particularly organizational structure. It was essentially a war for small maneuver units; battalion was the largest that we needed according to a number of my Army friends. But we created a Vietnamese Army in our own image. It was corps, division, and regiment and so forth, which was ridiculous. A top heavy structure and just wrong for the nature of the combat but it was what we had and what there was.

Q: I take it you were probably spending a certain amount of time in Saigon and then go out in the field and examine?

TEARE: That's right. We had divided up the country. Again, the consulate in Hue as it was then, later moved to Da Nang, took care of ICOR, the five northern most provinces. Saigon took care of the remaining three core areas in I guess it would have been the 38th Province. So we divided it up and I had the upper half of Four Corps. David Lambertson had the southern half of Four Corps. Bill Marsh and somebody else took care of Three Corps, the area around Saigon, ten provinces, so quite a lot of territory. Then someone else did the central coast and yet another person did the central highlands.

The guy for the highlands in my time was Steve Lyne, later Ambassador to Ghana and now a Professor at Boston University. Steve did not know Vietnamese but he had good French. He would be very good for this project. He had served earlier in Cambodia and spoke Khmer and the logical place to use him would have been in the western Mekong Delta where there is a considerable Cambodian minority and where the border is very sensitive. Precisely for that reason he was not sent there. That would have been seen as messing around with the Cambodians, which Embassy Phnom Penh didn't want and we didn't want really. We didn't want to encourage the Vietnamese to hire or create any more Khmer units. So Steve covered the highlands and dealt with the Montagnard, most of whom spoke French and on principle refused to learn Vietnamese.

So that is the way it worked for awhile and I visited my first seven provinces, some of them only once, others perhaps as many as three times, and then, after all it was a short tour, I had been there eight months, Marsh left. I was moved up to be Chief of the Unit. I inherited part of Three Corps from him. I visited most of those provinces maybe four or five times for most of them and one or two of them only once. I had supervisory duties. I was clearing the other guys' reports and I was escorting visitors more. I was sometimes going to country team meetings and so forth so I sort of was sucked up into management of a low order even before I knew the ground in Vietnam all that well.Q: How were reports treated? You had the military making their reports and this was a time when McNamara had all sorts of criteria for making reports at various levels. Everybody was making reports. When you have a very powerful President, Lyndon Johnson who wanted to hear certain news and this was what he wanted to hear, could you talk about the dynamics in the embassy on this?

TEARE: Let me try. I'm not sure I have the best perspective. Yes, you are right of course that it was Johnson who wanted to hear news and it was McNamara who wanted to present news, and particularly statistical news. And McNamara would visit Saigon at least a couple of times a year and those would be major occasions and we would all be turned inside out preparing Briefing Papers and so forth.

Occasionally a big question would be asked such as should the United States use tactical air in support of its own and of South Vietnamese ground operations in the south? To ask the question was almost to answer it and the answer clearly was going to be yes. But I remember we all were sent to work, in fact I think we each made a special trip to a province and went around and talked to Vietnamese opinion leaders about that. I remember talking to priests and monks and schoolteachers and so forth. Essentially the attitude was, as I look back on it, well we'll tell this man what we think he wants to hear, but essentially it was we don't welcome destruction but we do want to defeat the Communists and if this is the way to do it, so be it. And that's what we reported back and that's the word that went back to Washington and very soon back there was instituted support of ground operations in the south.

I think what really counted was the highly secret NODIS message traffic that I only rarely got a glimpse of or had any input into. Ambassador Lodge and I think Taylor in between, Lodge a second time, and later Bunker, supplied weekly or more frequent notices back to Rusk and the White House that were the truly influential documents. Our stuff, our provincial reports, generally went in as attachments to Airgrams, that old hectograph on pink paper when it was classified, which it almost always was. They would take days to get typed in Saigon. They would take I suppose a couple of weeks to get to Washington by pouch and get around. They tended to be long and low level and anything but earth shaking for the most part. In retrospect, I have to think that we could not have had much influence at all with any given report. Maybe the cumulative picture that we presented as it was read and promulgated by INR and CIA in particular contributed to the relative pessimism of those organizations as against more optimistic outlooks.

Q: One thinks that we know how these things work in the military. If they tell you that you are supposed to go out and pacify a district, by God, when you report that district will be pacified, no matter what the situation is on the ground! I mean you are expected to give a positive response. Did you find at all that your people were acting as almost Devil's Advocates or looking at the situation somewhat differently from the American military?

TEARE: Oh, absolutely. The hamlet evaluation system was tested and officially introduced during my time. That was where each hamlet was rated on a variety of criteria, given a letter grade A, B, C, D, E.

Q: Whether you slept in the town or not?

TEARE: Yes and whether the local officials did and road access and do the farmers get to market and all of that. Do they go to the fields? We were around long enough, longer than any of the military, to see a pattern. A sub sector advisor would arrive and he would say "Good grief, this place is Dodge City, everything is messed up" and then he would work there for a few months and he would do his utmost. And, yes, you could drive a little farther or somebody would sometimes go out at night and gradually things would creep up. Of course his evaluation was riding on what he accomplished and by the end of his six month tour he would have quite a few A and B hamlets, nobody below C probably. And then the next guy would come in and get shot at his first week on the job and say the whole thing was padded and rigged, let's get honest about this. It is all D and E, its Indian country and then this pattern would go down, things would get better in his mind and in his official evaluations the longer he was there. We were the opposite. We had no vested interest, no ax to grind.

I remember visiting one of the most obscure backwater provinces I had, Kimtung, for the first and maybe the only time. I didn't have much to compare it with except the report of a previous visit by one of my predecessors a year or so earlier. The whole U.S. side had turned over during that time. Most of the Vietnamese were still there. I talked to some of them and tried to get some idea. I came back and titled my report 'A Year Without Progress' and sent it in. A month or two later I heard from the Sector Advisor, that is the Military Province Advisor, quite a blast back taking exception to it. He had received a copy down through the MAC V chain and said look, this, that and the other thing had improved, mostly in his time, and in fact I don't think there was objectively very much difference at all. Indeed some of it was definitely backsliding, so far as I could tell, from a year earlier. But that is the only time I can think of when anyone specifically challenged one of my reports.

Q: Was the Political Section in the embassy divided up? Was there much communication there and were there camps about whither Vietnam and all that?

TEARE: I don't think so. I think in those days we were all sort of...or thought of ourselves anyway...as cynical, tough, well aware of the defects of the Vietnamese but at the same time determined to prod them into doing better.

Just as I arrived Philip Habib came on board as Minister Counselor for Political Affairs and we had a Political Counselor, Tom Corcoran, and the units within the Section that I mentioned earlier. Lodge was the Ambassador, back for the second time, for his second tour. Bill Porter was newly arrived as Deputy Ambassador. Somebody observed in '65 or '66 that we had as Ambassador a politician from a predominantly or heavily Catholic state and then under him a Deputy Ambassador, a Political Minister Counselor, a Political Counselor and the Chief of the Internal Unit, John Burke, all of whom were Roman Catholics themselves. That this was sort of a built in bias in favor of, well, if Diem had been around it would have been in favor of Diem, then in favor of Win Van Kew who was Roman Catholic himself and against all the non Catholic elements and supremely so against the Buddhists of Vietnam. Including those who had gone out and immolated themselves in '63 and so forth. Certain others, notably John Negroponte, were caught up in a vague sort of way as more sympathetic toward the Buddhists, also David Engle in the Provincial Reporting Unit. I think there was even a term "Bud symp reporting". But Negroponte, at least in later years, became identified with the forces of reaction and conservatism in this hemisphere, so I don't know how accurate that was in his case.

I think a lot of us were very skeptical about the ability of the Vietnamese, the Government side, ever to do any better than they were doing. We certainly saw their defects, the laziness, the corruption, essentially telegraphing their military operation so that the Vietcong would have plenty of time to get out of the way and no contact would occur if the Government side were lucky. At the same time I think most of us believed that the goal was a worthy one, that is keeping that country out of Communist hands. We had seen what had happened in Eastern Europe. We had seen the invasion of South Korea by the North. We knew what had happened in China and so forth. We were I guess vaguely aware of the Sino Soviet split but world Communism was still, we thought, a monolith and Ho Chi Minh was one extension thereof and it would be better for the people of South Vietnam if the Communists never came to power. I think that is undeniable.

Q: Yes. I was there '69 to '70 and that is exactly the way I felt.

TEARE: But history began to undercut even those assumptions. May I suggest that we call it?

Q: I think we'll call it at this point. I just want to put at the end of this tape, so we can pick it up, before we leave Vietnam were there any major developments that we could put on here that we should talk about?

TEARE: Not too many because I left in '67 and was back in INR working on Vietnam by the time the TET Offensive came along. There are some other stories and anecdotes that I can toss in and would like to.

Q: Alright well do you want to just put a clue what they are or make a note to tell me?

TEARE: Why don't I make some notes?

Q: Okay, just make some notes and we'll do that. Great. Okay, we'll pick it up then.

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It is the 12th of August 1998. Dick, you said you had a couple of things you wanted to mention about the Philippines, going back?

TEARE: Yes, I did, if I may. One thing that I was involved in myself quite a bit in the Consular Section in Special Consular Services Unit was work with the U.S. Military. I worked with the Navy at Sangley Point, which we still had then and at Subic Bay and the Air Force at Clark Field or Clark Air Base...CAB as the Filipinos called it.

The dependents of the U.S. Military came in on regular tourist passports with a category of visa. The Filipinos had modeled theirs after ours. For tourists it was '9A'. Diplomats were '9E' and so forth. Merchant seamen I think were '9D', a close copy of ours. They didn't want to treat military dependents as regular tourists and indeed of course they stayed longer than tourists ordinarily would. At the same time they couldn't be put to all of the strictures, requirements, that resident aliens were, mainly Chinese. So they developed a category called the '9A Special' visa for military dependents. They were good for single entry only. So whenever a military dependent wanted to travel outside the Philippines, they had to come to the embassy and get the form signed, something like an affidavit, which a courier then took over to Immigration and got them a new visa for re entry. Some of the military spouses in particular traveled a lot of the time, made circle tours, shopping trips and so forth. So I used to sign I suppose a couple of hundred of those every week.

I also had something to do with the hospitals at all three of the bases over the registration of births. The military had its own registration certificates but a lot of people like to get the consular certificate and particularly our blue form that looked like a stateside birth certificate on top of it. So I did that and all of that was sort of interesting in light of my connections with the military at virtually every subsequent post and of course my last job in Honolulu.

The other point I wanted to recall, I think I mentioned previously, I'm sure I did, my boss Lou Gleeck, who was the consul general. He ran a good section and had a lot of time to go over to the coffeehouse, La Casa De Ore, where he picked up a lot of political gossip and polished his Tagalog and so forth. I think I said also that Gleeck played golf with Ferdinand Marcos. I don't think though that I took this to where I was going with it. That is that Gleeck studied Marcos very carefully and wrote a long biographic study of him which he compared in length and depth to a New Yorker profile, the New Yorker of the old days. He finished this document sometime while I was still there, I suppose in the spring of 1964. It was clear by then that Marcos was going to get the nomination of the Nationalistic Party having bolted the Liberals, and run for President in '65 against Macapagal.

Although the United States is universally seen as having been in bed with Marcos since day one, this was not true in fact. The preponderance of feeling in 1964, when I left and on into the next year I'm sure, was that Macapagal while not very effective was at least a known quantity, whereas Marcos was unknown and therefore to be suspicious of. Gleeck meanwhile was championing his friend Marcos and pushing this document. The Ambassador, Bill Stevenson, did not want it to go forward to Washington because it was ultimately quite favorable to Marcos and that just didn't fit with his reading. I think he didn't quite understand the difference between reporting and advocating. He thought if we sent this in we would be seen to be advocating Marcos's ascension, which nobody was really. The embassy leadership, the Station, the Defense Attachï¿½ people all seemed to be inclined toward Macapagal and I think Washington was.

Finally Bill Stevenson, the Ambassador, left and Gleeck kept working on the Chargï¿½, Dick Service, to submit this document. Finally Service did. He sent it in as an enclosure to a very short Airgram and the Airgram simply said something like: this reflects the views of the author who is well acquainted with the subject but not necessarily the views of the embassy. That is how it got in. Gleeck seemed to believe that his friendship with Marcos and this big document that was put on file, plus his seniority because he had been promoted by this time to I guess to old O 1.... No, sorry, what had done it was that he had obtained the title of counselor of embassy for Consular Affairs, which vaulted him over all the other counselors to whom he was senior in personal rank. He was an O 2 with umpteen years. He really hoped, and he confirmed this to me in later years, that he would be made DCM when Service left in '65. In the event he was not even though he was perhaps the only person in the embassy in Manila who welcomed the Marcos' victory when it came later in '65.

So Gleeck stayed on as consul general until '69 and retired. By this time he was divorced from either wife number two or number three and later married a Filipino research assistant and had another child named Eddie Boy, or nicknamed Eddie Boy. Freddie was his child of the marriage I knew and it was Freddie who was the childhood playmate of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., alias Bong Bong, who just a few weeks ago was elected Governor of the Ilocos Norte Province.

Q: Did Gleeck stay on in the Philippines?

TEARE: After retirement he did and he became, unofficially at least, the historian of the American community in the Philippines which goes way back to 1898, and he also did some stuff about American firms. I think I have three or four of his thin, little books that he gave me on a later trip somewhere in my attic probably. Okay so much for the Philippines.

Q: So we're coming back. You left Vietnam but you didn't leave Vietnam. You came back to Washington and you were in INR, is that right?

TEARE: That's right.

Q: I just want to get the dates...'67 to?

TEARE: '69 in INR and then '69 to '71 on the desk as one of two Officers doing essentially South Vietnamese internal stuff.

Q: Well let's talk about INR in '67. Was there a fairly large INR establishment devoted to Vietnam at that point?

TEARE: I suppose in relative terms yes. There were at least three of us junior Officer analysts working on Vietnam or Vietnam Cambodia or some combination. That was not North Vietnam, either, they were across the hall. In the old days East Asia...the Far East Bureau, had an Asian Communist Affairs Office that looked after not only China but also Mongolia and North Korea and North Vietnam. The China Desk still looks after Mongolia. Above us was sort of a straw boss, Lou Sarris, a civil servant, and above him Evelyn Colbert, who was the Deputy Office Director, I guess. And then Fred Green, an academic from Williams College who had come into government for just a couple of years, was the Director of the Office of Research and Analysis for Far East or East Asia and the Pacific.

Q: I think he taught me for awhile at Williams!

TEARE: Very possibly. A good guy. And Evelyn Colbert is a wonderful person. The problem for the analysts, and me I think, I know that to be the case with one or two of them anyway, was Sarris, our boss. Sarris was an enormously bright guy but he was a terrible manager. He should have been left as an individual analyst. He and Colbert were among those who, along with some of the people in DDI at CIA, raised the biggest questions earliest on about the likely success, or lack of it of our involvement there and they deserve a lot of credit for that. I have sometimes said since that my sojourn with Sarris was the only bad job I ever had, not because of the subject matter which continued to interest me but because he would never get around to dealing with any drafts that had to go through him. Never. He'd sit on them for weeks or months and by that time they'd lose their currency.

Of course what I didn't appreciate going into that was the premium that the intelligence business puts on being first. In the morning you had to be in there by five and publishing your morning notes to the Secretary and things like that. They had other people doing that essentially. I got in at 8 or 8:15 or whatever it was and it seemed to me that the hot stuff for the day had almost all been done by that time by other people in INR or CIA, DIA. There wasn't a lot left for the rest of us. But again what incentive I had to do bigger and longer range projects tended to disappear because I'd never get them cleared out.

For example I remember writing a study based in part on sensitive intelligence of the personalities who were going to make up the South Vietnamese Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks. They were not all government apparatchiks...well maybe they were ultimately but a couple were Foreign Office, a couple were military. We had a fair line on the personal views and biographies of three or four of them. I put all of this together in a paper of I suppose ten or fifteen pages. I would ask Lou about it every couple of days and nothing would happen, nothing would happen. Negotiations began and this document that I thought might have been of some use to our negotiators was...I don't know what ever became of it. It certainly wasn't published while I was still there.

So I tried to get out of INR. Much as I liked Evelyn Colbert and Fred Green. I couldn't report directly to them. I had to go through Sarris to get there. I tried to get out after a year and switch to the Desk that had a vacancy and wanted me. I was not allowed to do it. Although I was told I could go off for a year of area studies at a university of my choice. That seemed like a generous offer but I wasn't interested. The family was just back, kids starting school and I didn't want to relocate to Ann Arbor or New Haven or something just for one year and then probably have to come back to Washington. So I said no thanks and the result was a second year in INR and then finally I was allowed to move to the Desk in '69.

The first year there I understudied Jim Rosenthal who was the senior guy on internal political stuff and had been the first Chief of the Provincial Reporting Unit in Saigon. Then he left in 1970 and I moved up and became the senior internal political guy. The junior one was a woman named Theresa Tull who came back from Saigon at that point. So she understudied me and I believe took over when I left.

We had a lot of frustration there but at least what we got done had some demonstrable use.

Q: I'd like to go back to when you were in INR...was there any intimation of the '68 TET attacks and all?

TEARE: I don't think so except in maybe the most generalized way. That is we had a pretty good idea that infiltration was increasing, that the North Vietnamese troops in whatever number, and that is a separate subject perhaps, were probably going to try to do something one of these days. But the idea of a spectacular, coordinated countrywide offensive, such as we saw in 1968, I don't think had really occurred to anybody. In part I think the North Vietnamese buildup was being interpreted at the time as a reaction to the very substantial introduction of U.S. combat forces. How were the North Vietnamese to deal with this? They soon learned that the way to deal with it was not to stand still and fight for ground but rather to retreat and fight in times and places of their choosing and let us be the ones exposed or surrounded in Khe Sanh; the Dien Bin Phu lesson over again, if you will.

But one of the most interest aspects and here I am dealing partly with other people's published recollections I think, is of a conference I attended as a representative of INR. In September of '67, my first trip back, I had been recruited by the East Asia Bureau, by Phil Habib in fact, to go as an escort for an election observer mission, which is yet another story. These were the elections in which Thieu and Ky became President and Vice President, respectively. I had done a lot of work while they were on the constituent assembly election of 1966 and so I was a natural for it, I guess. INR rather grudgingly let me go even though East Asia was paying expenses.

We went out with a group that included the Chaplain of the Senate, who was Erland Heginbotham's father in law, and a Rabbi and the Archbishop of San Antonio. They were about the only clergymen in the entire country who would have gone along on such a mission! We had the Governor of North Dakota, we had Senator Hughes of Iowa and a bunch of others. I was also involved a little bit with the White House on getting instructions out to the field. The White House's general idea was that the observers should be taken out and kept running around all day so that they would be exhausted when they got back to town. Some of them we were told were pretty elderly but we didn't want to say that to Ambassador Bunker who had replaced Lodge by that time because he was in his upper seventies by then.

Anyway, once out there I was asked by INR if I would stay on to participate in a major intelligence conference 'guess timating' enemy strength. I had been with INR only three or four months at this point and had not tried to do battle order, enemy strength in particular, and didn't know much about the subject. But INR could afford to send me because they would only have to pay my way home commercially and a few days per diem. So I joined in this conference along with some people who were then or later became pretty well known. I think General Graham who later headed DIA was the J 2 of MAC V at that time. Bill Hyland and Sam Adams of CIA. I can't remember whom all else.

The big question was how many troops and cadre should we credit the Vietcong and North Vietnamese with having. The basic answer was, well, we should give our best estimate provided it didn't go higher than a given number. I think this was right at the time that Westmoreland was out arguing for an additional 200,000 Americans. I've forgotten now, I'd have to refresh my memory what our ceiling was, but the main point was that we could mix and match provided we did not go above a certain figure because MAC V, J 2, would not agree to anything higher. It didn't matter what there was evidence for or what the best minds of Washington could come up with. MAC V was going to dig in firmly. Sam Adams was the young analyst for CIA who had developed a type strength for the Vietcong infrastructure and it had postulated so many committee members, so many armed cadre, so on and so forth in a District. It multiplied that by 240 some Districts, which was the total in the country.

If you did that you got very considerable strength figures because the District for which we had the good documentation was a very healthy one. I forget now which Province, which District. But Sam championed the argument that this was a typical District structure and that if we were going to be conservative about it we should postulate that the Vietcong had something approximating this nationwide and that made quite a difference in the strength figures.

The other point was whether or not we believed in a force known as the secret guerrillas. If we did, then they added another ten or fifteen thousand to the enemy strength total. That would have put us over MAC V's unstated numerical ceiling. So there was a lot of argument back and forth about that, all of it quite new to me. I found it intellectually stimulating but also I began to see just how subject to pressure and even dishonest the intelligence business could be.

We went in as a group to see General Westmoreland to present our findings. We were waiting there in his outer office and Joe Alsop came out. He had just had a long session with Westmoreland.

Q: Joe Alsop being a Conservative columnist in the United States.

TEARE: Yes he was. And the next week in his column, I was back in Washington by that time, I saw a couple of references to very sensitive code word intelligence information and to high sources in Saigon and so forth. I am sure what happened was that Westmoreland was selectively feeding him intelligence. Anyway we did present our findings to Westmoreland and I don't think there was any blood on the carpet in front of him. I think it had all been sort of negotiated out by the other people from Washington; most of them were fencing with the MAC V J 2 and me. It is a little bit like Henry Ford and the Model T. You could have any color you want so long as it was black. Well in this case we could postulate any strength figure we wanted for the VC and NVA provided it was no more than whatever...and I think the limit essentially was whatever MAC V itself had previously estimated in the spring in the same year.

Q: It was an eye opener. The whole war, particularly under McNamara turned very statistical.

TEARE: It did. I think I told you last time my recollection of the hamlet evaluation system. Every hamlet was rated on a scale of A through E, I think. A new District Advisor would come in, American military, find out it was no man's land and he would rate everything D and E. Then he would realize that over his six months in the job he was going to be rated on the improvement in the security situation. So a lot of hamlets went up to D and A by the end of his time. The next guy would come in. Indian country. Be horrified. All the ratings would drop again. And I may have quoted Ward Just who said that all the numbers were positive and all the numbers were irrelevant, speaking of McNamara.

Q: When about were you doing internal affairs in Vietnam, when you were in INR?

TEARE: Yes and more specifically on the Desk there was a division between internal and external and POLMIL and so forth.

Q: While you were in INR the TET Offensive happened in January and February of 1968.

TEARE: Correct, end of January.

Q: Were you able to come up with an evaluation of what this really meant in Vietnam itself?

TEARE: I don't think that what it meant in Vietnam was really the most important thing. In fact if you look at the casualty statistics, at least what was reported back to Washington, it was a serious military defeat for the NVA. They took a lot of casualties over the three or four weeks it took to clear out Hue, for example. In body count alone it was a loss for them, materiel and all that. The real change as everyone has commented, I'm sure, was psychological.

Q: You were saying the upshot was?

TEARE: The picture that the Administration had tried to paint of a winning struggle was shattered. Within weeks, by the end of March as I recall, Lyndon Johnson announced he would not run again. Bobby Kennedy had entered the race and been killed and all that. And there was the famous wise men's group, Clark Clifford had taken over as Secretary of Defense, and Phil Habib's report to them in which he told them that things were not going well. For the first time I guess Johnson's other advisors mostly lined up with Clifford and said we had to stop this.

Q: Well in a way we are coming up with two things. I mean we are looking at what I think most people could say was essentially a military defeat of the Vietcong.

TEARE: Yes, on the ground at TET.

Q: While on the ground in Vietnam. So in a way things were going well in Vietnam weren't they? The American view and all is almost a different factor. You are looking at Vietnam. Were you seeing a decrease in Vietcong activity? Do you recall?

TEARE: I don't recall specifically what we were seeing in terms of enemy activity. We did think that there were some fairly good signs of progress. One was on the electoral front. Although I am much more cynical about elections now than I was in those days. We'd had the successful one in 1966 for the Constituent Assembly and when I was back out there in '67 and it looked pretty good in the sense that a lot of people turned out. In fact in '66 one Province reported that 103 ï¿½ percent of all registered voters had voted! Barry Zorthian who was Public Affairs Officer at the time came around the Political Section in '66 and we were sort of celebrating the successful Constituent Assembly election and Zorthian said to Habib, "Well, Phil, it is a victory for my policy of maximum candor." And Habib said, "You mean maximum pander" to the press.

Also in '66 I had joined Phil for a background briefing at Zorthian's house, I think it was, for a bunch of American correspondents and one of them asked Phil, "Well what sort of Assembly do we see coming out of these elections? I mean is it going to be animal, vegetable, mineral, what?" That gave Phil an opening and he said, "Well, at a minimum vegetable...but we hope there are going to be some live animals." But sure 60 or 70 percent of registered voters would sometimes brave bullets and bad weather and they'd go out there and vote. But that is because they knew that that was what was expected of them. If you weren't able to prove that you had voted life might be more difficult the next time you wanted something from the government. And so in that sense and I think that continues down to Cambodia last month, elections in that part of the world are not necessarily to be taken at face value.

But we wanted things to be good and we had eleven Presidential Vice Presidential tickets in the race in '67. Thieu and Ky had won with I think only about 35 percent of the vote. The other tickets had finished more or less in the order that any observer of Vietnamese politics would have predicted in light of the strength and reputation of the people involved. The surprise of course was the so called peace ticket of Trum din Ziu which came in second. He had adopted the dove of peace as a symbol, clipped off a UNICEF green card. In retrospect again I would say that the vote for Ziu, although he himself was not a very reputable person, sort of a crooked lawyer with a shady history. The size of the vote he got, let's say somewhere around 20 percent was probably illustrative of war weariness and a desire for peace in the electorate, the populace. I forget who was third.

The guy I had kept in contact with, about my only regular Saigon political contact, Ha Thieu Ky of the old Diviat, or Revolutionary Diviat Party, finished fourth, which is about where he should have finished. He had ten or eleven percent of the vote.

It was all very plausible. So if you were looking at it in Political Science terms, the '67 election, like the '66 election for the Constituent Assembly, was not a bad exercise. Of course then we had a bicameral legislature in Saigon which spent most of its time arguing with each other and Thieu and Ky didn't have to pay much attention to them and didn't. So it was anything but a Westminster or Washington type democracy and nobody really claimed that it was. Well, yes, I guess we had to, but without a great deal of heartiness in our claims.

Meanwhile I had settled down in the internal job on the desk where we had to deal with a lot of things. For example the tiger cages, the revelation that the Thieu Government had perpetuated the practice of the Diem Government before it of incarcerating people in pits. That was a hard one, believe me.

Q: Tell me, what was the issue?

TEARE: Well the issue was how could the United States be supporting a government so corrupt and so cruel that it does this to its political opponents? In a nutshell. And the short answer was that it is very difficult to support such a government except that the alternative was seen as being even worse. Another incident I remember from that era was that Senator Fulbright wrote a letter to General Westmoreland who was then Chief of Staff of the Army saying would you please identify for me the request from the Vietnamese Government to which we responded by sending combat troops?

That turned out to be very difficult to do. In fact, almost impossible. The period in which we began sending troops was the period of '64, early '65, before Ky took over as Prime Minister, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee or whatever he was called. The last Prime Minister before him was Dr. Phan Huy Quat and that was the fourth or fifth government in the 18 or 22 or however months since Diem had been overthrown.

Quat was a medical doctor and he had a couple of other doctors in his cabinet which therefore became known as the Medicine Cabinet. From all the archives that I could get at in Washington, and I had no knowledge that the Pentagon papers were being put together and so forth, though I knew some of the people involved. The closest I could get was sort of a weaseling formulation suggesting that there had been an implicit request by the Quat Government during I guess the very early months of 1965 for help from the United States in fending off the Vietcong and the invading North Vietnamese. Invading as we saw it.

My draft went up the line in the East Asia Bureau and over to the Legal Advisor's Office and it went hither and yon, over to the Pentagon, and it bounced back a couple of times. Other people tried to strengthen it. I'm not sure that anybody ever came up with a satisfactory answer but I do recall hearing that Westmoreland eventually signed some sort of reply to Fulbright. I've never seen it and don't know what it says but it was a long stretch because essentially we had decided in our own interests and on the basis of our own assessment that something needed to be done to stave off collapse. So we had decided to send in troops. But we also made the point that we were there at the request of the legitimate authorities of South Vietnam. Well what request was the question and there wasn't really a totally satisfactory answer for it.

Q: You worked on the desk in '69 to '71.

TEARE: That is correct. The Office Directors in those days were first, John Burke and then Freeman Matthews, Jr. and then just at the end there, Jim Engle.

Q: Well now were we sort of scratching around trying to find good news? The TET Offensive had come and gone.

TEARE: Well we would point to such things as the fact that the government had continued to function or had restored its control in Hue and Da Nang and Quang Trach and elsewhere. That conditions were returning more or less to what they'd been before and that the Vietcong had probably only alienated a lot of people who had been sitting on the fence by their vicious tactics and so forth and so on. But I don't know how many people we convinced. Probably not very many.

In this era also we were going out and doing quite a bit of public speaking at teach ins and other sorts of spots.

Q: Did you do any of that?

TEARE: I did some, yes.

Q: That couldn't have been fun.

TEARE: No, I didn't mind it. I was never subjected to any personal abuse and I think I tried to come across as reasonable and open minded although certainly with a point of view. I did one at Colgate University. I did another one in some places in Iowa. I did one in Columbus, Ohio, and vicinity. We went out to several colleges. I went to Ohio Wesleyan. This was not the big time teach in circuit. I was never up against the Berrigans or anybody like that.

No, I got a polite hearing almost everywhere and although probably not many people agreed with me.

Q: Well what was the feeling in the '69 to '71 periods whither Vietnam? I mean when you were back in Washington?

TEARE: Well as best I can recall we had this feeling that the losses of the TET Offensive period on the ground had been largely overcome. Things were back to somewhere like they'd been before. We still held some hope for improvement of the Vietnamese armed forces. At the same time we had embarked on the program of 'Vietnamization' under the Nixon Administration under which we were turning things over to them progressively. I forget when we actually began reducing troop numbers but I think certainly by '70 or '71.

Q: Around '70, I believe.

TEARE: Yes. On the other hand I don't think we had many illusions about Thieu, Ky or the political process in Vietnam.

In 1967 when I was newly back from Saigon I was put on guide duty, escort duty, for some Vietnamese legislators who had been brought to this country. By now it was '68. They had been elected in '67. We brought this over to this country. One was a guy in his sixties who had an overcoat he had bought in Paris as a student in the 1930s. It went down to his ankles.

We took them all to Annapolis and we had a cruise on the yacht of Governor Agnew. This was a few weeks before lightening struck him and he learned that he was going to be the Republican Vice Presidential nominee. Maybe I told you this story?

Q: No.

TEARE: One of the legislators came from Quang Trach, where Agnew's son, Randy, was stationed in the Marine Corps at that time. He had brought some photos of Randy. This guy was pretty sharp. He knew he was going to meet the Governor of Maryland, got photos of his son. Randy looked pretty good out there, stripped to his waist, passing the ammunition to the next guy beside the artillery piece, so the Agnews were overwhelmed with these photos and so forth. Later of course it turned out that Randy Agnew was a homosexual and ran off with a hairdresser, a male hairdresser, and I don't think that cheered the family to the same degree.

Then we split up and my group went to Philadelphia and San Antonio and Austin and back to New York where we all met up again. They were really nice guys. Two of the three spoke pretty good English. We were riding in a cab in Austin, this was May of '68, LBJ had just announced that he was not going to run again, so I said to myself well, I'll engage this cab driver in some political conversation. These cab drivers are always good at that and these guys will get a kick out of it. So I asked him what he thought about Johnson's decision and resulting fallout from it. He said, "Son, I've known that Johnson Connolly crowd, man and boy these thirty years, and I can tell you it don't matter whose elected in the fall, whoever gets to Washington is going to find there is not one red cent left in the Treasury. That Austin crowd have cleaned it all out!" And I said that was enough, we didn't need to hear anymore for the innocent ears of these Vietnamese politicians!

So there were little things like that happening along the way. But it was not a good democracy, the political process was not really going anywhere on the Government's side and I think everybody knew this. By '71 there was another Presidential election. I had already left by that time, I think, Ky ran against Thieu, that time, I believe. Thieu was re elected with somebody else as Vice President and so forth.

Well I went off to Mexico City as Political Officer. It was Free Matthews for whom I had worked on the desk who'd offered me the job. And about the same time John Burke, his predecessor, who was by then DCM in Port Au Prince had offered me a job in Haiti, where I would have been Chief of the Political Section. At that point I thought Duvalier would last forever, Papa Doc, so Mexico sounded a little better for the family. So I decided to take the offer to go to Mexico.

I had been there a year and a half when the Paris Agreements were signed at the end of January in 1973 and at that point the Department brought back 44 Officers who had served in Vietnam previously, plus one guy who had not but who spoke Polish. The idea was that he would be the liaison with the Polish contingent of the International Commission on Control and Supervision that was established to monitor the Paris Agreements, originally Canada, Indonesia, Poland and Hungary. So I was one of those called back. If I had been in Haiti I don't suppose I would have because there I would have been Chief of Section or maybe the only Political Officer and could not have been spared. But from Mexico City I was. So I got back to Vietnam at the end of January 1973, right at TET in fact, five years after we passed it.

They had parceled us out. We had created instant consulates general on the shells of the MAC V and CORDS regional headquarters. We already had a consulate general in Da Nang. So we set up one at Nha Trang, a MR 2; at Bien Hoa a MR 3 and Can Tho a MR 4. I had not spent a lot of time in Central Vietnam previously so I was glad to go up there. The way it sorted out I was deputy principal officer to Jim Engle, whom I had known for just a few weeks in Washington, the end of my time on the desk. That turned out to be a very good arrangement.

Q: Before we go into Vietnam again, you were on the desk in the spring of 1970 when there was the incursion or whatever you want to call it of Cambodia. This caused great outrage on campuses.

TEARE: It was right at the time of Kent State.

Q: There were petitions. Kent State was involved in the protest. Did that have any effect? I mean were you involved in the protests of some Officers and all that?

TEARE: No, I was not. I regarded most anything we did to Cambodia at that time as pretty legitimate. Sihanouk had been harboring the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong for years at that point. Now maybe he had no choice. That is about the best thing I ever heard in his defense. But it seemed to me that to hit them where they lived was legitimate. I knew more about, and was more disturbed by, the incursion into Laos about the same time. Operation Lang Son 719 which was more a joint enterprise, I think, in the sense that the Vietnamese were more involved. They were at the front but they would not have done it without our pushing and our air and artillery support. That one turned sour very quickly. It was generally regarded as an almost total failure and the South Vietnamese got whipped soundly and came running home in disorder.

No, maybe I was not sensitive enough politically or not bothered as much as I should have been by the duplicity of the Nixon White House. But I didn't particularly get outraged and take the Tony Lake approach on that one.

Q: I was consul general in Saigon at that time and I thought bloody good show!

TEARE: I remember demonstrators outside the Department, though, right around the D Street entrance for example as I was getting a bus to go to some other building. And of course where were teach ins and big demonstrations here and elsewhere. I have a friend who is a Protestant Minister who came with his wife from Cleveland to participate in one of the big anti war demonstrations of that era. They left their car in a church parking lot in the middle of town, hiked on down to the Mall and their car was broken into. I said, "Jeez, it seems to me we have some pretty big domestic problems, too, that we ought to be worrying about, not just the foreign ones."

Most of the people I knew outside Government were totally out of sympathy with the Administration. I don't think I had any friendships dissolve over it but certainly there were people, including my own mother for example, who were decidedly against Nixon. She'd hated him for many years. She was against his policies in Southeast Asia. She was quite well informed about him and had very good arguments that were very hard to rebut.

Q: So you are back to Vietnam. But, first, in Mexico...did you have a chance to settle in and all?

TEARE: Oh, yes, it was a three year tour and I took sixteen weeks of Spanish at FSI before I went down. We drove all the way down in our station wagon and I was one of several Officers in the Political Section there. I was doing internal Mexican stuff, which is a very tough nut to crack, by the way. So I had been there fully a year and a half, working for Free Matthews. The Ambassador when I got there was Bob McBride, for whom Matthews had worked in Madrid, and then he was replaced by Joseph Jova, who was quite a character.

I was a middle grade Officer toiling away and trying to get somebody in the Partido Revolutionary Institutionale to talk to me, the PRI. The opposition Party people had all the time in the world, PAM primarily. Lunch would begin at 2 or 2:30 and last until 5:00.

Q: What was the problem of the PRI? Were they interested or were they too busy?

TEARE: Well first of all they operated essentially a closed system. They didn't want too much exposure into their...they didn't want their inner workings exposed I think is the way they put it. Everything was done in private. There were no nominating conventions, no intra party debates, nothing like that. Candidates were selected from on high. That included the selection of each President by his predecessor. Furthermore they were in control. They were never challenged. They won virtually every election in sight. It is only in the years since that they started to lose a few governorships and Lower House seats. So they were riding high.

They didn't need any help from the outside and they didn't welcome scrutiny. So although there were a few people, including Rodolfo Echeverria who was the President's son, son of the President at the time I was there and who was Secretary General of the Party, and he would occasionally consent to see the odd foreign diplomat, it was a rarely granted audience. I think I met with him twice in my whole tour there. So we were sort of going around the edges, working a lot from public sources.

There were some interesting things going on. There were a couple of fringe publications that were talking about the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968 in which at least a couple of hundred people were gunned down.

Q: This was not the Olympics?

TEARE: Yes. The pre Olympic riot.

Q: Of the students essentially?

TEARE: They were mainly students. The Secreariato de Governor Nacion at the time was Luis Echeverria Alvarez, the equivalent of Interior Minister. He directed the law enforcement authority and it is highly probable that Echeverria ordered or at least did not stand in the way of a tough crackdown on the demonstrators in Tlatelolco with all its consequences. But all of this was not only not confirmed it was not even to be speculated about. Echeverria meanwhile had moved up to be President in 1970 so this was dangerous stuff to be publishing.

Q: I was wondering, was this a police state in some aspects?

TEARE: Not in the sense of Eastern Europe, I'm sure, no, it was not...nor China. They did not have a system of informants in every block and every apartment building. And in fact, as we have seen increasingly since then, I think the police were not very efficient and quite corrupt. They could be cruel and vindictive and, yes, there would be retaliation and people who stepped out of line might have their cars burned or might be beaten up or worse. So it was a tough place but it had been for years. I think that climate prevailed until quite recently.

Q: In a way we often find ourselves meddling in other countries' possessive political systems if we feel that they should be more like us, more democratic and all. Did you find yourself in Mexico in a place where we just kept our mouths shut? We reported but that was about it?

TEARE: Yes. I think that was essentially the case. The Mexicans were very standoffish toward us. They had refused to let astronauts train in the lava wastelands of Northern Baja, California, which was considered to be some of the most moon like terrain on the surface of the earth. They would regularly decline disaster relief from even the American Red Cross much less from the American Government.

They were fiercely independent. Their whole history it seemed to me at the time was defined by their feeling of having been ill done by the United States. The loss of vast territory in the Mexican War, the U.S. invasions in the last century, in 1916 Pershing's raid...all of those things. One of their great satisfactions was the expropriation of the American oil companies.

Q: Carranza?

TEARE: Yes. 1938 I think it was. So they were fiercely independent, fiercely nationalistic, fiercely anti Yankee. At the same time of course the migrant workers were going across the border. U.S. cars were enormously popular and U.S. consumer goods. There was a lot of smuggling going on. So it was the characteristic love hate sort of situation.

We had policy problems over Cuba in particular because the Mexicans liked to twist our tails on anything but in particular they tolerated some Cuba presence when we wanted them denied and so forth.

Q: I was wondering if you found a certain sort of shoulder shrugging. It seems like we really in many ways have close cooperation with the Mexicans on all sorts of border things and all this. But at the same time in foreign policy it has almost been handed over to the Anti Americans so they have a rather strident foreign policy, I think from our perspective. Whereas in others things we have the FBI and water control and all sorts of things are kind of working between us.

TEARE: Well I think they are working a good deal more smoothly now than they were 25 years ago. It is true we had the International Boundary and Water Commission back in those days although I couldn't have told you what they did. But I think there was not very much cooperation on a lot of day-to-day things. Then, of course, as you say, a tradition of hostility in foreign policy matters almost for its own sake continues I think down to the present time although I've had nothing to do with Mexico really since '74.

But it was not an easy place to work I found. People didn't keep appointments; they kept you waiting forever. The traffic and the air pollution were bad. There was physical danger. There was a group called September 19th that was going around looking for people to kidnap and at one point the Belgian Ambassador's daughter, I think it was, was kidnapped and released after a few hours. Whether or not there was payment I don't know. But, remarkably, the perpetrators were caught, or some of them. They confessed that they had been casing the American Ambassador, trying to follow his movements. But he was too well protected and his movements were too hard to predict so they gave up on him and went to a softer target. So we saw that as a vindication of the precautions that we took.

But on the other hand just from what I've read in the last few weeks I think the common crime problem as opposed to political crime in Mexico City is far worse today than it was in my day.

Q: Well then you were called back in...when did you go back?

TEARE: The beginning of '73. About a year and a half after I got to Mexico.

Q: In '73...where did you go?

TEARE: That was to Na Trang and I was Deputy Principal Officer.

Q: You were there from '73 to?

TEARE: This was a TDY. I was there for in the end just about seven months, which was the longest of anyone in this first wave of TDY people. But we had an enormous amount of talent in that group of 44 including Frank Wisner, Parker Borg, Richard Mueller and others who have gone on to greater prominence in the Service. Frank was my counterpart, Number Two in Can Tho. I think the Principal Officer there was Tom Barnes and somebody said Teare ought to go to the Delta, that's what he knows! Where I had worked best during my regular tour. Somebody else said, "Well they've already got Wisner down there and we have to spread the talent around" and so forth. Well there were ten Provinces I think in Two Corps and we had one Officer in each and everyone at least for a little while. We got very good coverage of what was going on, particularly in the Highlands. Jim Mack, now Ambassador to Guyana, was our man in Dien Bien.

Our job essentially was to monitor the effectiveness of the cease fire and on the Government's side its efforts to build itself up as a political force or to develop a system of political organization that would equip it for the hypothesized peaceful political competition with the Communists. So we worked very diligently on that. We got some very good stuff. Most of which however only went back to Washington by Airgram I think, in fact I know what we prepared was almost entirely Airgrams so it would take three or four weeks to get there and get distributed. But we got some beautiful reporting and we really knew what was going on, what the Vietnamese were doing at the Corps and Division and Province level.

Probably the best of all the Officers I had was Richard Mueller who started up in Can Tho Province. His reporting was absolutely beautiful. Not only was it succinct and nicely worded and full of good insights, best sources and so forth, but it was beautifully typed!

Q: This was before the word processor!

TEARE: Oh way before. He was using a portable typewriter on his knees or on a table in the mess hall in what had been the Advisory Shop in Can Tho. We used a variety of means, couriers, Air America pilots would carry this stuff back. We had processors in Nha Trang if need be just putting it on Airgram mats and shipping it off to Saigon. I was the Reports Officer and the Coordinator of what all we were doing. Anyway we nominated Richard Mueller for the Director General's Award for Reporting which had just been instituted a year or two earlier. Saigon nominated Cal Mehlert, one of its Officers who was assigned there on a regular tour and Saigon I think was very confident that its nominee would win, certainly would beat out anyone from the provinces.

Well as it happened this TDY program was the baby, the pet of the Director General, Bill Hall then. Alex Johnson as Under Secretary for Political Affairs had been involved in putting it together. So that maybe gave us a little leg up. Anyway Mueller won the Director General's Award that year. Now the TDY program had such attention focused on it that as I said that was probably a leg up but we were particularly satisfied that we had beaten out Saigon's candidate whose reporting in our view had not been anything out of the ordinary. Furthermore we thought that Saigon was complacent about it all and deserved to lose.

Q: What were you seeing here in Two Corps?

TEARE: Well in general we saw a Government of Vietnam and armed forces that were more sinned against than sinning. This is not to say that they were perfect. Indeed they launched air strikes a couple of times when they shouldn't have. But in general they were behaving themselves pretty well and they were of course essentially in a defensive posture. That is the nature of the Government's responsibilities in guerrilla warfare. You are the one who has to keep the roads open and the other guy can come along and close them at times and places of his choosing. That is easy to do. Keeping the roads open is hard.

Furthermore we had a pretty good sense of military capabilities and vulnerabilities. In Da Lat Province, around Ban Me Thuot there were no RVN units at all.

Q: RVN being the Army of the Republic of Vietnam?

TEARE: Right, these were the regulars. There were a regiment in Pleiku and I think at least a couple of battalions in Ton Tun, but no RVN whatsoever in Da Lat which is a very large province with only a couple of lines of communication in a pretty scattered population. There were only regional and popular forces. But it was wide open essentially. Jay Blowers, our man in Da Lat, wrote a report in which he said "I believe that if the North Vietnamese ever decide to launch a major countrywide offensive they will begin it here, in Da Lat Province." And that is precisely what they did two years later, in 1975. They came in through Da Lat, they quickly took Pleiku, they worked their way down to the coast effectively cutting the country in two and they moved North toward Da Nang and South down the coast eventually reaching Saigon.

The Two Corps Commander as I recall was quite corrupt, certainly no better than he needed to be but I think we also had some influence on him in the direction of observing a cease fire. First of all we wanted the cease fire to work, we believed or hoped that it would. But we wanted the onus for breaking it to be on the North Vietnamese and to the extent that that could be pinned down I think there were more violations by the North Vietnamese. They went on essentially with what they had been doing which was building up their supply system, their lines of communication, developing their intelligence. They were simply somewhat less blatant about it than they had been before.

So it was a heavy time with all this talent reporting through me. Now not too many people lasted out the full six months. Some people started being pulled out earlier. Parker Borg I think was working for the DG at that time. He left after three or four months so we moved Richard Mueller down from Can Tho to Pleiku to cover both provinces from report headquarters in Pleiku. Similarly I lost a couple of others along the way.

Meanwhile the Department was finding people to come out on regular tours of duty, the staffs of three new consulates and Da Nang and to keep Saigon going. Those people began to show up. Meanwhile Jim Engle, who was the Principal Officer in Nha Trang, was pulled out and sent over to Phnom Penh to be DCM. He never actually assumed that position because Tom Enders was there and didn't want to leave and Ambassador Swank didn't want him to leave or something. Anyway supernumerary...I think Swank left, Enders became Chargï¿½, Engle was still there as DCM, I don't know what happened to his assignment in the end.

But I was Acting Principal Officer in Nha Trang, so I was the one who got to fly around on the airplanes all the time and do the odd ceremony. Through the AID people, or the remnants of CORDS, I had a force of more than 2,000 Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). Although I didn't direct their daily operations or try to, nevertheless we were involved in feeding people and helping build roads and that sort of thing. So it was quite a little empire.

I shared a house with Steve Johnson, the son of Alexis Johnson. Steve was originally sent out to be the liaison with the Canadian contingent of the ICCS, because as he liked to say he spoke Canadian already. But that turned out to be not much of a job and then the Canadians pulled out with our blessing, I think, because they found the tactics of the Poles and Hungarians so frustrating, the obstruction. The Poles and Hungarians could never be mobilized to go out and investigate a violation if it had been headed by the VC, whereas the Canadians wanted to go out in a big way and energetically document violations no matter who was responsible. They didn't mind at all catching the VC or the NVA in the act. So the Canadians pulled out and Steve became surplus in Saigon and so came up and joined us in Nha Trang.

He and I shared a house and the house had been the one that John Paul Vann occupied during his time as Director of CORDS and MR 2 and is where he kept one of his minor wives. It was quite secluded. It was down on the south end of the beach in Nha Trang. It was comfortable. We were only there a few hours each night. We were working dawn to dusk and beyond. I think the whole time I was there I only swam in the ocean, which was just across the road from my house, a few times.

It was all work and it was really intense and begging the question what was being done with all that we were reporting I have never felt more engaged or more productive I imagine at any time in my career.

Q: Well what was the feeling of your group, whenever you had a chance to talk, whither Vietnam and what did the Peace Accords mean?

TEARE: I would say we concluded that they didn't really mean very much. We saw the pattern of violations going on which were let's say two thirds of them committed by the other side. But more to the point we saw Thieu and people on the non Communist side were not making good use of the time that the Paris Agreement had bought for them. Thieu's idea of political organizing was to declare the existence of a Government Party and then have everybody join it. If you were a civil servant your pay would be docked if you didn't. Well that is not how you build loyalty or political support. But that is the way Thieu went about it. And the Party was I think heavily Catholic which he was himself and if anything it probably resembled the Diem ist organizations more than it did anything else. The loyalty was skin deep at most.

Was there another election along there? Probably there would have been one in '75, I don't know if they got around to holding it before the collapse but anyway it was not impressive. There was coercion; there was no spirit in it. So this was a Government that was essentially a tenuous structure with little popular support. The main thing that kept people on the Government's side was fear of what would happen to them in the event of a Communist takeover and not all of them were so terribly afraid of that. Life was not easy. There was some prosperity. There was more profiteering in the cities I suppose but the countryside was pretty much what it had always been. No fertilizer, no good system of irrigation, no assurance that you could get your goods to market or that you would get a decent price for them if you did, constant risk of death or injury from stray military action even after the cease fire.

Q: What about the Montagnards? I mean these were always sort of our...I mean particularly our military loved the Montagnards.

TEARE: True enough.

Q: Did you have a large group of Montagnards in your area?

TEARE: We did but I can't recall that there were any special military programs anymore involving them. I think the civilian AID side, the remnants of CORDS the AID element, had some special programs in the highlands for the Montagnards but it was nothing that I focused on particularly. I think they were no happier under lowland Vietnamese administration than they ever had been and maybe less so. But in those months in 1973 they just didn't seem to be a major factor. I'm sure we reported a bit on their doings.

Q: Were we looking, I mean were you seeing reports on the Vietnamese military?

TEARE: Oh yes.

Q: How were they doing?

TEARE: Generally rather badly when they had to go into action. I remember just from my own non professional observations worrying about things. I made one trip I've forgotten the purpose now within Bin Vinh Province. We flew in a helicopter, a Huey belonging to I suppose the Air Force or maybe the 22nd RVN Infantry Division and I noticed that a couple of the lights on the control panel, the gages on the control panel, had been covered with black electrician's tape. I asked the pilot why and he said "Oh...red light came on. We don't like red light so we cover it up." I decided after that I would not fly with the Vietnamese Air Force ever again.

The equipment was falling into disrepair. Guys were getting sloppy in their uniforms. They were sleeping at outposts in the daytime the way they always had down in the Delta. There was not any sense of commitment, of discipline of esprit, but by definition under the cease fire they weren't involved in too many actions so we didn't have any great opportunity to observe them doing what they were supposed to be doing.

I remember though going to visit the ICCS outpost in the town of Minh Hoa which was one District North of Nha Trang. I remember that the Indonesian there, a major I guess pulled me aside and said "How much you Americans spending on this war?" I said I think we are spending about thirty billion dollars a year, which was roughly the figure at the time. He said, "If you give us, the Indonesians, ten billion dollars for one year we will clear out all the North Vietnamese and Vietcong." And I said that was a tempting offer but I don't have the power to do it. I'm sure of course that was braggadocio but I think it did represent the sense that the Indonesians believed they knew how to deal with Communists or to deal with anybody who got in their way. Certainly that spirit was lacking in the Vietnamese. Not that they couldn't be cruel, torturing prisoners and that sort of thing. But they just didn't have the get up and go of the Indonesians.

Of course nowadays, speaking in the middle of 1998, we see some reason and have for some time to second guess the Indonesian forces but that's another story.

Q: Well you left there in what, 1973?

TEARE: I did. I left about the end of August after roughly seven months there and a couple trips back to see my family in Mexico. I would return to Mexico City. And then a strange thing happened. One of our vice consuls from somewhere in the North of Mexico was kidnapped, Patterson was his name, Donald Patterson. There was a long search for him involving a lot of us in the embassy. We had a task force. It involved the FBI. Well it took about the entire resources of the embassy plus FBI people working from the American side of the border.

It went on and on and it pretty much took us away from our ordinary work for weeks or even months. So the latter part of my tour there, from December 1973 to June or July 1974 was skewed by that experience. I never got totally back into the internal political reporting I was supposed to be doing.

Q: What were you doing?

TEARE: Well I'm trying to remember now, it seems to me a lot of the time we spent with an open line to Washington reporting Task Force developments. At one point we thought we had lured...there had been a couple of ransom notes...we had lured somebody into a meeting in Mexico City. I believe there was a female FBI Agent who was going to pose as Patterson's wife and go meet the guy. The meeting never came off.

We did get a ransom note though that I got a look at. It was done in block printing. I noticed that wherever the letter 'D' occurred it had that horizontal bar across the vertical piece of the 'D' that you see in Vietnamese to distinguish the hard D, the regular D sound from the Y or Z sound of the unbarred D. I said that somebody who had been in Vietnam must have written the note. I think later they did arrest the guy who had sent the note at least and they got him for extortion. But I don't think that the kidnapping and murder case was eventually solved.

Q: His body was found.

TEARE: His body was found.

Q: He was killed right away wasn't he?

TEARE: It seemed almost certain he had been killed within the first 24 48 hours of the kidnapping. The family was quite influential politically and that brought some further pressure to bear I think on the Department and on the embassy, not that we wouldn't have gone all out for anybody. But I remember that had its effect. Whoever was the Counter Terrorism Director at the time came down to Mexico City a couple of times. It was quite big doings and it preoccupied as I say a lot of us for quite awhile.

Q: I had a long interview with Tony Gillespie who was involved with that.

So you left Mexico when?

TEARE: June or early July of 1974. Again Vietnam played a part in that because the Deputy Ambassador in Saigon in '73 was Charlie Whitehouse and he moved on later that year to be Ambassador in Laos. I had some dealings with him in my capacity as Deputy and Acting Principal Officer in Nha Trang. I had never met him previously. So I was being advanced by Personnel to be Political Counselor in Laos. So that went to Whitehouse who by then knew me, he wouldn't have otherwise, and I think that helped me to get that job. So I got to Laos with my family just about the end of August 1974.

Q: Well you were there not very long.

TEARE: I was there two years instead of three because when we removed all the dependents in 1975 and thinned out the staff I was one of those who stayed. But my tour was curtailed, yes.

Q: Let's see '73 to?

TEARE: '74 to '76 I was in Laos.

Q: '76...what was the situation when you got there in '74?

TEARE: It was quite interesting because the Communists there had come to town already and had joined in a coalition government with the Right Wing and with the neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister. It was a very uneasy coalition but it was nevertheless a coalition and I think some people thought it might even provide a model for Vietnam, which of course it didn't. But there were Pathet Lao in town and they had positions in I think almost every ministry. The guy I dealt with most from that side is still around and is today the Foreign Minister, Mr. Suban Sikkerat who in fact had been a Colonel in the Pathet Lao, the Laos Peoples' Forces or whatever it was called but he would never admit it. He was educated in France, spoke very good French, quite good English too and had been sent down to Vientiane with the establishment of the coalition just a few months earlier to be I think one of the senior political figures in the whole Communist show. He was very, very good and a very worthy adversary for us.

But the Government was limping along. There was not a real spirit of cooperation between the two sides. Souvanna Phouma did not have a whole lot of power. There was also a sense of watching what was happening next door in Vietnam. I think it was pretty clearly understood that a collapse of the Saigon Government over there would have repercussions for Laos and for Cambodia, as of course it did. The Domino Theory is true to that extent. Not Thailand, not Malaysia, not Indonesia but Cambodia and Laos certainly. So it was again a strange sort of place.

The United States had invested a lot in Laos over the years since the late '50s to the extent we almost had or did have a parallel government in some ways. We had our own electrical power generation and distribution system alongside the Government's. We had our own telephone system with its own lines running alongside the Government line. We had our own school, our own compound, our own commissary, our own little hospital, and our own fire engines. We had just about everything. We were like a state within a state. We had I think about 400 employees and something like a thousand dependents. We were far bigger than all other Missions.

We put a lot of money into the country. Our military assistance went mainly to buy rice and gasoline for the Force Somai Royal, the Rightist troops. I don't know that we had influence to match our contributions but nevertheless we were the best friend of the old Rightist Government and we were trying to be friends to the Coalition Government which was meant to be somewhat neutral, neither all Right nor all Left. We contributed direct budgetary support through something called the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund, FEOF. We had AID people working in education, public health, public safety, all over the country in all kinds of things. We had regional AID operations in Luang Prabang, and Pak Se. The CIA was involved with General Vang Pao and his Hmong guerrilla force up in the Northeast of the country around Long Cheng, that was the Headquarters.

I paid one visit up there and saw. The Vietnamese word for highlanders, Montagnard if you will, who were not much interested in being controlled by the lowland Laos and who hated the Vietnamese, all Vietnamese, but since Vietnamese in those parts were mostly Communist they were happy to fight them. So it was a strange situation in which we were ostensibly working with the Coalition Government in town and also doing a lot of things for the people of Laos. But we were also still involved with a fighting force that was harassing the North Vietnamese in the northeastern part of the country, the whole eastern part of Laos, particularly in the highlands.

But all of this had sort of an unreal aspect. Once again I got involved in a disappearance case because a young American named Dean, and an Australian companion named Sharmon, these were guys just out of university, were going down the Mekong in a canoe and they disappeared. We launched a search operation for them, largely trying to collect intelligence on what might have happened to them. The father of Dean turned out to be a YALE classmate of Ambassador Whitehouse so there was a lot of interest there. It is not known to this day what became of them precisely but the CIA did succeed in tracking pretty far. It seems they went ashore at some point in southern Laos and were captured by a Pathet Lao element and then probably after a couple of days in captivity somehow angered their captors and were shot. But their bodies have never been recovered.

In my last assignment in Honolulu I got a report on the case which I'll dust off for a future session here giving what the military now has on that case. The Joint Task Force for Accounting that is looking after MIAs also looks peripherally at civilian cases of which this was a prominent one. So, again, I was not in Laos very long however before the roof fell in there. It was in April of 1975 that things started to come apart, well late March over in Vietnam when the North Vietnamese came in just as had been predicted into Dar Lac Province and on down to the central coast. Vietnam started rolling up.

The Government in Cambodia decamped and the Khmer Rouge took over...well, Ambassador Swank left with the flag under his arm on the 12th of April 1975. That was the same day that Ambassador Whitehouse left Laos having completed his tour of duty. He was nominated and confirmed later that year to go to Thailand as Ambassador. I remember the day very well because it was the day that my wife came back from her mother's funeral. She had been gone for three or four weeks. Then by early or mid May all the families had left Laos because the minute Saigon fell it set off a panic among the Rightist side of the Government in Laos.

All the generals and cabinet ministers of the Rightist persuasion, virtually all of them, fled the country in a matter of days. In many cases the Generals were flown over to Thailand by helicopters and their Sergeants drove their Mercedes down to the ferry crossing and the cars were taken over to Thailand and then from there. We were pretty cynical about the whole thing.

We were working for an orderly drawdown of the American community. A lot of people went to the APO, which was still functioning, and mailed out their silverware and their family photographs. Yet at the same time we were trying to preserve calm in the community and say that nothing had happened here yet. Whitehouse had turned over to Christian Chapman who was the DCM. He became Chargï¿½. We had several community meetings, tried to keep calm, but it was clear that people were panicking. Above all, people in Washington were panicking because they had just had the evacuation of Saigon the helicopters off the roof of the Chancery. They were traumatized by it. They could only imagine that it was going to happen again. We had already pulled a lot of people out of Cambodia, I don't know if we intended a total evacuation. And they were afraid it was going to happen in Laos.

We kept saying there wasn't combat here and there probably wasn't going to be, it was going to be far different from Vietnam, it may not be pleasant but would be mostly peaceable. But Washington said no, get them out, get them out, and so we did. We sent out all of the families, mine was among the early ones to go. I think we did them almost all on commercial flights of Thai Airways and Royal Air Laos. I don't think we brought in many or any military or contract aircraft. But virtually all of the dependents were gone by, say, the 20th of May, three weeks after the fall of Saigon. Chapman's family was the last to go. His wife didn't want to leave. She wanted to stay there as a symbol. I think he had to be ordered to get her out.

But we sort of hunkered down and waited to see what would happen. One of the first things that happened was the seizure of a couple of our properties, our in town compound where we had the swimming pool and the Commissary, and a little compound of tin roof buildings that was known as Silver City was seized. So eventually was Kilometer Six where we had the school and a big U.S. housing area. We still had people living in Silver City, including a temporary duty secretary I remember who had come up from Bangkok because we had thinned out the staff so drastically. I think she was on her first or second night there when ostensible student demonstrators seized the compound. I remember going over at six in the morning trying to negotiate her way out of there and the other people who were in there.

Eventually we got the people out. The Pathet Lao were not interested in hurting people. In fact they weren't really interested in antagonizing the United States. They seemed to cherish the belief that if they were semi decent to us we would quickly start coming forward with reparations. Well that was not of course what we had in mind. But it took awhile for all of this to settle down.

One of the first things the Pathet Lao did however was freeze our bank accounts. We had an account at the Bank National. They assumed that the money in that account was rightfully theirs, that it was an undisbursed, if they understood that concept at all, contribution by the United States to the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund. Well it wasn't, it was the embassy's own operating funds for local salary and purchases and so forth. But it took us weeks or months to get them to understand that and finally to unfreeze the bank accounts.

Washington did not want to send any additional money. They didn't want to give us a new Treasury check. It would be throwing good money after bad. That is not precise either. New money after perfectly good sequestered old money. They didn't want to do that, understandably, and meanwhile we were running very low on cash. Somewhere along in there, I guess by this time it was later in the year of '75, I sold my car to a Thai diplomat who paid for it in Laotian kip. He got a very good deal because we had to convert our kip at the legal rate, which was totally artificial. But even so I was paid something like five million kip and it took the embassy B&F Officer and a local cashier all of one afternoon to count it! But with that cash in hand we were able to meet the payroll that particular time. I think before the next payroll came due our account had finally been unfrozen.

But it was that sort of thing. We were living from hand to mouth. The Lao shot up a Thai border post across the river so the Thai cut off petroleum supplies. Laos had none of its own. It was all imported from Thailand. So it became a question of how we were going to get gasoline for any purpose, our generator fuel. We had an Admin Officer, Bob MacCallum who saw to it by whatever means that we never ran out of fuel and I didn't ask too many questions about how he did it!

By this time Chapman had pretty well burned his bridges with Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Laos and Phil Habib, who had visited us in June, had decided that Chapman needed to be replaced. So they brought out Tom Corcoran who from my work in Saigon I knew had closed Hue, first closed Hanoi then closed Hue, had closed Phnom Penh once in the '60s. We didn't tell the Laos that but Corcoran came as Chargï¿½. We had had an Ambassador nominated and even confirmed, Galen Stone, known as Rocky, who was coming from a European post. But Stone was never sworn in because we thought that would be too encouraging to the Laos.

Meanwhile there was a Lao who had been, I think, Ambassador in Beijing come back. He was all ready to go to Washington. He was desperately hoping that Stone would be confirmed and come to post because that was the only way he was going to get to Washington. But it didn't happen. We stayed at the Chargï¿½ level from then, 1975, until 1990, I guess it was...no, '93. Let me get my years right. Charlie Salmon was my predecessor in Honolulu '93 to '96. So he went in '89 as Chargï¿½ and became Ambassador in '92. 1975 to 1992, seventeen years, we were at the Chargï¿½ level. I was by this time, effectively the DCM. But I couldn't get the title because the Ambassador's slot was vacant, then Corcoran as Chargï¿½ was occupying the DCM slot so I stayed political counselor. But for all practical purposes I was the acting DCM.

So we just hunkered down. Now Habib had come out in June and he sat down with the country team. He said, what did we think; should we stay or get out? I knew him. Perhaps I was the only one in the room who knew him, or at least knew him better than the others having served under him in Vietnam, and I said I felt we should stay unless they kicked us out. We had turned tail and pulled out of Phnom Penh and Saigon but this situation was different...let them kick us out. He said, "That's what you say, what do the rest of you say?" So he went around and polled the DAO and the Station Chief and Chapman himself. I think all or all but one or two agreed with me. So Phil said, "Alright, if that's the way you want it, okay. Now, you have an evacuation plan?" And we said yes, sure, but it was premised on an unopposed evacuation, U.S. military helicopters coming in and lifting us out. He said, "That's not going to happen now. Throw away that plan and if you guys get into trouble here is what you do. You go over to the Chargï¿½'s residence and you hunker down there. Make sure you have plenty of water and C rats and I'll negotiate you out. Got that?" We said, "Got it." So he patted us on the back and went on his way.

But in fact that did a lot for our morale and it was not long after that that he replaced Chapman with Corcoran, which was a good move as I said.

Q: This is a very peculiar relationship because most of the time the newly emerging Communist takeovers, starting with China and moving down to Korea, we didn't have anything in North Korea, but certainly in Cambodia and Vietnam....

TEARE: We left Hanoi in '54.

Q: We left Hanoi...so was a lot of this different? Did you feel we could hang on? Would it serve any purpose?

TEARE: We thought it would. First of all we believed, and I think we were exaggerated in this, that Vientiane would be a good listening post on Hanoi. We also thought that we might be able to do something on the POW MIA front. And at this point too there were still quite a few American civilians who had been captured in the final offensive in '75 and they weren't all accounted for yet. But beyond that I think there was the feeling that I expressed to Habib that we shouldn't be seen as running away, particularly in a country where there was really no violence in connection with the takeover and where our lives were not under threat.

When the Pathet Lao troops came down to some of the river towns in southern Laos school girls came out to meet them and put flowers in the barrels of their guns. They were glad to see them. It was a welcome. It was that relaxed. So we were pretty confident that we were not in any physical danger. In fact the people who quickly became endangered were the Russians and the Cubans because almost immediately a ragtag Laos Rightist guerrilla force began staging minor harassment operations from across the river in Thailand. You know a couple of guys would come over in a canoe at night and toss a grenade into the Russian Ambassador's front yard and go home again. That was the new terrorism in Laos in late '75 and the first part of '76.

But it was kind of a grim existence particularly for our local employees. Most of them wanted to stay with us. It represented steady employment. They had come to know us and like us over the years and believed in the American way to a certain extent. And precisely because of their loyalty to us they came under suspicion in their own community. The Pathet Laos set off on a process of political organizing and indoctrination and just about everybody had to go for some form of education. This was typically done through what they called seminars, usually a week or two of morning, afternoon, and evening lectures. Lecturing about the evils of the old Royal system in Laos and the old government and the Americans and others who had supported that government and the glories of the new Communist system and the fraternal allies in Vietnam, Russia, China and so forth. It was stultifying stuff but you had to do it. Furthermore you had to appear attentive and interested, otherwise you drew attention to yourself, adverse attention.

Our employees would be taken off for seminars and sometimes wouldn't come back for weeks. We kept their pay going and also realized soon that they were malnourished. Even with their salaries there wasn't a lot to be bought. So we would pay them partly in rice and then vitamin pills along with their cash salaries just to keep them going. They appreciated that. But it was grim for them and it was rather grim for us. Other embassies had drawn down to some degree. There was a small core of Westerners; ourselves, the British, the Australians, some French I think at that time, a couple of Germans, and then friendly Asians such as the Thai and Japanese. It was a pretty small community and we saw a lot of each other and not much of the Laos.

Q: What did you do?

TEARE: Well for example we played volleyball every Wednesday evening and every Sunday afternoon on the tennis court at the British Embassy Sports and Social Club. And there were movies shown a couple of nights a week also there. Later, after my time, the Australians built a much bigger and fancier sports complex down on the Mekong with a swimming pool and all. But it was pretty limited.

We worked long hours.

Q: Doing what though?

TEARE: Well we were sniffing around all the time trying to find out what this new Government was up to. What we could learn about what was going on in Hanoi and in Phnom Penh. I remember one day we got a Diplomatic Note from the local Cambodian embassy, Khmer Rouge controlled. It had been distributed for them by the Laos Ministry of Foreign Affairs that didn't realize we shouldn't have received it so we did. It was the first listing of the Pol Pot Government in Phnom Penh. A lot of the names didn't mean anything to us but Tom Corcoran recognized the value of it instantly. We got an Immediate telegram out to Washington that evening reporting this thing that had fallen into our laps!

A lot more of it was staying alive. Trying to get our bank account unfrozen, trying to get the Silver City properties back, trying to get permits for outgoing shipments of household effects. In general it turned out that those who were packed last fared best and that included me. Other people had belongings stolen out of their shipments, either on the Laos side or the Thai side, rocks substituted for contents of packing cases, things like that. Ours came home with almost no loss or damage. But it took a couple of months to get things out.

Also getting visas for people coming in TDY or replacement personnel. And Washington having once got us down to a ceiling of 29 staff members said that was it. We'd say there was a budget and fiscal officer over in Thailand and we need him and they would say we would have to send someone else out if we were going to bring him back. This was the way Washington was playing at that and still is. I saw that in Djakarta just a couple of months ago.

They, to my mind, take a wrong headed view of things. There are times in fact when a post needs more people or at least different people more than what it already had. In fact in troubles in Cambodia recently the Department did allow Ken Quinn to bring in some extra DS, Diplomatic Security people from Bangkok. But in general the Department is so concerned with minimizing exposure and possible loss that it to my mind interferes with the Post's ability to do its job in a crisis situation.

Now what we are doing in Nairobi and Ghana this week seems to be to flood the place with FBI men and Marine Security Guards and so forth and I think that's probably the right approach in the circumstances. Certainly if you are going to do an investigation. We weren't doing that, but the numerical ceiling on personnel strength hamstrung us for quite some time.

Q: You had an awful lot of equipment, a Commissary, everything else there, and the Laos taking it over. I would have thought that part of your problem would have been custodial.

TEARE: Well we tried to get property back. We would write them Notes all the time saying we had the honor to bring to their attention that certain property of the American Employees' Association is still sitting in a compound in Vientiane. But it mostly fell on deaf ears. We got very little back. Most of it had been taken from us so our custodial job in fact was not all that great.

Now on the question of what was going on Hanoi. We did get some information. The pattern seemed to be that the people in Beijing would go to Hanoi for R&R, people in Hanoi would come to Vientiane and people from Vientiane would go to Bangkok, the beaches of Thailand. But the most significant exercise in which I was involved had to do with some of the American civilians who had been captured in the final offensive.

There was a UN High Commission for Refugees representative, a Burmese, named Darryl Grin Han who had arrived in Vientiane I think during my time. He ran the office there and furthermore he was entrusted with opening an office in Hanoi that had not been allowed previously and was a sensitive operation.

So Darryl left his wife, who was German, in Vientiane most of the time. He went to Hanoi periodically and would stay. I guess he took her eventually too. He had an office in the hotel. On one trip back Darryl sought me out and said he had learned that the North Vietnamese would be ready to release several American civilians who had been captured earlier that year, '75, in the final offensive. He said he thought he could be of help in getting them this far and etc, etc. And so we did that and the Americans got out rather quickly and everything worked very well.

What the Vietnamese and Laos didn't know was that Han was a Resident Alien of the United States. In fact he had met his wife while both were in the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell. They had green cards that were about to expire. You ordinarily can't get a green card renewed while you were overseas, I think you have to come back to the States to do it. At least that was the rule in the mid '70s. So I remember writing to INS through State explaining why these people who were extending themselves to help the United States ought to have their green cards renewed on an exceptional basis while still outside the United States. And of course that worked.

But the larger point was the fact that he was able to learn so quickly of their presence and was able to do something about it. That convinced me that if there were military personnel in North Vietnam, prisoners of war, it would have come to the attention of the outside world. A Scandinavian diplomat would have picked up something of this and the word would have filtered back to us rather promptly and we might have been able to do something about it. Here we are 23 years after that and we are still conducting POW and MIA recovery operations, now with the cooperation of the Vietnamese and Laotian governments. We have pretty well finished up in Cambodia where the Hun Sin Government was giving us good cooperation.

We pay a lot for day laborers and helicopter rides and so forth.

Q: We are really talking not about prisoners, we are talking about the dead.

TEARE: We are talking about bodies not recovered, BNR, yes. There are no more prisoners. I am convinced. There are no MIAs, living MIAs.

Q: This has become sort of...

TEARE: It has become a political football.

Q: It's a Right Wing political thing in the United States.

TEARE: Absolutely.

Q: Nobody who knows anything about the place believes that but it is an article of faith for those who believe in plots.

TEARE: Yes. But anyway I was convinced as early as '75 that if people were there we would have some line into it as we did with these civilians. Once their case was resolved I think that was it. One was an AID employee named Paul Struherik. A couple of others were missionaries. They had been mostly in the highlands.

Q: What were your dealings? I mean did you go to receptions and things like that with the Laos Government?

TEARE: Yes we were invited to most things to which other members of the Diplomatic Corps were invited. We spent a good deal of our time speculating. It was a rumor mill. One question was what happened to and would happen to the Royal family? Well it was pretty quickly established that they were taken off to re education in the north of Laos. But it was not until some time quite recently...the late '80s or beginning of the '90s, that the Laos Government finally admitted that the King and the Crown Prince had both died back in the late '70s, I think, or the early '80s. And they only did that in order to win a visit by the Thai Princess because the Thai Government had made it be known that she could not go to Laos, Sirindhorn is the Princess, unless the Thai Government were informed officially what had happened to the Laos Royal Family. So then the Laos revealed through a press conference in Paris that the King was dead. So the Thai Princess could make her visit and so forth.

But it was that sort of thing. Was a Republic going to be declared? Well there was speculation it was going to happen on such and such a day in July and then in September and it didn't happen and didn't happen. Finally it was declared on the 2nd of December 1975 and that became the National Day and Prince Souphanouvong, the half brother of Souvanna Phouma, and the so called Red Prince, was installed as President of the country. So then chiefs of diplomatic mission were invited to call on him.

First all of the resident Ambassadors were booked in. This was all in the space of ten days or so at the rate of a couple a day. Then it got to Charge de Affaire and I was Charge at that moment because Tom Corcoran had gone to Bangkok for dental work. So we had a couple of days' notice of this. I got a message down to Tom saying don't you want to hurry back so you can make the ceremonial call on Souphanouvong on next Tuesday or whenever it was. Tom came back and said no thanks. Tom didn't like dealing with the Chinese Communists at all and he probably had met Souphanouvong in earlier years and had no interest in a further meeting.

So I went to the call on Souphanouvong which we conducted in French. I had talked to a few others who had already gone to see him so I had some idea. It was meant to be courtesy but anyway I remember that he said that we needed to get countries to heal the scars of the war. I was mighty glad I knew French but my vocabulary wasn't all that good. He wanted an immediate contribution, reparations, etc. I countered by rendering in French as best I could the idea that it was time that heals wounds, that a passage of time would be necessary. So we parted on that. I still have I am sure the issue of the Communist Party's daily newspaper with little photos of my call on Souphanouvong and three or four others on the front page.

So it was distant, rather formal.

Q: The whole Vietnamese Government was claiming reparations.

TEARE: Well they were trying to.

Q: It was absolutely politically out of the question and practically out of the question and it stopped the sort of return to some sort of relations for a couple of decades.

TEARE: But the Vietnamese have always claimed that the United States halfway promised them three billion dollars if this, that and the other.

Q: Which didn't happen anyway.

TEARE: No. They broke the agreement, we say. And they did, there is no question about it. But anyway that is the sort of thinking and I think the Laos generally believed that vast sums of money would somehow begin to flow and of course they didn't.

Bob Hawke as Prime Minister of Australia went to Laos in 1989 I think it was and said they would build them a bridge across the Mekong. He had not checked this out with his staff and nobody knew how much such a bridge would cost but Australia was committed to it. I think they finally did build it and it cost them tens of millions of dollars and I think it is not being used very much. Partly because the Laos are so damned suspicious of anybody trying to come across it. It is a good avenue for trade and would allow one to bypass the ferry, which is a very inefficient way of getting goods across.

But in general we've stuck at that point, as we did with Vietnam too for many years. They want aid and trade, we want accounting for MIA and body count recovered cases. In the case of Laos also we want to see action in the counter narcotics field and we haven't seen too much of that although we've funded some programs, I think largely through the UN Program there. But I am not expert on what has happened in Laos since I left in '76.

Q: Well was there sort of the feeling while you were there that we were maintaining a presence but that the importance of Laos with the fall of South Vietnam basically disappeared from our radar?

TEARE: Almost. Yes. It was not important to us and it never had the value as a listening post on North Vietnam that some people had predicted.

Q: Was there ever any concern that Laos now being in Communist hands that it might try to do something to Thailand?

TEARE: I don't think so. I don't think the Laos have the capability to run things within Laos much less to do anything on anyone else's territory. No the saying is that the Vietnamese plant rice, the Cambodians watch it grow, and the Laos listen to it grow. That is how energetic they are. The commercial establishment of Vientiane such as it was when I got there was almost entirely foreign. There were Thai, there were Indians, there were Chinese, there were Koreans...lots of Vietnamese of course. But you had to look far and wide to find any sort of business establishment actually run by Laos. Commerce was not their thing. Commercial agriculture is, I dare say, their thing.

It has changed somewhat since then and certainly policies have changed. Laos is now much more open to outside investment. I think it has had an evolution rather like Vietnam's in that respect. They went along for the first ten or fifteen years after the Communist takeover and the old Socialist Party and then they got poorer and poorer. And then they began to wake up. In the case of Vietnam it was called Doi Moi, new life, program of economic liberalization. Incentives to production and things like that started in the late '80s. Laos got into it a little later.

Now...I was in Hanoi in 1997 and things are not exactly booming but at least they are coming along. There are the rudiments of a tourist industry and a couple of high rise hotels and things like that. Unfortunately I could not get the Admiral to visit Laos, it never worked on his schedule during the last two years, so I have not seen Vientiane since '76 but I think it is moving in somewhat the same direction, probably much more slowly.

Q: I thought we might stop at this point.

TEARE: Yes, it is a good stopping point.

Q: We will pick it up next time. In mid '76 you left Laos and where did you go?

TEARE: Back to Washington. I was for a couple of months Special Assistant to Art Hummel as Assistant Secretary for EA, then there came an election. Hummel was out along with Gerry Ford. Hummel was career of course. And then Dick Holbrooke came in as Assistant Secretary for EA/P in the Carter Administration.

Q: All right. Well we'll talk about that then.

Q: Today is August the 19th, 1998. In 1976 you came back to be what?

TEARE: The position was Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. John Heldly had recruited me for that job while still in Laos. He was the previous Special Assistant. The Assistant Secretary at that time was Philip Habib. I had worked for Phil before and was flattered by the offer. I said sure but by the time I got home, slightly delayed, Phil had moved up to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs and Hummel, whom I did not know had become Assistant Secretary.

Hummel I thought very graciously took me on, sight unseen, to be Special Assistant. But it turned out to be very brief because of the election, as I mentioned. I think I reported for duty the day after Labor Day and by early November, two months later, we knew he was not going to stay. One of the earliest rumored appointments of the Carter Administration was Holbrooke to be Assistant Secretary, I think even before Secretary of State was announced. So Hummel and I became...well I figured that I was a lame duck. I had known Holbrooke before, in Saigon, and I think I am slightly older than he is, and I had the sense that he was going to want somebody else entirely of his own choosing. But I waited until he got to Washington and told me that himself. I think that happened in December.

So by Inauguration Day, January 1977, I was out of a job. I didn't have anything to do for a couple of weeks and then INR where I had worked previously invited me back to fill in there. So I went to INR for about three weeks and did one project for them on Cambodia. This of course was during the fairly early days of Pol Pot. Sort of a hypothetical thing what would be your reaction if we tried to warm up to Pol Pot although I saw no prospect that we were going to do so.

We didn't know the depth of his crimes either.

Q: I was going to ask...what sort of information were we getting out about Pol Pot?

TEARE: Well I think not very much and I certainly wasn't with it very long but I believe my commission was more to look at the reactions of other nations in the region which was really a hypothetical. We didn't have a lot of intelligence on their reactions or what was going on within Cambodia.

I should add perhaps that Hummel during the brief time I was with him was very good to me and I enjoyed working for him. We made one trip to London and Brussels. I think it was London, certainly to Brussels... where the North Atlantic Council had a committee on Asia that he briefed. So that was fun. During that time, those couple of months with him, we had one particular crisis in Korea. That was the axe murder, which you may remember.

Q: I was there. I had just arrived. But talk about it, though.

TEARE: I have no particular insight. I just knew what was in the telegrams and media reports but it was certainly one more instance if any were needed of the strange and I would say self defeating behavior of the North Koreans. It has made me at least as suspicious as anyone else of them ever since. It was also during that period when Orlando Letelier was blown up at Sheridan Circle. So that was a rather eventful period.

Anyway along about February '77 after I had been with INR a couple of weeks Personnel told me that I was being assigned to the National War College for the class beginning in August. But they also told me that they considered that they owned me from then on until I started the War College and they had a specific vacancy that they wanted me to take over and that was as Director of Political Studies at the Foreign Service Institute.

The guy who was in the job, Eugene Bovis, was being pulled out early for refresher Arabic training. He was going to Jeddah, I think it was. So they asked me if I would fill in. I'm not sure they gave me a lot of choice in the matter but I didn't mind. It sounded congenial. In fact most of the courses that were to be given in the March, April, May period were already set up and so essentially I was just the emcee, introducing lecturers and thanking them, collecting evaluations and things like that.

But there was one course of more than unusual interest and that was the Department's first ever seminar on human rights. The Carter Administration had come in strong on that point and Pat Derian was the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights or Humanitarian Affairs. I'm not sure whether she was the first to hold the position or not.

Q: Maybe there had been something before, I think one person before her, but it hadn't really gelled and it also included refugees, too.

TEARE: Anyway Bovis had prepared short lists of speakers to be invited on different topics. But that course was not so far along as the others that I took over so I was the one who actually recruited the speakers. They turned out to be pretty good. Bovis had done his spadework well.

We had enough money to do it off site at Annapolis at one of the Sheratons or Ramadas or someplace there. So all of that took some additional organization and I had, I think, a Civil Service secretary who was very good at that sort of thing. We got everybody lined up for the course. Some Bureaus were less enthusiastic than others I guess about sending representatives. But eventually we had quite a respectable group of mostly middle grade officers.

I wanted to get Derian down there to greet them and she wouldn't do it...she was too busy to leave Washington! So we got on a bus on the morning the course was starting over in Rosslyn and drove first to State. We went inside and she gave what I thought were rather perfunctory remarks about the importance of the subject and her hope for this course and then we got back on the bus and continued to Annapolis. It was not the way I would have preferred to do it either for symbolism or for group dynamics. But I think the course went pretty well and somewhere I still have notes I made on it.

We looked at it from I suppose more a legalistic and philosophical standpoint than from a practical one although we tried to get in a couple of practitioners. I remember one of our best sessions was conducted by Mel Levitsky who had been working on Soviet matters, refuseniks, that sort of thing. That was a part of the world I knew and still know next to nothing about so I found that quite interesting.

Q: Were you picking up any reflections on this, this was so very early on, about people in various geographic bureaus saying that this was all very nice but if we start messing around with human rights what about our ties to Saudi Arabia or something like this?

TEARE: Well, exactly, and that was brought up quite frequently by participants in the course and the usual tension between the moral imperatives and the zeal of the reformers. Of course it was very easy for the Political Appointees to come in and want to accomplish great things versus the realism of the career people and cynicism perhaps who saw nothing but apple carts to be upset. I was I suppose more inclined toward the latter view. I saw a lot of practical difficulties. But it is very difficult to say our policy should be utterly realpolitik and devoid of any moral considerations. You can't do that.

Q: You can't do that, no.

TEARE: So we sort of muddle along but certainly the Carter Administration gave it the biggest push that it has ever had I think and sometimes dove off cliffs in the process! I think one of the people in this course went on to be appointed as an Office Director. Her name was Roberta Cohen and I had some dealings with her later. If she was not already on Derian's staff by that time she later joined it. I think she had come from the Hill and she was one of the true believers who wanted to go around punishing dictators and human rights violators.

But that was sort of a brief interlude. And then in August 1977 I started at the National War College as a member of the class of 1978.

Q: So that was 1977 to 1978?

TEARE: Yes.

Q: Could you talk about that?

TEARE: Happy to. It seems to me that it was more relaxed than I understand it has since become. I don't remember that we had to do much in the way of writing occasional papers. We were expected to write one fairly long paper, which I did. That was in the spring. On Chinese policy toward the Southeast Asian nations, which was up my alley, at least the Southeast Asia parts. I didn't know that much about Chinese policy but I read a lot. I worked with a very good faculty member, Tom Robinson, who had come from the University of Washington to join the War College just that year. But otherwise it seems to me that we did not work terribly hard and we were encouraged to exercise and take up speed reading and get more into computers although then it was really just word processing in its infancy. Things like that. Recharge your batteries. Everybody was around forty, had 18, 20, 22 years in service, or something like that. Most people were military members, O 5s or some were already 0 6, one or two I think made 0 7 before they left or soon after.

It was not a particularly memorable class in military terms although one guy, Hank Stackpole, went on to become a three star general and Commander of Marine Forces in the Pacific. He was a contender for the job of CINCPAC a few years ago and he is now the first President of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. So I saw him quite frequently after he moved back from Tokyo to take that job. Another was Fred Franks who became a lieutenant general, Army Corps Commander, in the Gulf War and was notable for having an artificial leg. I forget how he lost it but I suppose it was after he came on duty because you would never get into the Army with one. But he did well. And then there was another guy whose name escapes me at the moment who went on to be Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Barry Horton, that was his name. That is at least a two star billet, maybe three star.

Also in the class on the civilian side were some people I had known before and others I got to know pretty well. One I knew best and still do is Charlie Salmon whom I had met in Manila in 1966 at the Troop Contributors Summit. I don't know if I mentioned that earlier but that was a circus and a half. And Bill Rope who went on to be DCM in Ankara and a bunch of others, some of whom I have seen at later stages in my career.

You tend to remember particular disappointments or grievances. The War College traditionally sends everybody off on a trip in the spring of the year. So I had signed up for the African Regional Studies course because I had never been to Africa and I thought I ought to do something different. That was to have included a trip to Africa, several countries in West Africa including Nigeria and Ghana. Because of a dispute that the Department of Defense was having with the House Appropriations Committee... I believe it was over the value of the travel element of the War College Program, it applied to ICAF also, Defense decided to leave a number of people home from the trips, just arbitrarily. And they did it supposedly by randomized computer selection. But I noticed that the class officers were all among those not selected for the trip. I think they were trying to prove a point. So anyway I was one of approximately one third of the people who stayed home. So I never got to Africa and I haven't been there yet.

Then at the last minute after the selection had been made we were told that we could have a trip around Defense installations and Defense contractor plants in the United States if we wanted. Travel would be by C 130. I had already flown a lot on C 130s and decided I could do without that. A couple of people did it. Most of us I think stayed home and did our income tax as it was that season. So I felt quite an achievement. But basically the War College was a good experience, not particularly demanding. I've always been glad I did it.

Q: So we are talking about '78. Where did you go then?

TEARE: Came out of the War College with no assignment and the same thing had happened to a lot of people the previous year. Personnel had resolved they were going to do better and the Director General had come over to see us and to hold our hands and say they were going to make every effort to get all of us assigned by the time we graduated. Well they still hadn't! At least some of us hadn't!

The East Asian and Pacific Bureau was looking for people and I guess was looking out for me to some degree and I was soon offered the job of Deputy Director of Philippine Affairs, concurrently the political-military officer on the desk. The country director was John Monjo. So I took up that position in the middle of the year and spent two years toiling away on Philippine matters.

Q: That was '78 to '80?

TEARE: '78 to '80...correct.

Q: During the '78 to '80 period what was the status of Philippine American relations?

TEARE: It was testy I guess you could say to some degree mainly because by this time Marcos had been in office since the end of 1965. He'd had the regular two terms. He had then instituted martial law in early '73 to change the Constitution and avoid another election, an election that would not otherwise have been legal. Thus he had stayed on under martial law and now it was five years later. He'd been in office eleven, twelve years and we were getting very worried about him. He was spending money. He was amassing money illegally. He was treating his opponents quite harshly and we wanted him to throttle back and to start thinking about succession. This was anathema to him just as it has proved to be for Suharto and others. So we tried and I think we made not a dent in his posture.

Imelda meanwhile was becoming all the more grandiose. She had herself declared Governor of metro Manila which was the city plus all of its many suburbs. She was building a cultural center. They were just aggrandizing themselves all over the place.

The Philippines did not lean on us I guess for any particular favors during the period that I was there. They did want to buy new aircraft and we wound up selling them the F 8, which was a semi obsolete plane mainly mothballed in the deserts of Arizona. We learned later on that most of the Filipino pilots were not tall enough to reach the foot control so they had to have wooden blocks fastened on. I guess that was the rudder or whatever.

I think they were trying to buy old ships.

We had I guess nothing particularly contentious although I'm sure I'm glossing over some things in my mind except that, and this was the big project that I worked on and it was already far advanced when I started, and that was the 1979 revision of the Military Bases Agreement. That was contentious mainly because Marcos was trying to get more money out of us and was not above using the threat of closing Clark and Subic in order to do it. He didn't really want to do that. The Carter Administration was still rather new in office and I think Marcos didn't like or respect Carter from a distance and thought he could hold the United States up for more and more money.

As I've always heard it what finally induced Marcos to settle was a visit to him by Senator Inouye of Hawaii representing the Administration. This would have been around November 1978. Inouye reportedly said to Marcos that as a fellow Asian he could not advocate that Marcos settle for anything less than what President Carter had offered and as a United States Senator he could not promise that Marcos would get any more. So eventually Marcos did settle and I've forgotten the precise terms but I think it was on the order of 450 million dollars over five years.

But the real point was that the appropriations were to be subject to the best efforts of the Administration to obtain the appropriation from Congress. That was not a very solid guarantee. But it was the only way we could get anything approximating a multi year appropriation that the Congress would not grant. I don't think we even did two years at that time in those days. I think it was all annual. Now I guess we authorize for two years although we still only appropriate for one. So, a best efforts guarantee and I worked on the letter that Carter eventually signed and went to Marcos about that.

Finally, and the money had been increased somewhat from the Administration's original offer, Marcos finally agreed to sign. This was right at Christmas '78, New Year's '79. But then we had to find a day on which he would do it because Marcos' lucky number was seven and he would only take significant actions on days that had a seven, dates with a seven in them. I think it was finally signed in Manila on the 7th of January 1979.

It had taken a lot of work by a lot of people. I was not foremost among them by any means. Lawyers from OSD, ISA, Foreign Military Rights Affairs, there was a Navy lawyer assigned to the embassy in Manila for a long period, the political-military officer in Manila, Mike Connors was the leading exponent. He did a lot of work on the Agreement there.

So this was wrapped up about six months after I joined the Desk and we sat back and breathed a sigh of relief but again operating the bases with the Filipinos was never easy. There was always something.

Q: Were you at that time and maybe on the military side trying to look ahead and say this won't keep up forever? You know nationalistic pressure is something that would eventually cause us to get out?

TEARE: We worried about that but I think we were really focused on what was then considered the vast importance of the two bases. What I was told by my military colleagues at the time was that Clark was highly important but Subic even more so, that Subic was vital to our ability to operate in the Western Pacific and beyond. Not so much because of the wonderful natural harbor and the adjacent naval air station at San Miguel which enabled the carrier pilots to practice even while a ship was in port but above all because of the ship repair facility at Subic. We had a highly talented and experienced Filipino work force at economical wages and there we could determine the priorities of all the work whereas if you go into somebody else's shipyard you can't necessarily set the priorities. So this was portrayed as highly valuable and we negotiated for it in those terms.

I suppose we didn't give enough attention to the future and the likelihood that the bases someday would be more difficult to hang on to or indeed impossible. I think also this '79 revision included a provision for a quinquennial review, every five years we were going to sit down and review the whole thing. Well again when you just sign something five years seems a long way off but in the end that proved...well...it wasn't the fact of the review it was a sign that things would not go on forever. Indeed in the subsequent reviews they could either jack us up for more money or cut us off in other ways. Something like that eventually happened although not until the Philippine Senate voted in 1991.

Q: In this period with Marcos were we making any move to change the situation, I mean toward freedom to be a more democratic country?

TEARE: We tried some things I think. We encouraged legislative exchanges and I don't know that we offered them help with their judiciary, probably not; they were pretty sensitive on that score. But I don't think we did very much. I think our main focus was on trying to alter Marcos's behavior and that was an impossible quest.

The Ambassador in the second Nixon Ford Administration had been Bill Sullivan who was certainly no pushover. He also had a good singing voice and the story was that he and Imelda used to sing around the piano. I guess Ferdinand would sing too and they had happy times in Malacaï¿½ang Palace and there was some belief that Sullivan and the embassy were co opted, charmed by Marcos. This was before I got to the Desk. And then David Newsom went out there for just a few months the end of '77, beginning of '78, before he was called back to become Under Secretary for Political Affairs. And then Dick Murphy went out.

First of all the story was, I think even in '77 before Newsom went, Hummel was the original person intended for the Philippines, and I think that was floated informally with Marcos and Marcos reportedly sent word back that he would like someone closer to the President than Hummel. In other words not a career officer. The name of Billy Carter was even mentioned, the President's brother.

Q: Basically a very ne'er do well person.

TEARE: Precisely.

Q: He was pretty close to being what would in our terms today that we'd say was sort of a lay about or red neck?

TEARE: Exactly. It was a ridiculous proposition. But, if it's true and I rather think it is, it reflects the way that Marcos liked to work. Everything was on the basis of personal connections and obligations and so forth. About this time, maybe a little later, Marcos sent his own brother in law who was already Governor of a Province, to be Ambassador to the United States. He had the two jobs concurrently. Earlier he had been Ambassador to China. This was Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, a younger brother of Imelda's. Who, and I don't think I've told this story, had once fetched up in Saigon when I was there complaining that the Philippines was not getting its share of contracts out of Vietnam whereas Japan, which had sent no troops to Vietnam, was getting a lot of contracts.

So Kokoy came on a secret mission to Saigon to get some contracts. Maybe I did tell this story. He wanted to stay with me so he would be out of sight so I let him do that. But I worked on it for 24 or 48 hours and finally got him at least to call the Philippine Ambassador and acknowledge to the Ambassador that he was in the country. Otherwise it would have been mighty embarrassing. I don't know whether he got any contracts as a result of that trip. I did set him up with an appointment with MAC V J 4 with somebody who was doing procurement.

Anyway, Billy Carter to be Ambassador is what Marcos allegedly wanted. That did not happen. But I think there was a gap of several months between Sullivan's departure and Newsom's arrival. And then Newsom was pulled out again after only a few months and Dick Murphy went.

Murphy was an Arabist of course and had never worked particularly in East Asia or the Pacific. But he did the job manfully and I think he also has a good singing voice and may also have wound up around the piano with Imelda. We would send him instructions, EXDIS messages for his meetings with Marcos. We would say to tell the President that the United States is worried that the rule of law is not being met, or that political opponents seem to be denied equal access to the media, that there were reports of disappearances, and so forth. Meanwhile however the New Peoples Army was arising as a new insurgent threat. That probably gave Marcos all the more excuse to crack down.

So it was not a happy situation although the re negotiation of the Bases Agreement took some of the heat out of it and again I think probably reduced our ability to complain.

Q: Did Benigno Aquino play any role at this particular time?

TEARE: I think that he was already in self exile in the United States. I think I'm correct in that. This was in '78; he was killed in '83 on his return. Yes, I'm sure he was back here in the U.S. and I don't remember that we on the Desk had any dealings with him.

John Monjo left in '79 to go to...was it to Korea or Djakarta? I think he went to Djakarta as DCM and very soon Charge. I had rather hoped that I would be moved up to the Directorship. Holbrooke had arranged stretch assignments for two or three other people that season, the summer of '89. But I think he had used up his credits with the Secretary. And he used to go to the Secretary directly, over the head of the Director General, and get people where he wanted them.

So I was acting for a few months and then Frazier Meade who had served in Manila as political counselor, I guess, and then in Cebu as consul, came in and took over the directorship. It seems to me the second of my two years on the Desk was less eventful than the first.

Q: What was your impression of Dick Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary?

TEARE: Brilliant and undisciplined. He had good ideas. He was certainly alert and vigorous in pursuing them. He drove his staff pretty hard but he was always late for meetings. He was, I guess, difficult to manage. His secretary used to have to corner him and send him off for a haircut, even. He sort of operated at high intensity all the time and I think he was looking ahead. Among other things it was on his watch that they established the Pacific Island Affairs Office as a separate one, which a lot of people thought was an important step. Recently rescinded, by the way.

Q: What kind of Affairs?

TEARE: Pacific Island Affairs. It was split off as a separate office from Australia New Zealand. That was seen as symbolically important to the Island countries at least.

Beyond that I find it hard to say. I was there, as I said, for two years and I would go to his meetings. At least when I was acting country director. I worked directly with him on a couple of things, particularly Philippine Bases. Although again he was constantly moving from one topic to another so I don't suppose he thought about Philippine Bases for more than half an hour at a time during those several months when we were putting the negotiations to bed. But you were always conscious that he was there.

Q: Then in 1980 you were...?

TEARE: In 1980 I was ready to go overseas. I had bid on a number of jobs but nothing came through and so I talked to people about it, including Evelyn Colbert, whom I mentioned in a previous interview. She was the Deputy Director of the East Asia Office in INR when I was there earlier. She by this time had come to the East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand and the Islands. Or maybe she had moved on by that point to be national intelligence officer for East Asia. I've forgotten the timing precisely. But anyway I think she talked to Holbrooke about it and they decided that I would be a logical person to go to the Micronesian Status Negotiations.

The job over there had been vacant for about a year. It was the senior career position in the office, beneath the Political Appointee who was the head of it. So I agreed to do that when I couldn't find anything that looked good overseas. That was to be another two year assignment, which would have given me six years in Washington. But it was only during this time that the five year rule was instituted.

I am hazy on the timing because about the time I went there or even earlier there was a new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia New Zealand and the Islands and that was Ginger Liu. She had been hired by Holbrooke after an advertising campaign. They wanted a woman to follow Evelyn and they wanted an Asian American, if they could find one. So they got Ginger Liu who was 32 years old and had been a regional counsel for the Department of Energy on the West Coast. She was Chinese American, born and educated in California. Ginger turned out to be a breath of fresh air, a very unconventional type. She got interested in the Micronesian Negotiations and I wound up doing quite a lot of work with her.

She was notable among other things for her interest in weight training and exercise and so forth. She used to go to the Pentagon Gym and she said that was one of the best places for her to do business with Rich Armitage who was then, I guess, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs East Asia at the Pentagon. So they used to meet and talk business in the Pentagon Gym!

Ginger was unconventional. She was a good lawyer, I believe, and she gave quite good support to negotiations. Negotiations had been going on since the late 1960s or very beginning of the '70s, at a time when we began to see that the UN Trusteeship for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands could not go on forever. That we would have to do something about it, something to bring the Trusteeship to an end and to get them launched in some fashion. We had encouraged the formation of something called the Congress of Micronesia. That was 1969 as I recall. The Congress in turn had appointed some negotiators and they had been meeting with people from Washington ever since, by this time fully 10 years.

The Nixon Administration had appointed a negotiator named Franklin Hayden Williams who was, or soon after became, concurrently President of the Asia Foundation based in San Francisco. So Williams had the two jobs and obviously couldn't give full time to either one of them. A staff was put together for him in Washington, part State, part Defense, but quartered at Interior. I think this was largely because Interior was still administering the Islands, having taken them over from the Navy sometime back in the '60s I guess. So the relevant office of the Interior which was called Territorial and International Affairs was on one floor and we had the little part of one wing of Interior on the floor below.

Perhaps an interesting footnote is that one of the earliest, maybe the earliest, senior career people there was a Navy Captain named Bill Crowe who went on to be CINCPAC and Ambassador to the UK, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in between and then Ambassador to the UK. And then at some later point the senior job had shifted to civilians so I was technically a lineal descendant of Bill Crowe in this position.

The Carter Administration had appointed its own chief negotiator, full time, and that was Peter Rosenblatt, a Washington lawyer and a member of the Scoop Jackson wing of the Democratic Party. So I joined that staff in June or July of 1980, just before another presidential election. Just after I got that job I read an article somewhere, I think in the New Republic, about the upcoming Democratic convention which was going to re nominate Carter, of course. The article said that the Jackson wing of the Party was rather disaffected because Carter had given very few jobs to its members.

The punch line of that story is that another Jackson Democrat was quoted as saying, "Yup, they wouldn't give us Polynesia, they wouldn't give us the Marshalls. All they would give us was Micronesia."

But, anyway, Peter Rosenblatt was and is quite an intense character who was fully capable of having a 10 minute conversation with one of the Micronesian leaders and then spending twenty minutes giving a read out on that conversation to those of us on his staff. And Peter desperately hoped to wrap up the negotiations. Indeed they were pretty close to resolution with both the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia by the time I joined the process and it was perhaps hoped that they would be concluded. If Carter had been re elected they might have been concluded quite early in his new term. But, in the event of course, he was not.

So right after the elections I was dispatched to Guam to meet with leaders from the Micronesia amities, the third one was Palau. I was to assure them the best I could up to that point that despite the change in political party back in the United States we of the negotiating staff were going to make every effort to keep the offer as it stood. That there would no doubt have to be a hiatus while the new Administration reviewed policy on the subject but that they should be patient and steadfast and we would be back to them as soon as we could. So I did that. I did that entire trip out to Guam and back in 96 hours. It was grueling.

I typed the letter to them on a borrowed typewriter at the Guam Hilton on the basis of the draft I had taken out and improvements I suggested back and further changes that were telephoned to me form Washington. That was the way we operated.

Rosenblatt could have resigned to Carter, the outgoing President and the one who had appointed him. But he chose to resign instead to the incoming President, Ronald Reagan. He rather had hopes of being continued in the job through the conclusion of negotiations and then of moving on to something else, I'm quite sure, something bigger in the Administration. Even though he was a Democrat some of his philosophical allies, Democrats such as Jeane Kirkpatrick and Eugene Rostow, were being appointed to posts in the Reagan Administration. But that didn't happen. Rosenblatt had made some enemies on the Hill and on St. Patrick's Day, 1979, he got a telephone call about 4 o'clock in the afternoon saying, "Is this Ambassador Rosenblatt?" He said yes and the caller said this is so and so in the White House Personnel Office. "You remember that resignation that you submitted to President Reagan a couple of months ago?" He said yes, of course. The caller said he just wanted to let him know his resignation was accepted and they would like him out of the office by close of business that day. So there went Rosenblatt's hopes.

At that point I became the Acting Director of the office and we conducted a policy review which took months and wound up essentially affirming the policy of the Carter Administration, adopting it for the Reagan people. This was no surprise. It was entirely predictable. The whole direction of policy had been pretty well ordained.

Our interest at that time mainly was making sure that what had happened before and during World War II never happened again. That is that no hostile power could ever get into those Islands and use them against us.

Q: What is the term? Something denial....

TEARE: Strategic denial. That was perhaps our biggest single objective and also into the evolving compact of free association. We had negotiated it up to that point. We had worked in the defense veto which says in essence that if the United States objects to a proposed action by one of the freely associated States on the ground that it compromises our ability to defend said State, then said State must cease and desist. It cannot take that action. So it was a veto over their defense and foreign policy behavior if you will. And a third principle of ours was that free association was something less than full sovereignty.

In our view, for example, the freely associated States resulting from the compact would not be able to join the United Nations because they would not be fully sovereign. There was an entailment of their sovereignty in that we were responsible for providing their defense and we had this veto over their acts in the defense and national security realm.

But that didn't last very long, that last of the three and all of them are now members of the United Nations, even Palau which took a much longer time to negotiate.

As a little more history, originally there was one single Trust Territory divided into six Districts. One of those Districts, the Northern Marianas opted for a different form and they became a Commonwealth of the United States by an agreement, the Commonwealth Covenant, negotiated in the '70s and enacted into law. The other five Districts, one of which later subdivided which is how we got six, all wanted something different which became known as Free Association. And so those Districts reading from East to West were the Marshall Islands, Kosrae (Kusaie), Ponape, Truk or Turk as its called now, Yap and Palau.

One of the principles of the negotiations because we had to report to the UN Trusteeship Council and through it to the Security Council on the conduct of our administration of these Territories, was that any negotiations with them had to be at arms length, clean as a whistle. So although we ultimately paid the legal bills they were free to shop for the best legal counsel in town. And when they did their original shopping in the early '60s they went to see Clifford and Warnke. They met with Paul Warnke who had served in the Pacific in World War II and at least knew where the Islands were, which is more than a lot of other people did. So they engaged Clifford and Warnke as Counsel for the Congress of Micronesia and its negotiating team.

Later when the Districts started going their separate ways, two of them, they got their own legal counsel. So when the Marshall Islands, the Eastern most District split off on its own, they engaged Covington and Burling.

Q: All top grade firms.

TEARE: Then when Palau split off it took yet another firm, this one not so well known and so old line, Van Ness, Feldman and Sutcliff. The distinguishing thing about those guys, the three named partners, was that they had all worked on the Hill. Two of them, I think, had been staffers of the Senate Energy Committee, formerly insular and natural resources, that had jurisdiction. So Feldman and Sutcliff at least knew the Congressional lay of the land which was very important in negotiations. That was always a factor.

So by 1980, when I joined it, we were negotiating with the three law firms. There were other people floating around the periphery. People of Bikini, people of Rongelap and Enewetak, people affected by the nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands in the 1940s and '50s. They had their own litigation against the United States.

One of the purposes of the Compact was to subsume all of their claims, have their claims assumed by the Government of the Marshall Islands. The Marshall Islands in turn would receive a large sum from the United States, part of it in trust, as compensation for the losses that some of its peoples had experienced as a result of the testing. So all of this was going on. The Compact kept getting bigger and bigger with more subsidiary agreements hung upon it. The most important of those in monetary and political terms was the settlement with those islanders affected by the nuclear and thermonuclear testing program.

Anyway, the arrangement was also that the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations was theoretically a dependency of the National Security Council. Now obviously the National Security Advisors were not terribly interested in hearing about Micronesia very often so things were funneled to them through the Counselor of the Department of State. When I first started that was Roz Ridgway. I remember one or two meetings that she chaired. It was under the Carter Administration.

Then when the Reagan Administration came in that duty passed to Jim Buckley who was Counselor of the Department. Bill Buckley's brother. A true gentleman and very easy to work with. The only problem was that he once referred, lightheartedly, to the script that he was following or was not following that we had prepared for him. We scripted him for every meeting because the meetings were relatively infrequent but they were often necessary to get an agreed policy recommendation, often involving more money, and to get up the line to the NSC. And along the way we had to fight off Interior, which kept trying in our view to turn the clock back and even to turn the Islanders against the concept of Free Association.

By this time Interior had upgraded its territorial and the insular operation to an Assistant Secretary. They brought one on board, Pedro San Juan, who was a character in his own right. He was a Chief of Protocol at State, I guess in the Nixon Administration. He was one of the strangest characters that I have encountered anywhere, any time. But we managed to use the inter agency process to override even Pedro and we had things humming along pretty well.

Meanwhile the Reagan Administration had come forward with a candidate to replace Rosenblatt finally and this was a man named Fred Zeider, who had been a big fundraiser for George Bush in Texas.

Q: Was this the Bush Administration?

TEARE: No, Bush was Vice President.

Q: This was a sort of Bush wing?

TEARE: Yes and Zeider was a Bush protï¿½gï¿½ and Zeider was put forward for this job. He had worked in Interior briefly in the Ford Administration. In fact he had what essentially was San Juan's job earlier on. So he knew a little bit about the Islands. Zeider had been in the automobile industry. I think his father had invented the air brake or an air brake or something. There was even a proposal at one time right after the War to manufacture a car called the Zeider but it didn't work, they were absorbed by Chrysler or something. So Zeider had sold out, had a lot of money, lived in Texas for awhile and then came to Washington. He kept an apartment in a building across Virginia Avenue from the Watergate. But he had sat out the Carter years in Hawaii, where he also had a place on Diamond Head Road, I think.

Anyway Zeider came back to Washington with his friend George Bush and played golf with Bush frequently. He was sort of almost a court jester to Bush, sort of like George Allen to Eisenhower, I think, in an earlier era. And Zeider allowed himself to be persuaded that he wanted this job as head of the Micronesian negotiations. He later claimed that he had been told it would take eighteen months at the most and he wound up spending five years at it.

Q: That brings up a question. This thing started in the late '60s?

TEARE: Correct.

Q: It sounds like, if nothing else, a hell of a lot of lawyer time was logged on this.

TEARE: Well it was.

Q: It's not that complicated.

TEARE: I think what was going on was first of all a lot of guilt on the part of the United States. We had kept the Islands in a state of nature from the end of World War II through the early Kennedy Administration. They were pretty backward. They weren't going very far very fast in terms of education or public health or anything else.

Then in the early '60s there was a new look at the situation and a determination that we had to do something for these Islands fast. And so they got massive federal programs. Virtually everything instituted for the Great Society applied to them out there. And we were throwing money at the place without any strong administrative structure through which to channel it.

This in turn raised the Micronesians expectations and also they themselves became very insistent on having the best of everything you might say with as little cost to themselves as they could possibly arrange. So the Postal Service and the Federal Aviation Administration and food stamps and aids to navigation and everything that we had ever provided we were supposed to provide in perpetuity or explain why not. So we would have long, dragged out discussions with the lawyers and often with the Micronesians themselves over each and every one of these provisions. We would have to get the blessing of every federal agency involved. So we would have big inter agency meetings with 30, 40, 50 people there overflowing our offices. Sometimes we would borrow rooms elsewhere.

Everybody seemed to want to have a say. This was perhaps understandable because almost everybody was going to have to do something for the Islands for at least fifteen years thereafter. They wanted to know what and how much. They wanted to estimate the costs. That sort of thing. I'm not saying it couldn't have moved a lot faster but it did drag on and on and on over all these details. And then there were the slowdowns I suppose when the Republicans went out in the end of '76. Certainly the period I was there the policy to do with the Democrats went out and the Reagan Administration came in. So it just seemed to be endless.

I was on it for three years. I wound up extending for a third year. Again because I couldn't get a good job overseas. It just seemed to go on. Indeed it went on for a couple of years more after I left before they finally signed.

Q: Wasn't there a Congressman on the House Interior Committee who really didn't want this thing to move away because for one thing it cut out an annual trip for them?

TEARE: Yes, although the Islands themselves are not such great destinations. Their greatest protector was Congressman Phil Burton, Democrat of San Francisco, who had died shortly before I got there. But his tradition was carried on by his brother who was also a Congressman, by his widow who took his seat and by a number of others who were interested in the fate of the Islanders and would do almost everything for them. Whether it was for the trips per se or out of some larger sense that these are our wards and that we need to take care of them I don't know.

Q: I have to say I spent a week on Ponape. It is the sort of place where first prize is one day on Ponape, third prize is a week on Ponape.

TEARE: I don't know I think it probably was that they liked having a bit of empire. And we were spending tens of millions of dollars a year on the Islands. The Congressmen who got interested in it stayed interested and both the House Interior Committee and the Senate Energy Committee kept a tight grasp on the issue. The House Foreign Affairs Committee particularly, and in the days of Steve Solarz as the Sub Committee Chairman for East Asia and Pacific wanted to get into the act. Occasionally House Interior would have to relent to the extent of holding a joint hearing. But they jealously guarded this turf, both the House people and the Senate people.

I don't know. It was a proprietary thing so far as I could tell.

Q: How much did you feel from your perspective that the citizens of these Islands called the shots and how much was the lawyers sort of just doing their thing?

TEARE: I think the governments of the Islands were setting the general outlines. That is they wanted a lot because they thought they were owed a lot. And I expect that any instructions to their American lawyers were probably pretty general. But the lawyers being bloodhounds themselves and I don't mean that in a pejorative sense particularly. You just go out and get what you can for the client. That is the way you do it whether it is a merger or a divorce case or whatever. They applied the same principles. Although we were dealing in the tens of millions of dollars they knew that this was not large in relation to the overall U.S. budget and they always thought there was more that could be squeezed out. And I must say also some of the agencies were pretty recalcitrant.

We did sometimes get very annoyed at them ourselves and if I had been a lawyer on the other side of the table I would have gone after them and exploited inter agency differences. We even had problems or differences of opinion between the CAB and the FAA, for example, because they were separate at that time. The Navy wouldn't necessarily agree with the civilians from Defense and so forth. So we were, I always thought, rather vulnerable whereas although sometimes the different Island entities disagreed with one another they usually stood together when it came to getting more. And also their lawyers were pretty good and ours were not always the best. So I think they were pretty effective.

Anyway the process went on and on and on. Meanwhile we had to report on it annually at least to the UN Trusteeship Council so I went to four consecutive Trusteeship Council regular meetings '80 through '83. It was held in May in New York for about a week. And then I went to special meetings of the Council on two or three occasions. I made a trip to London and Paris with Buckley in 1982, I think it was. We were trying to persuade the British and the French that it would be okay to terminate the Trusteeship in part, that is spin the Marshall Islands and the Federate States off leaving only Palau. Palau which was stuck way behind in terms of negotiations mainly because it had established a so called Anti Nuclear Constitution that contradicted the defense provisions of the Contract. They kept putting that up to referendums of their population, six or seven of them. So the train was moving however slowly but Palau was not on the train.

The British and the French had both said to please deal with the termination of the Trusteeship just once for everybody. That had originally been the position of the United States too. That was the logical way to deal with it. But by the time we began to think that we were within striking distance on the Marshalls and FSM, we wanted to get that launched without waiting for Palau. So we had to try to persuade the British and the French to go along with us and ultimately they did. But they weren't happy about it.

The Trusteeship Council has rules for....

Q: It was the UN?

TEARE: Yes, it is the UN body. It had complicated rules of membership. I think all of the permanent members of the Security Council were automatically members of the Trusteeship Council. Plus there had to be other countries as well so that the number of administering authorities was balanced by an equal number of other countries. Of course, Australia had been an administering authority for New Guinea and New Zealand for Samoa and Britain itself I think for some African territories and so forth. But by the time we are talking about in the beginning of the 1980s this was the only Trusteeship left in all the world of the original eleven and it was the only strategic Trusteeship that ever had been. The other ten Trusteeships were the responsibility ultimately of the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council reported to the General Assembly on those.

But on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands uniquely the Trusteeship Council reported to the Security Council. We had arranged that ourselves because in the Security Council we would have a veto. We had already back in '47 begun using part of the Trust Territory for nuclear testing and we wanted to keep it that way and to preserve strategic denial and keep for ourselves the possibility, never exercised, of establishing military bases in the Trust Territory. Again we were sort of looking backwards to World War II and its conduct.

So by this time there was no need for other members of the Trusteeship Council because we were the only administering authority. We were balanced by Britain, France and the Soviet Union. China, although in the UN by then, declined on principle to take any part in the workings of the Trusteeship Council. So it was just the four countries. The Presidency alternated between Britain and France because we couldn't as an administering authority be President and nobody wanted the Soviets to be President of the Council. So that all worked very smoothly except for one year when the Soviet voted for the British representative when he was supposed to vote for the French or vice versa. He got his signals confused. So it was three to one, with the Soviet voting the wrong way.

The whole thing was pretty ritualized by the time I got there. We would make our report as the administering authority then the governments of the elements of the Trust Territory would make reports and then individual petitioners would come forward with specific complaints, requests for redress, and so forth. And then the British and the French would get together and write a short report that would be sent on to the Security Council. The Russians would object to some portions of it and we would vote for it and it would all be wrapped up again for another year.

Q: I would have thought that within the General Assembly or something this would be one of those places where not necessarily the Soviets but the neutral block would beat up on the United States. They would do it on Puerto Rico all the time.

TEARE: You are quite right. But there was another mechanism for that. They had been frozen out of the Trusteeship Council, Security Council channel by our foresighted arrangements back in the '40s. But what had been developed was something called the Committee of 24, a body of the General Assembly, which took upon itself to evaluate all non self governing territories, including places like St. Helena, Ascension Island and the Falklands and American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam and so forth. We have always taken the position, and take that position down to the present day, that they have no right to talk about Puerto Rico or Guam because those places have freely chosen their status with the United States and it is all settled. We have refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the Committee of 24 in this matter. But certain people on the Committee of 24 have kept after us nevertheless over the years. That has always been another circus and a half!

But in the Trusteeship Council, Security Council chain on the Pacific Islands, we were essentially invulnerable. Oh, we could be embarrassed and sometimes the British and French joint report would say something mildly critical...educational standards in Ponape have not advanced in a degree commensurate with others...but it was all very gentle and civilized.

We did have occasional special meetings of the Council, too, when we were trying to get something done.

So anyway I had labored on that for three years. It was always interesting. I never had the sense that I was spinning my wheels precisely but at the same time I cannot point to a lot of progress during that period.

Q: What was your feeling when you left in 1983 about the future? You know you could almost see pretty much where the negotiations were going to end up and that we'd be paying out a certain amount of money for a certain period of time. You had been out to see these places hadn't you?

TEARE: Yes I had made two or three extensive trips there.

Q: So what did you see whither these countries?

TEARE: Well very murky futures because the Islands have very little in the way of natural resources and indeed some of the indigenous skills they had such as fishing have pretty well atrophied in the last couple of generations as they have been able to get imported food. It is a lot easier to open a can and get mackerel out even if it was caught in your waters and then up to Japan for processing and it comes back to you than it is to go out and catch one yourself. Or tuna.

Furthermore I had real questions and I think my worst fears have been borne out about the ability of the Islands to manage the money they would be getting. Would they invest it productively or would they spend it all as soon as it reached them? Would they train their people? Would they send people offshore to acquire skills, would they get them back? Would they come up with a better crop of administrators and teachers than they had in the early '80s? All those things. Would they develop tourism, for example? Would they work hard enough? The story is that the Palauans wouldn't work even for the Japanese so the Japanese sort of shunted them aside and brought in conscript labor from Korea and Taiwan to run the sugar plantations which existed on Palau in the 1930s.

The work ethic is not high there and so you had to fear for their future and I did. Some very bad investments and shady practices also compounded it. The Palauans about the time I was leaving got into a contract for a power plant with a British company which people said they didn't need, couldn't afford, and so forth. They somehow managed to borrow money to enter the power plant deal on the strength of the payments they were later to receive in future years from the United States! So they were mortgaging the compact money in advance. That did not augur well. And indeed Palau had a lot of political troubles internally, apart from this question of the anti nuclear Constitution which tied everything up for a long time.

The first President, Haruo Remeliik was murdered two or three years into his term of office. And the next President, Lazarus Salii killed himself. So this is not a very stable political life for a brand new country of 60,000 people...ridiculously small, too. Can any place of that size be viable? In the Marshall Islands the highest point of land, I think, is six feet above sea level. They are subject to storms and tsunami. Ponape you've seen for yourself. It has got a bit of scenery. It is a volcanic island with...

Q: No real beaches.

TEARE: No. True. There is said to be great diving however in the wrecks of World War II warships in Truk Lagoon. But there is not much there. To the extent that there are hotels, or at least there were as of 1980, it was the result of one man, Bob Six of Continental Airlines who had developed a subsidiary that became known as Continental Air Micronesia. It established resorts in I think Ponape and Palau and tried to get a little tourist industry going but I don't think it has really prospered since.

The one exception perhaps is tourists from Japan who were already going to Guam in considerable numbers to get married or on their honeymoon. Palau managed to get quite a few Japanese tourists at least for awhile and they still have them coming in.

But other than that there didn't seem to be much in the way of an industrial base. Agriculture was not even subsistence...a lot of taro but not too much else grown.

Furthermore the health of the population was a worrisome factor because a lot of the Islanders I think are predisposed to obesity. Here they were drinking soft drinks and beer from the United States and eating pretzels and potato chips and not fishing or getting any other physical exercise. There was a lot of obesity, diabetes, and early death from heart attack and stroke. That sort of thing.

It was a grim picture and I don't know that it is significantly better today.

Q: Well in '83 you left?

TEARE: I did.

Q: Whither then?

TEARE: Well by this time I had lobbied around and managed to get myself assigned as Deputy Chief of Mission to Wellington, New Zealand. There I succeeded my War College classmate, Charlie Salmon, who was there from '80 to '83. The ambassador was a Reagan appointee named H. Monroe Browne. The 'H' stood for Herbert, but he didn't want that publicized.

He was a strong ideological supporter of Governor Reagan, not all that close personally I gathered, but he was a Californian and he had made money in the cattle business and then in construction. He also had some pretensions to intellectual status. He was President of something called the Institute for Contemporary Studies in San Francisco, a think tank that I know and knew little about. It was essentially way over on the conservative end of the spectrum.

Browne had come to New Zealand, I think, in '81...probably the first batch of Reagan ambassadors. Among other things he liked it because horse racing is big in New Zealand and he, and more particularly his wife, owned a few horses and liked to race them. He liked nothing better than to go to one of the provincial race meetings in New Zealand on the weekend and become friendly with the racing crowd. He had even arranged with the New Zealand Racing Authority for his wife's...because the horses were in her name and I think she even chose them...colors to be used by her jockey to race. They were, I don't know vertical stripes and New Zealand has horizontal stripes or something. It was a special concession that he worked out.

They owned two or three horses, one of which got so far as the Caulfield Cup in Australia, one of the big races over there. It finished third, I think it was. This was probably 1985. By virtue of that it qualified automatically for a place in the Melbourne Cup, which is the biggest race in the whole Southern Hemisphere. It is run on the first Tuesday of November every year. Unfortunately this horse was a sprinter, not a distance runner. The Melbourne Cup is a longer race than the Caulfield Cup is. I think it's a mile and a half or something. So the horse, Lack of Reason, finished 19th in a field of 23 in the Melbourne Cup. Not so successful!

The horse's sire was named Alack and its dam was named Sound Reason, I think. So the colt was named Lacka Reason...an anagram of Alack and Reason from Sound Reason. But later on when we get into the nuclear capable ships question people used to say that the name of the Ambassador's horse reflected his policy...lack of reason!

Q: With New Zealand one almost immediately thinks of the nuclear issue.

TEARE: Right.

Q: In the first place you were in New Zealand from '83 until?

TEARE: '86.

Q: '86. Before we get to the nuclear side, were there any other points of concern between the United States and New Zealand?

TEARE: Very few. It was I think a pretty harmonious relationship in most respects. I think that was probably particularly true during the Conservative government of Sir Robert Muldoon which was still in office when I got there in 1983 and continued until '84. He had come into office in '76, I think, I would have to check that. But anyway he'd been in for several years.

There were some issues on the agricultural front. New Zealand complained that we had quotas of one sort or another on beef and on butter. We had a problem over lamb. Of course New Zealand produces a lot of that and it was something about the difference between frozen and chilled. I've forgotten. But anyway the effect they thought was to deny access to our market for their best lamb. They could deliver it chilled but we would only take it frozen or something like that.

So there were relatively minor disputes in the area of agricultural trade but fundamentally the two countries saw eye to eye on most international policy matters. New Zealand had sent a small troop unit to Vietnam in the '60s or early '70s although I think they had pretty well repented of that. But basically it was a fairly easy relationship until '84 when Muldoon and the National Party were turned out of office and a Labor Government, headed by David Lange, was elected and came into power.

Q: Would you describe the Labor Government there as reflecting sort of the extreme labor types of Great Britain of pre Margaret Thatcher? Sort of ideologues of the extreme social side or not?

TEARE: I think so although I'd qualify it a little bit. From what little I know of the British Labor Party there were still people in it who had come up through the trade unions and had worn cloth caps and carried lunch pails to the job and had served as union organizers and worked their way up that way. Although I think increasingly by the '80s the Labor Party in Britain was becoming more middle class, there were more people who had not served apprenticeships but had gone to University and so forth. I think if anything the New Zealand Labor Party at this period was even a little more bourgeois than that.

But at the same time it had more in the way of academic Leftists, people who had picked up their ideology at University and who were critical of the arms race, for example. They would say a plague on both your houses...the Soviet Union and the United States...but the Soviet Union is obscure and hard to influence. The United States is close at hand and speaks our language and is more susceptible to influence so let's concentrate our effort on the United States...why haven't you disarmed? Why haven't you signed the Test Ban Treaty? Why are you going so slowly in SALT Talks; it has been long enough? So we got a certain amount of that.

But it was I would say a Left of comfortable middle class circumstances rather than a proletarian hard Left.

The ruling party when I got there, the National Party, was again maybe not much like the Tories of Margaret Thatcher, but more a mix of country squires and farmers and small businessmen and so forth. The Foreign Minister, for example, Warren Cooper, had been a sign painter originally. Muldoon himself, I don't know, he had been in politics forever, that was his life.

But it was not a particularly talented government that Muldoon had and by the time I got there in '83 it was clearly on the ropes as a government. It had introduced price and rent controls that were very unpopular and a very un Tory thing to do.

Marilyn Waring, MP, had a public split with Muldoon and thereby I think further endangered his majority. Muldoon himself was drinking and behaving erratically. The country was running a serious trade deficit and its currency was under challenge. He wasn't doing anything about it. One night in late May or early June of '84 while drunk he decided to go to Government House, see the Governor General and request the dissolution of Parliament and a new election.

Now the election was due later that year anyway but Muldoon decided to speed it up, advance the date. The day he chose was the 14th of July, a Saturday, and the ANZUS Council was due to meet in Wellington starting on Monday, the 16th of July. They had George Shultz coming for it and Bill Hayden, then the Foreign Minister of Australia. This was an annual event and I'm sure Muldoon had not given any thought to that when he set the election date.

Meanwhile a Labor Government had come into power in Australia in 1983 and a lot of people thought of this as handwriting on the wall for New Zealand. The New Zealand Labor Party had had a number of or at lease a couple of changes of leadership and its lasthe guy who had led it in the '81 election, Sir Wallace Rolling, known as Bill, had lost the leadership to an upstart named David Lange. I think it was because Rolling had failed to win an election that was winnable but what had perhaps prevented the Labor victory in that election was a series of riots over the visit of a South African Rugby Team, Springboks. A lot of New Zealanders thought that Springboks should not be allowed to play in New Zealand because they came from a nation whose government practiced apartheid. Muldoon said no, by God, it's sport and they are going to play! And so demonstrators had appeared at the stadium where they played and there had been some violence.

I think Muldoon managed to frighten a lot of people into voting for him thinking otherwise there would be wider unrest if Labor took over. I don't know. I was not there at the time in '81 but Muldoon got another term of office in '81. So Labor changed leaders and got David Lange.

Lange was a lawyer from Auckland who had specialized in defending criminals, often indigent cases. He has an enormous gift of gab. According to a biography of him, he sort of talked his way into the nomination for an open seat in I believe 1978 when he was totally unknown. But his oratory was such that he appeared late in a field of expected candidates, would be candidates, and just wowed them. He was very clever, a good debater and so he became the leader. He was only forty one at the time in '83 when he took over the Party and by '84 he led it to a resounding victory although I think almost anyone in Labor could have pulled off a victory in '84. People were fed up with Rolling and with the harsh economic policies and the way the country seemed to be going down hill. Inflation, unemployment, minimum price controls, loss of population through emigration, things like that.

So it was a very strange period because Muldoon lost the election. The results were known very quickly that evening. George Shultz was already in Australia and on his way to New Zealand. I think he telephoned over I think from the Lodge, the Prime Minister's official residence in Canberra where he was having a social evening with Bob Hawke and he spoke with Ambassador Brown about the way things were shaping up there.

Muldoon, of course, had sobered up and realized the ANZUS Council was coming and after some little discussion it was decided that we should go ahead with the ANZUS Council no matter what. So the Council meeting was held with the Foreign Minister of the by then lame duck government, Warren Cooper. But Shultz had a meeting with David Lange on the Monday or Tuesday, the newly crowned Prime Minister. Except that Muldoon would not relinquish office immediately and would not take policy steps that his own Ministers were convinced were necessary to save the economy.

So finally Muldoon was cajoled or deceived or whatever into doing what had to be done. I think I am probably glossing over a lot here because I've forgotten many of the details. But there was even a New Zealand television docu drama done on this period of events. Somebody later sent it to us and I had a chance to look at it. It didn't do enough to refresh my memory obviously but the upshot was that after about 10 days Muldoon was gone and Lange was in office with a comfortable majority.

The real point of contention is what Lange did or did not tell Shultz during their meeting on the 17th of July 1984. The lowest ranking person in the room on the American side was Paul Wolfowitz who was the Assistant Secretary for Asia. Shultz was there. Ambassador Brown was there and one or two others with Shultz. But the understanding that the rest of us got on the American side was that Lange was going to look for ways to preserve access to the New Zealand ports by nuclear capable ships of the United States Navy. Despite the fact that his Party platform said that anything nuclear, nuclear weapons, nuclear propulsion systems, for that matter nuclear reactors for power generation, were anathema. New Zealand had none and wanted none of any of the above either permanent in the form of reactors or temporary, even transitory ships with possible weapons aboard. Of course our policy was neither to confirm nor to deny the presence or absence of any nuclear weapon on any ship or aircraft.

Nuclear propulsion was a different story. Everybody knew and the Navy was quite prepared to say which ships were nuclear propelled and which were not. And furthermore argued that nuclear propulsion systems on naval vessels are about the safest thing there is in the world. Well what happened then was that we went into a sort of limbo for about five months, mid July to mid December 1984, during which attempts were made to figure out if there wasn't some way that we could continue ship visits. Ship visits that were not important by the way to the Navy. It was out of the way. It was extra distance, extra fuel required to steam down there. But we wanted to preserve the principle that U.S. ships, nuclear capable included, could call there because after all this was a Treaty ally. We were obligated under the ANZUS Treaty to defend New Zealand and we needed to use everything in our arsenal to defend it, or might need to.

Q: Well we were also thinking of the presence of Japan, I would imagine.

TEARE: Oh, very much so. Japan and a couple of Scandinavian countries. Denmark in particular. Definitely so.

Q: Was this a clear issue that was sort of how the Labor Party almost defined itself?

TEARE: Yes. Well put. We knew it was going to be an issue. In fact in early '83 before I got there Lange had, soon after taking over the Party leadership, said something to the effect that he thought nuclear reactors aboard ship were pretty safe. The whole Left wing of his Party sniped at him so he lowered his head on that. So it was clear we were going to have an issue. Everybody knew it. The question was whether or not it could be handled in some fashion or other.

Over that period in the second half of '84 there was a lot going on beneath the surface. Both Ambassador Brown and I were in frequent conversation with four or five people in the New Zealand Government. These were career officials for the most part who had carried over. They didn't change with an election. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mervin Norwich, who had been Ambassador to Washington. The equivalent of the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, Gerald Hensley. The Secretary of the Ministry of Defense was Dennis McLain who later became Ambassador to Washington. The Chief of the Defense Force was Air Advisory Marshall, Sir Euan Jamison.

There were a few others as well but more junior policy advisors. These guys, the career New Zealanders, were given some latitude at least, not specific instructions, from Lange to go ahead and see what could be worked out in the way of a compromise.

Jamison, the Chief of Defense Forces, made a couple of unannounced visits to Honolulu to discuss the situation with Admiral Crowe, Commander in Chief of the Pacific. The direction that they were going was for the United States to find an innocuous looking ship that would nevertheless be nuclear capable. It would be advanced by us as the candidate for the first port call under the Labor Government and would be accepted by the New Zealanders without any public question or comment. But the New Zealanders would be able to say to themselves that it was an old rust bucket that wasn't bristling with weapons, its last deployment was not anywhere where it would have carried nuclear weapons in all probability so it was probably safe.

The idea was that once we had brought in one ship we could then bring in subsequent ones periodically with no great rush that would be less innocuous. So we would preserve the tradition and everyone would be happy. Specifically there would be no repercussions for Japan.

Now the Japanese state publicly that they don't want nuclear weapons in their ports and therefore they assume that the United States is not bringing in nuclear weapons on the ships that are home ported there or call there. And that's it. It is essentially a Kabuki play, I guess, is the right word for it. Or it is really a they don't ask so we don't tell sort of situation. And that's fine. That level of theater or ambiguity works in Japan. But it would not work in New Zealand because there everything is up front. You lay it out on the table. There is nothing hidden. It is all transparent and has to be.

So clearly this was not going to be easy to arrange. But the American career officials and Ambassador Brown and the New Zealand career officials nevertheless went plugging away in good faith towards some sort...I wouldn't call it a compromise. We would not have been compromising the NCND principle. But something innocent looking.

Our understanding was and the New Zealand career officials' understanding was that Lange was going to take care of the political side. He was going to convince the Labor party caucus, that is his fellow Labor MPs, that this was okay and if need be he was going to go on and convince the larger Labor Party and indeed the whole public of New Zealand that it was okay. Now how he was going to do that was never made clear and if I would have given it more thought I suppose I would have concluded that there was no way he could do that. But I was caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment, that we had something here and were going to make it work. And so we trudged along into December and by that time we had pretty well decided, that is Admiral Crowe and Air Vice Marshall Jamison had decided, on the specific ship that would be nominated. We were relatively optimistic.

Ambassador Brown had gone off on leave for Christmas so I was already to deliver the Note requesting clearance for our ship. I had made a call to, I've forgotten whether it was Wellington or Auckland, on some date in early 1985. I think it was to have been in March. So I was all set to deliver the Note about the middle of December when I got a call from the Foreign Secretary telling me to hold that off. They were a little worried, and the Prime Minister himself was worried, that if that document was sitting around Foreign Affairs over Christmas when the whole Southern Hemisphere, at least New Zealand and Australia, take off, that it might leak. They felt it would be better if it were held until January when they started to build back up toward the new Parliamentary and academic year. So I reported that to Washington and Washington said sure.

I know that the Australian DCM in Wellington picked up on what we were doing. That was okay because we had by then got authorization to discuss it fully with the Australians and the Australian consul general in Honolulu who was alert to things had become aware of at least one of Jamison's visits. So the Australians had put two and two together to figure out what was going on. And they didn't mind with this one exception that the Labor Government had come into power there in '83 after some bruising internal battles. It was committed to the ANZUS Alliance and to port access for nuclear capable ships even though it was highly unpopular with the Labor Left Wing over there.

So the Australian Labor Government's position was that however it worked out it was fine, provided that New Zealand did not pay any lesser price than Australia itself had paid. That is if Australia was going to accept nuclear capable ships then so should New Zealand. And if New Zealand would not accept nuclear capable ships than there had to be some price in it for New Zealand. This was a position that found favor in Washington.

So in December or early January the Labor Party, Lange's own people in New Zealand, began to get worried I think. They started putting pressure on him through letter writing campaigns threatening consequences if he were to cave on the matter of the ships. And at the same time there were positive inducements nominating him to the, what is it the Norwegian Parliament for the Nobel Peace Prize? Because of what he had already done in coming to power as I guess the first Government in any Western country fully committed to ending nuclear weapons and making his own country nuclear free! So these pressures were mounting on Lange.

Then he went off on an incommunicado holiday with, I think, his two sons. He took them up to the Tokelau Islands which is a New Zealand dependency. It is out of television range and maybe even telegraph range. He was gone for several days in the latter part of January while all of this was going on. His deputy prime minister, Geoffrey Palmer, had not been briefed on any of this and was giving out bland assurances that there was no possibility that this could happen.

I think other people within the Labor Government, the more conservative part of the Labor Party, might have supported Lange had he chosen to do something, in my view, courageous. They were not clued in either. So by the end of January, Lange came back to New Zealand. The last part of his trip was by air and a staffer had gone up with a bunch of newspaper clippings because more and more things were leaking, or at least suspicions were arising. So the New Zealand media had it.

By the time that the Secretary of Foreign Affairs said they were finally ready to receive the ship as requested the atmosphere had changed significantly. It had become poisoned against it and quite militant. And so I guess it was Ambassador Brown with me who delivered the request. Then Lange called us in a day or two later. With all the people I've mentioned present - Norwich, McLain, Jamison and Henslehe said in effect that he had hoped that the ship would be ambiguous enough for New Zealand to be able to state its conclusion that the ship was not nuclear armed and that they would not dispute that conclusion publicly. They would not dispute it, but they would have to make it public. That would be a political necessity. He realized that because he didn't want us to have to say anything publicly, but it would be New Zealand that would make the determination. Well we had told him that we didn't want anybody making determinations about our ship because that would open up larger problems.

Maybe this was two meetings down; I'm telescoping the two of them. But anyway he finally said could we, the United States, nominate some other ship instead of the one we had proposed. I immediately began shaking my head because I knew that was a non starter and I think everyone else in the room knew it was too. But Ambassador Brown said he didn't think so but he would indeed report the matter. That was the correct thing to say. And so he checked it with Crowe I think right away by telephone because it was still working hours in Honolulu the previous day. Crowe said no and we sent word back that we could not substitute the ship.

So technically speaking New Zealand never did deny us clearance for the specific ship but they asked us to substitute. That of course we couldn't do and I think they knew we couldn't do... wouldn't do. And so it has stuck there ever since. No U.S. naval vessel has called at a New Zealand port since the last one, pre-Lange, which I think was actually in '83. The change of Government was '84. This episode was in January '85.

But then the recriminations began immediately. Publicly. One of the most outspoken people calling for trade sanctions again New Zealand was a Republican Senator named William Cohen.

Q: From Maine? Now Secretary of Defense?

TEARE: Yes and I found this rather hard to fathom because Maine is about as far away from New Zealand as you can get and Cohen had the reputation of being a liberal Republican and so forth. Why would he get so exercised about it? I learned only in 1997 that he had been traveling in Asia and had stopped off in Honolulu and had a briefing on this subject from Admiral Crowe, and that accounted for his knowledge of the subject and I guess for his indignation.

But back in Washington others were getting very steamed up, Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, above all. But a lot of people were unhappy and or felt they had been betrayed. Just about everything you can imagine.

Q: When you get angry you want to beat up on somebody small rather than big!

TEARE: Well, yes that's true. But it was a very unequal combat because Lange was very glib, very clever, an excellent debater who knew how to play to the press. He would hold a couple of press conferences a week, one on a Monday and then one on Thursday plus others as needed. And Lange didn't have to clear his remarks with anybody so he would twist our tail in lots of different and clever ways. We would have to report his remarks back to Washington and wait for Washington to come up with some sort of retaliation and get it cleared. By the time we got it and used it Lange was into a couple of news cycles later and was doing it all over again! We never caught up and he gave us quite a pasting in the New Zealand media. It quickly died out as a topic in the United States I believe but it went on for a long time in New Zealand.

Q: I thought we might stop at this point and we'll pick this up. We've already talked about events leading up to the rejection essentially or non acceptance of American ships and how Lange afterwards was able to beat us up in the press and all that. But maybe we want to talk a little about the atmosphere for doing other things around January of '85 or so?

TEARE: Correct.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up then.

Q: Today is the 24th of September 1998.

We talked about the press the last time in New Zealand. Did you find the American reaction unhelpful? I mean I would assume people were sort of shocked and annoyed and there would be all sorts of articles in the American press which then would get replayed page 20 in the Boston Globe and page one in the Wellington Journal or something like that.

TEARE: Yes. The reaction by people back in the States was strong and up to a point that didn't bother me because I wanted the New Zealanders to be aware that they were letting down the side. I think I mentioned last time though that this came during a period when the Soviets had walked out of the disarmament talks in Geneva as a means of putting pressure on the Dutch and the Italians over the stationing of Pershing cruise missiles on their soil. Here was New Zealand of whom nothing else was being asked at all, just to continue business as usual, refusing to do so at a time when the Dutch and the Italians and others were taking the heat in NATO. So to that extent certainly the New Zealanders to my mind deserved to be told that what they were doing was damaging to the Alliance in our view. And it was that.

Some of the reaction on the other hand I think became too extreme particularly the proposal idea that New Zealand should be punished in the trade area for what it had done in the defense area. We had always tried to keep those separate and indeed I devoted a lot of time in the next two years in Australia trying precisely to keep them separate for other reasons. So I think that reaction was too strong to the point of being really irrational.

I don't know if I mentioned last time that one of those who called for trade sanctions, at least consideration of them against New Zealand, was then Senator Bill Cohen of Maine.

Q: Now Secretary of Defense.

TEARE: Cohen put out a proposal for trade sanctions. There were a lot of angry people. Weinberger and some of his staff in the Pentagon particularly. What happened essentially was a decision on our part that we would suspend most military to military relations with New Zealand and high level contacts. That policy was codified in a couple of different iterations and it became all the more entrenched after New Zealand enacted its policy into legislation. That happened after I left. I think it was in '87. This was done for the very clear reason in the minds of those in the Labor party who didn't altogether trust David Lange that it would be much harder to alter and indeed that proved to be true. That is the case down to the present time.

Q: From a pact point of view what was the role of New Zealand defense wise to the United States at that point?

TEARE: It was small in terms of actual current contributions. In fact I think you could say that in most respects in terms of hardware, operational capacity, interoperability, New Zealand derived far more from the arrangement than the United States did. We would send ships to visit New Zealand a couple times a year. When they did they would customarily exercise with New Zealand ships briefly. But a lot of New Zealanders came to the United States to take training courses at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Bragg, all across the map. We occasionally exercised on the ground in a tripartite manner with Australia also.

The whole benefit in those terms flowed to New Zealand because they were keeping up with the outside world. They were getting access to technology that they could not have developed on their own and couldn't buy anywhere else. It was not terribly advanced. It was a small force then and smaller today. But from our standpoint what counted I think was to have New Zealand on our side. They were one of the flags in Vietnam. They had fought with us in Korea and earlier in World War II we had made extensive use of New Zealand as a base of operations against the Japanese in the Southwest Pacific. So the importance for us was much more symbolic.

Our Navy should be able to go anywhere in the world in our view and suddenly it couldn't go or wouldn't go to New Zealand anymore because of the policies adopted there. And yet the concept was that if New Zealand ever came under attack, from what quarter it would be hard to imagine, but nevertheless that is what the Treaty said, who would ride to the rescue? Why we would! And yet our ships were not welcome there. So that was the real rub.

Q: I would have thought that the New Zealand military, the professionals, must have been pissed as hell about this.

TEARE: At their own Government?

Q: Yes.

TEARE: Exactly. And here is another irony, the people hurt most by the sanctions we adopted were precisely the career uniformed military of New Zealand, the people who least deserved it, if you will. But that was seen as, and I agree, the only realm in which we could legitimately retaliate.

Q: How about the Australians? What was their reaction to this?

TEARE: I think the Australians were rather dismayed because they had gone through some of the same domestic debates themselves and had come out on the side of preserving the Alliance. For the Australian Labor Party, by then in power since early '83, it was a particular problem because they did not want to see a Labor Government in New Zealand pay any lesser price for continuing the Alliance. So long as that didn't happen and New Zealand was appropriately punished, the Australian Labor Government was satisfied, if you will, in equity terms. But at the same time they were conscious, indeed a lot of people in Australia were conscious, that without New Zealand the Alliance was somewhat weaker at least. Cooperation with the United States on the one hand and continuing with New Zealand on the other but never with the two simultaneously, Australia was going to have a much more difficult time of it in military terms. That proved to be true.

Q: Was there, particularly because of wartime alliances, matrimonial alliances and all, was there a sort of New Zealand lobby in the United States or anything like that?

TEARE: Not a noticeable one, no. There were certainly some matrimonial alliances. We would occasionally meet such people but I don't think the numbers approached those of Australia and there were certainly dwarfed by the UK. That accounted for a little but I don't think there was any strong pro New Zealand lobby in the United States. There was more approval I think of New Zealand's policies from certain anti nuclear groups, including a woman named Helen Caldicott who is in fact an Australian by birth but was I believe on the faculty of Harvard Medical School at that time. She lectured and traveled widely and helped to keep the drums beating for Lange and Labor Party policy in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

Nasty though the rhetoric sometimes was it never seemed to translate into bad personal relations. We were able to get things done on other fronts with the Government of New Zealand without any significant disruption I would say. There were problems over access to the U.S. market for their beef and lamb. There was a question of chilled lamb versus frozen. The chilled lamb of course would be better because it had not been frozen and U.S. producers were trying to keep chilled lamb out, confine New Zealand to frozen lamb. That sort of thing.

It never got personally difficult.

Q: I was wondering on something like chilled versus frozen lamb and all. Here you are the American Ambassador in a small country that really depends on this. Did you find yourself taking the role of the American lamb producers as opposed to the New Zealand lamb producers or try to present it? I mean I would think this is where you could easily get caught up in trying to help this country because we had other things we were interested in.

TEARE: I was DCM not the Ambassador but the policy issues are the same. I would say I generally believed in what the U.S. was after or the individual U.S. companies or the beef producers made sense. I think New Zealand had taken a terrible hit when Britain joined the Common Market and eventually Common Market quotas began to apply to New Zealand exports, butter, cheese and so forth. That really undercut New Zealand faith in the British. They felt betrayed by that but they had never had any comparable access arrangements with us so there was nothing that great to be lost. They were rather seeking to gain.

Furthermore in that era and later, too, all of us, that is the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, were trying to get into the Japanese market. The U.S. was the spearhead on that and frequently our efforts...they didn't succeed all that often but when they did as on beef...served to open the door also for other producers so in my view New Zealand and Australia should have been grateful to us. Of course gratitude is not a plentiful commodity under those circumstances.

I don't know if we covered before though what actually happened and didn't happen in the way of relations with New Zealand.

Q: Why don't we cover it and we can always eliminate it if we have it.

TEARE: Okay. Just in essence. The visible military cooperation ship visits ended and so also did exchanges above the Assistant Secretary level in the international arena. But what continued was rather interesting too. First of all the signals intelligence business predated the ANZUS Treaty and if only for that reason was considered to be exempt. So it was not affected and cooperative arrangements continued.

Also the Antarctic Program continued and that relied on U.S. Naval aircraft flying in cooperation with the Royal New Zealand Air Force. We would do the flying in the early part of the Antarctic season because we had the planes with skis and then New Zealand would do the flying in the later part of the season when they could only use the land runway and wheeled aircraft. The Antarctic Treaty says everything South of 60 degrees South, or South of the Antarctic Circle I guess is a nuclear free zone. We had subscribed to that Treaty long before these problems came along. The New Zealanders therefore assumed, and correctly of course, that we were not introducing nuclear weapons into the Treaty area. Therefore it was okay for those U.S. military aircraft that flew to Antarctica and back to do so. Similarly Air Force planes would come through Christchurch, New Zealand, which was the Antarctic support base periodically and drop things off and go on to Australia and on around the world. Channel flights they're called. The New Zealanders did not object to that. Of course there were no nuclear powered aircraft and the cargo was assumed to be benign and civilian, and it was.

So the Antarctic Program continued and the Signals Intelligence Program continued. Those were not casualties of the rift. Then eventually after New Zealand passed legislation we came forward and formally declared that because our ships could not visit New Zealand we were unable to meet our obligations to the defense of New Zealand under the ANZUS Treaty and therefore those obligations had to be suspended. That is the way things remain to the present day.

Q: Technically or whatever you want to call it, New Zealand does not fall within any defense arrangements?

TEARE: Not of ours. Australia covers it. They have a bilateral defense agreement and I think the Australians would consider that they are still bound to the defense of New Zealand under the ANZUS Treaty but technically there are no U.S. treaty obligations for the defense of New Zealand now in force.

Q: Did this stand cause any...you mention on the political side the Labor Party in Australia but how about military to military, Australia to New Zealand...any sort of rifts there or lessening?

TEARE: I think the Australian military leadership was rather sympathetic to the New Zealand military leadership and quite disgusted with the New Zealand politicians. It did make Australia's life more difficult in the sense that instead of preparing for one annual Tripartite exercise they might have to prepare for one with us and a different one with the New Zealanders. It cost more money, staff time, and everything else.

Also there is a sense in Australia, and this persists to the present day, that by cutting itself off from the United States New Zealand is falling farther and farther behind the modern military world. Indeed as its force shrinks and its technical lag increases, New Zealand becomes more and more of a drag on everyone else and may in fact be approaching the point of irrelevance as a military actor. So from that standpoint the whole period now of fourteen years...thirteen years...has been one of decline. It worries the Australians.

Furthermore the Australians have counted on New Zealand to help in procurement of major capital items, the biggest one being frigates. In the late '80s Australia decided to build some frigates and it wanted New Zealand to help by buying some. New Zealand finally committed to buying two with an option for two more. The last I heard New Zealand was going to stand at the two, was not going to exercise the option for the third and fourth. I saw the first one. I stood on its deck in fact in Wellington in August of '97 when it made its first call at Wellington. It's called the Tekaha. Aboard that evening was the then Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jim Bolger, who is now here as Ambassador to the United States.

So that's the biggest single example but there have been others, including training. Australia offered to train New Zealand's pilots. Today, 1998, New Zealand wants more modern aircraft and indeed has talked about US F 16 or FA 18. The Australians have the FA 18, which would get the New Zealanders back closer to interoperability. But it's a real question whether New Zealand can afford any current generation aircraft at all. The answer may be no. And they certainly can't afford both that and a third and fourth frigate. Their manpower is reduced. I think they are down to about 8,000 people in all the services combined so they are heading toward footnote status.

Q: Well in a way one can say okay, New Zealand military looking where it is, who cares? But doesn't this also have in today's world certain political consequences because we are talking about more and more joint efforts to bring peace and stability around? New Zealand in a way would be treated the way we treat Fiji or something like that, or like Samoa as a sort of nice or interesting component in one of these peace things but it really isn't very important.

TEARE: In Fiji you chose an interesting example because in fact Fiji has been supplying troops to UN peacekeeping missions in several parts of the world for several years as a means of earning revenue as well as getting experience for its people. One of the problems, and I remember hearing this in New York at UN sessions where I was a note taker, Fiji is aggrieved because the UN and specifically the US behind it, doesn't always pay Fiji's emoluments on time. But there is value to us, yes, in having participants like New Zealand in multinational operations.

You remember the many flags in Vietnam of which New Zealand was of course one. And we still like that sort of thing. Just this year, 1998, the matter arose when President Clinton was looking for people to join us in facing down Iraq in the Gulf. One of those who answered the calone of the few this timwas New Zealand. New Zealand sent twenty special air services types and an aircraft or two and once there I'm told not only exercised and practiced with the Australians but also with us, our special operations people who were waiting around in Kuwait. In the end they didn't have to do much except show force. But the real point is that when Clinton was looking around for help and called the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jenny Shipley, he got an affirmative answer from her and that boosted New Zealand's stock in Washington by several points.

Q: Have we covered pretty well the New Zealand period do you think?

TEARE: I think we have, yes.

Q: If there is anything else you can always obviously insert it into this. So you left New Zealand when?

TEARE: In March of 1986 on direct transfer to Canberra.

Q: You were in Canberra from '86 to when?

TEARE: Until August '89.

Q: And what was your job?

TEARE: I was again the Deputy Chief of Mission. The previous one there, David Lambertson, had been pulled out after only about eighteen months of his tour to go to Korea as DCM there and specifically to be on hand during what was anticipated and I think proved to be quite a long gap between Ambassadors. So the Canberra job came open a little bit short of my three years and my early negotiations with Personnel had not shown that there was anything particular in store for me anywhere else so I put my name in for the Canberra job. The brand new Ambassador, Bill Lane, interviewed me. I think I was one of two finalists and I got the job. So we transferred over there as I said in March of '86. My wife was still recovering from a broken hip incurred in a riding accident in New Zealand in October '85, but we managed the transfer. We enjoyed the tour in Australia very much.

Q: As you saw it, I mean you had come from this place where really for a small country you had had a lot of controversy there and to arrive in Australia, what was the political situation and relations with the United States at that time?

TEARE: They were good. Relations were good. There had been doubt I think in the minds of a lot of the Reagan people, including Reagan's first Ambassador out there, Bob Nesen, about the responsibility of the Australian Labor Party once in office. In fact I think Nesen hardly knew anyone in the shadow Labor cabinet his first couple of years there. But Labor came in with Bob Hawke as Prime Minister and Bill Hayden as Foreign Minister and after a few months Kim Beasley as Defense Minister. It turned out to be quite a responsible government. It got along well with the Reagan people and later with the Bush people.

Lane was I would say a moderate to liberal Republican himself and he had very good relations with Hawke and cabinet. It was rather easy, in other words. I remember my first working day there. Lane was calling on the Prime Minister and he took me along. Our mission was to complain about something that Bill Hayden, the Foreign Minister, had said publicly about US policy in Central America. So we delivered the complaint. We had several other items of business. The whole atmosphere was very relaxed and pleasant. And then as we were going out the door Hawke pulled Lane aside and said in a stage whisper loud enough for me to hear it "Ah, that's just Billy mouthing off. You don't need to pay any attention to him, mate." So that was the Prime Minister undercutting his own left wing Foreign Minister, but off the record! So that was sort of the way things got going.

A couple of days later Lane had gone back to the States and I was Chargï¿½. The US bombed Tripoli and killed Qadhafi's daughter. And didn't we damage the French embassy in the process?

Q: Rightly so.

TEARE: They wanted me to go on television and talk about our action. I ducked that one. It didn't seem to me there was much to be gained in that. I had only been in the country a week or ten days and I forget who was to be speaking for the other side.

So that was sort of the way things went in Australia. There was usually something going on but many of the issues involved third countries. When there was dispute, and there was over trade matters, it was often very good natured. The Australians wanted to sell more wheat and of course we had wheat in abundance. They protested our market access policies. One day a bunch of wheat farmers came to the U.S. embassy and they brought television cameras with them. They wanted to have a little demonstration.

They cut open a sack of wheat and poured it out into a flowerbed and then another television crew arrived. They had missed the scene. So they asked the farmers to do it all over again and so the farmers good naturedly scooped up some of the wheat, put it back in the sack and did the whole pouring exercise again. Everyone went away happy. A few weeks later we had sprouts of wheat coming up in a bed of tulips outside the Chancery.

Another time an anti-nuclear demonstrator, an Independent in the Senate, Senator Jo Valentine, wanted to demonstrate against U.S. policy. I forget which particular one. She let it be known in advance that she was going to nail something to the door of our embassy. That got the Australian federal police worried because putting nails in the door would amount to desecration of property. We were a little worried about her intentions too. So we were watching out the window when she arrived in a taxi along with three or four of her Senate colleagues, a couple of whom were members of the Labor Party I think. They had brought their own door and they leaned that up against our gate and she hammered the nails to attach her position to that door and not to our door. The federal police were there in force and I think they were breathing sighs of relief!

I don't mean to suggest that it was all sweetness and light and theater, but Australia was a very easy and very satisfactory place to work. I have often said that there you could get information over the telephone from a government official in five minutes that might take you might five months or five years or you might never get in some other country by any means. The Australians were very open and set great value in the alliance with us. Our policies were similar, are similar, on a large number of issues. Not totally uniform in this regard; there are differences. But in the defense area it was solid.

In the trade area it was sometimes dicey. There were Australian politicians saying that if the U.S. did not give them more access to our markets for grain and meat and so forth they ought to retaliate by tossing the U.S. out of the defense facilities in Australia, which were always referred to as U.S. bases. This was a characterization that we tried to avoid because first of all they weren't bases in any operational sense. We didn't have troops or aircraft based there.

Q: They were basically listening posts weren't they?

TEARE: Yes, and secondly they were joint! One of the developments over my years there, '86 to '89, that I was very glad to see was a demystification of the joint facilities. That was the term adopted by the then Minister of Defense, Kim Beasley, now leader of the opposition going into an election here in just a couple of weeks, October 3, 1998.

Beasley, a good friend of the United States, an academic by origin, a shrewd politician, a good judge of public opinion, and farsighted. I think no one else, certainly no one on the U.S. side, looked down the road the way he did. He didn't foresee the end of the Cold War probably. But he did foresee a situation in which so long as the facilities remained shrouded in mystery they were going to continue to be the targets of the left wing of his own party, of Greens and others outside of the main parties. So what he did was to press us for a greater level of Australian participation in the management and direction of the facilities which we granted. He pressed for a more candid discussion through the media, through encouraging academics to write articles and so forth, to put before the Australian public what the facilities do. At least in general terms. That helped. It was a demystification, to adopt his words.

Q: Can you explain what the facilities were?

TEARE: Yes. There were and are several of them. The biggest and best known is the one at Tine Gap near Ayers Rock.

Q: Right in the middle of the continent.

TEARE: The red heart of Australia! Another one is called Narrungar. That is down in the northern part of South Australia. It was primarily Air Force. Both of those were, without going into further detail, ground stations for satellites collecting all sort of things.

The other facilities were not so much of intelligence value as actually of scientific value. There is one right in downtown Alice Springs, the joint seismic facility, which essentially collected earthquake data. Of course that has its utility in detecting tests but this is pretty far away from Chinese and Russian testing areas. All of its data went straight to the relevant department of the Australian Government, Minerals, I think it was, the scientific and research organization.

There were a couple more out on the West Coast, north of Perth, in Western Australia. One of those is called the Harold D. Holt communications facility and that one was very low frequency for one way communication with submarines staying submerged. Another one very near by was for the collection of solar data. It was operated by the U.S. military but it was essentially a scientific undertaking. There were other non defense related facilities including a NASA tracking station not far from Canberra, which continues to operate.

The Harold D. Holt station has been turned over to the Australians. The Narrungar station I believe is going to close in a couple of years. But Pine Gap is going to continue in operation and it is truly joint nowadays. Some of Narrungar's residual functions will be transferred to Pine Gap. It remains very important to the intelligence collection business.

Q: Did you find that you get into the sort of traditional problem of the military, and this is true of any, but American military where they don't want anybody to know anything of what is going on? This is good military posture but there is the political side of, you know, if you are going to stay here you have to be more transparent? Did that play itself out during the time you were there?

TEARE: No, fortunately that was not really an issue. And of course there is some civilian involvement in Pine Gap in particular. But the people involved were all very reasonable and I think we picked up from Beasley and came to realize that he was correct that the continued acceptability of the facilities on Australian soil depended really on a better public understanding on the part of the Australians. There were occasional demonstrations where people would try to get through the fence at Pine Gap either symbolically or maybe with intent to do some real damage. Those things were contained relatively easily.

Q: What was your or you might say the embassy's impression? While you were there it was the Labor Government, is that right?

TEARE: Throughout.

Q: Could you do a little compare and contrast with New Zealand and all as far as when you got there coming from the New Zealand experience? Did you find it a different bird?

TEARE: There are considerable differences. Most fundamental perhaps, is that while both countries are primarily English in background, and while the Anglican Church is, I guess, the most numerous in both, in the case of New Zealand the next largest population group was of Scottish background and the Presbyterian Church is next in line. In Australia the next source of immigration is Irish and the Roman Catholic element is very strong. That may explain some of the differences.

New Zealand ever since the early years of this century had had only a unicameral legislature and it had until very recently a system that guaranteed majority government just about. You could get sixty percent of the seats with forty or forty five percent of the vote and that is what usually happened. It was very easy for a government in power in New Zealand to get legislation through. In Australia the parties were perhaps more evenly balanced. There was an upper house that could delay legislation and indeed it was a crisis there that caused the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in '1975, the previous Labor Government. So it was not so easy for a government there to work its will.

In New Zealand, starting with Lange and continuing through both his terms, the remarkable thing was a vast transformation of the economy. I don't know if I talked about this last time. Nobody played according to form in New Zealand. The Prime Minister from about '77 to '84 was Sir Robert Muldoon of the National Party. He was in theory a Conservative but who in fact believed strongly in a managed economy to the point that when I got there in '83 they had controls on rents and wages, which were very unpopular. He was a State ist, you could say, whereas in theory he ought to have been a free enterpriser.

Lange came in and particularly his Finance Minister, Roger Douglas, swapped things around. They liberalized the economy, they removed the controls, and they started selling off government assets. They behaved like free marketers. Again, contrary to form! The transformation of the New Zealand economy from 1984 to 1990 was something to behold. It was until at least very recently being held up as a model to the rest of the world including Australia, which needs to do some of the same things. But Australia has stopped short in particular of liberalizing the labor market and of going after some of the areas such as stevedoring. The whole operation, the port system in fact, is full of featherbedding, heavily encrusted with union traditions and principles. The Australian Labor Party simply has not been willing to bump heads with the unions there whereas in New Zealand the Labor Government was.

So I guess Australia is slower to move, maybe a little harder to govern. Also in Australia there are strong state interests and that can affect the ability of the federal government to move on a number of things including taxation for example. So Australia is quite a bit slower, more ponderous, not given to dramatic change the way that New Zealand was in that era.

Q: Was there any relationship between Hawke and Reagan? I would have thought those two, both very tall and big men....

TEARE: Hawke is short.

Q: Okay. I was wondering whether there was any relationship there or not?

TEARE: Contrary to what you might have expected, relations were very good and I think it had to do a lot with Reagan's geniality and Hawke's own outgoing manner. Hawke and Bush got along too. Now maybe that is somewhat less surprising because they were closer in age. On one of Hawke's visits here during the Bush Administration he was invited to Camp David and he got to pitching horseshoes with Bush and it could not have been closer or more harmonious. Of course Australia put up a good contingent for Desert Storm and so forth.

Q: Bill Lane. Could you tell me a little bit about his background and how he operated?

TEARE: Yes. Bill and his brother, Mel, inherited from their parents the Sunset Publishing Company. Sunset Magazine is known today as the magazine of western living. For a long time they wouldn't sell subscriptions to anyone East of the Rockies! Now they do. They have branched out into several regional editions for the Pacific Northwest, the Desert Southwest. The parents had bought the name of the magazine from I think the Southern Pacific Railroad at the bottom of the Depression when it was a very different sort of publication. The parents, L. W. Lane, Sr., and his wife, made it into a going concern and the brothers took it over gradually in the fifties and sixties and built it up into a very valuable property with books. There is a whole series of cookbooks and How to Build Your Own Patio type books and they got into educational films and other things. They were both very much involved, still are, in Stanford University alumni activities and the national parks and all kinds of things.

They are Republicans, and Bill had supported Ronald Reagan. But in particular on some aspects of domestic policy, Bill was a good deal more liberal than the Reagan line. He had his own good connections in Congress. He had been to Australia many times and knew a lot of people there. He wanted the job and got it as Reagan's second Ambassador. He got there at the end of 1985. He loved the country and the people and moved around a lot. He was a very good outside man at developing contacts. One year at the Sidney Easter Show he got to be marshal of the parade and to ride a horse. He was also a great horseman. He got to ride his horse down the main street of Sidney to open the parade. He enjoyed life there.

As an internal manager of the embassy it was a different story. I think I'll leave that for some future time.

Q: One of the things we are examining is sort of the relationships of both career and non career and we are finding a very mixed bag so these interviews are not designed to show up things but I wonder if you could talk in some sort of general terms? I mean some people are better managers than others are. It is just a fact of life.

TEARE: Well I think in Bill's case, despite his vast success in private life...you know he and Mel later sold the company about a year after he finished for I believe it was a hundred and twenty million dollars to Time Warner. They got some in cash and some in stock. None of their children was interested in carrying it on. I think Bill was not altogether sure of himself in the position of Ambassador on the internal side. He didn't believe that the career Foreign Service was going to support him. That was very unfortunate. I tried over time to make him realize that it was in the interest of the career officers to make him look good but he didn't believe that; he didn't altogether trust us. Some people on the staff in particular he didn't get along with. We lost one Economic Counselor who got himself curtailed and out of there or I think otherwise might have been sent away.

It was difficult all around. Lane would try to get into the process. He would try to write his own Reviewing Statements on principal officers at the consulates. A couple of those I was unable to head off resulted in Grievances. A couple of people had their careers prolonged as a matter of fact as a result of having grieved Lane's Review Statement.

To the outside world he looked good. In dealings with his own staff it was not easy.

Q: I would like to examine a bit the role of the Deputy Chief of Mission in this because this is not unusual. In the first place a Political Ambassador would come and I don't know where in particular it comes from but the well was often poisoned beforehand. They are told to watch out for these career people who are some smart cookies who are going to try to run rings around you or do things to you. Those of us who have been on the inside know this just isn't so. Sometimes you get the wrong mix and you do get some people who sort of disdain the Ambassador, but generally you accept him and try to make him look good. Also there are strengths of people coming from outside. How did you deal with this?

TEARE: I'm not sure I had any conscious approach for dealing with it. I think I tried to soldier along day by day and to some extent interpose myself as a buffer between him and the rest of the staff and the principal officers. I generally talked to each of them on the telephone at least weekly and tried to let them know what to look out for. I tried to make sure that our reporting product was first class and to give him an opportunity to look at everything when he was in country although he often wouldn't read the incoming traffic. So it was not easy to keep him current on things.

I don't know that I succeed particularly but we lasted through that time and I have the sense that people were grateful to me for trying to maintain an even keel.

Q: I was wondering... with the Economic Counselor...were you saying to get with it? This is the situation...rise to the occasion and deal with it?

TEARE: I tried that. In this case however this guy was there when Lane arrived and in the ten weeks or so that they were together before I got there the die was cast. There had been a couple of exchanges and relations were already frosty. In another eight or nine months the guy was gone.

Q: What about dealing with the Australians at the state level. Was this left more to the consular posts?

TEARE: Well inevitably they saw more of the state premiers than we did. But, again, we tried not to step on each other's toes and to make it clear that we had no objection to their talking to cabinet ministers when cabinet ministers were back in their own constituencies and so forth. But the way it worked out in practice was that most of the federal business was done in Canberra. That was where ministers were to be found and when they were at home they didn't want to be disturbed. When I would go to one of the states where we had a consul general I would let him know, of course, that I was coming. I would ask him to set up appointments as he saw fit on the state governor, who was a ceremonial figure, on the premier, on other state and cabinet ministers and of course to go along. That seemed to work very well.

Q: Canberra has been the capital for some time but like Brasilia it sort of sits off there. Did this cause a problem or was it in a way handy? You could meet everybody a lot easier than if they were in Sidney or Melbourne or something.

TEARE: Canberra is an artificial capitol. Its location was chosen by compromise. The building of the city was supposed to start in 1912 or 1915 but was delayed by the First World War. The first bureaucrats didn't really arrive there until the late '20s and it was still hardly more than a village at the end of World War II. But it has grown and grown since and it is I guess now a metropolitan area of maybe 400,000 people which is still tiny compared to Sidney and Melbourne but it is getting there.

Australians generally tend to speak of Canberra very disparagingly both as a place to live and as a concept, sort of the 'inside the Beltway' syndrome. I found it not that way at all. I thought some of the best people in Australia had migrated to Canberra to work in government. I knew several three generation families in Canberra. It is becoming a real place. As I said a moment ago, the Feds, the federal politicians, tended to do their business there although they often professed to dislike it. There is a tradition furthermore that state premiers do not usually go on into federal politics. It has happened occasionally. The shadow Foreign Minister at the moment, Laurie Barrington, is a former Premier of New South Wales. But the more typical attitude is one that I heard and saw in print from Jeff Kennett, the Premier of Victoria, who is rumored to have federal ambitions of his own. He said a few years ago that there are two things in life you don't want, one is to die a slow death and the other is to go to Canberra.

That may have been disingenuous on his part but there is that feeling still to some degree. I have never been to Brazil but I don't think the animus toward Canberra is quite what it is toward Brasilia. I don't know about newer capitols like Nigeria's and so on.

Q: What about Australia? One thinks of this as being a very large country with these settlements sort of scattered around the coasts and a hell of a lot of nothing in between. Is it a hard place to report on? As far as we are concerned is the action pretty easy to take care of?

TEARE: Australia, and this I found hard to believe, is one of the most urbanized countries of the world. I think 85 percent. An even higher percentage of the population I believe lives within fifty miles of the coast. You have got five cities of a million or more in descending order Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide. And then there are a lot of other people on the coast up and down New South Wales and in Queensland in particular. There are not too many people in the interior.

Distances are vast. Domestic travel costs are exorbitant even after they encouraged some competition between a couple of domestic airlines. So we thought twice before committing to a trip around there. It was not that difficult to cover in the sense that people were open and willing to talk. The local media covered things very intensively and so forth. So for federal elections for example we tended to coordinate the reporting in Canberra. For state elections and local and bi elections the posts handled if they could. Melbourne would cover South Australia for example, Tasmania.

One footnote. The consulate in Brisbane has had a checkered history. It was closed by the Department of State in 1980 and ordered re opened by the Congress in 1983. This is one of those Executive Legislative disputes. There were seven posts closed in 1980, five of them in Europe. The other two were Mandalay in Burma and Brisbane in Australia. So the Congress in 1983 said to let all seven re open and they included special line items in the Budget for those posts. So Brisbane was duly re opened. The Burmese would not let us re open Mandalay but that is because they are who they are.

So for the first couple of years that I was there, '86 through '87 '88, that separate line item still existed in the Budget. I think it extended even to the representation. Brisbane had its own representation account, not under the control of the Ambassador. And now of course we in our un wisdom have closed Brisbane once again. That was the Administration's doing but I guess Congress went along with it this time.

We had only one American there when we re opened in 1983. We really needed two if we were going to make it a full service visa post, non immigrant, but I think the Department's hangdog attitude was shown by its failure to send a second officer. As a result we never did get back into the visa business in Brisbane so Queenslanders had to continue to send their passports to Sydney which bothered them a lot. Queensland is, at least in this period and I think still is, relatively booming. It is the fastest growing part of Australia in terms of population. There is quite a bit of industry now and investment. It would be a very good place to have an active consulate but we've shot ourselves in the foot once again by closing it.

Q: Did you notice the change in Australia as far as its opening the immigration policy and all that? Were you seeing anything different as far as we were concerned?

TEARE: The White Australia policy was officially jettisoned in the early '70s, more than ten years before I got there and of course the big influx of refugees from Indo-China took place in the second half of the '70s after the fall of Saigon and so forth. So by 1986 when I got there the Asian population was becoming noticeable. It was still very small in percentage terms, I think only around two or three percent and projected to rise to maybe four percent. But the Vietnamese in particular had congregated in some numbers in several areas. There is a town in the western suburbs of Sydney called Cabramatta, which is an aboriginal name. It was becoming known as 'Vietnamatta' in the popular press in the late 1980s. I think one Vietnamese had been elected a Counselor in the town of Fairfield, another western suburb of Sydney, by 1989. This was seen as perhaps a sign of things to come.

There was also of course the tension and guilt over the aboriginal population and what had been done to it. Again the figures are the subject of some dispute but its generally considered to be less than one percent of people with pure aboriginal blood.

So there was resentment of immigrants and the typical story that they are eating up the social welfare and they are all on relief, or the dole as they say there, which I think was exaggerated. So there was a sort of racism which has really flowered just in the last couple of years in the person of this Queensland politician, Pauline Hansen, and her One Nation Party which could be a factor in the federal election next month. That side was not pretty just as racism is not pretty anywhere. At the same time I was there for the 200th Anniversary of European Settlement in 1988 and a lot of people began taking an interest in their past, which frequently included convict ancestors and some miscegenation with aborigines. A couple of people at least published articles in the Sunday supplements about how their quest to discover their roots had turned up this convict or that aboriginal ancestor and some people seemed to be taking pride in it. So it was two edged, I guess you could say.

But my impression now ten years later is that the racism side has become uglier and is of more concern to the mainline political parties. Indeed the current Prime Minister, John Howard, has been criticized for not coming out earlier to criticize and combat Pauline Hansen and the policies she represents.

I should say that during the same period, the late '80s, Australia was becoming very popular in the United States. A lot of it had to do with the actor Paul Hogan and his film Crocodile Dundee which was a smash hit here and then the television commercials he was doing. Australian wines were being imported into this country in quantity. Other things were happening that gave Australia a higher profile in the United States.

Q: How did we view Australia vis a vis Indonesia? Here you've got that almost deserted northern coast and one of the most populous countries of the world and not a stable one. It is a difficult country out there sitting just to the North and I would have thought that we would have watched this relationship with some care.

TEARE: We did indeed and it again was a subject of considerable interest right at the time I got there. An Australian journalist named David Jenkins with the Sydney Morning Herald, a guy whom I had known in Laos in the '70s, published an article about Suharto, the family, their wealth, influence and so forth that got hyped up by a headline writer.

Q: You say they expelled some journalists?

TEARE: Yes and refused to issue visas to new ones or replacements. They were very unhappy about the article and things stayed rather frozen for a couple of years. They were beginning to warm again around 1989 when Try Sutrisno, the Commander in Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, finally accepted an invitation to visit Australia. He went on to become Suharto's Vice President in the 1993 to '98 term.

Anyway, Australia had six journalists killed, that is had suffered the loss of six journalists who were covering the takeover of East Timor in 1975. There is strong reason to believe that the Indonesian Armed Forces killed them quite deliberately. That was a major irritant from the Australian standpoint and one that is remembered down to this day. Despite that, however, the Hawke Government early in its tenure, in 1983 I believe, decided to accept the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. The United States did something similar. We have this strange formulation in which we say that we recognize Indonesian control over the territory without maintaining that a valid act of self determination ever took place.

Maintaining seems to me a strange word for it. Accepting would be more like it perhaps. But anyway we in Australia have done that but when you hear East Timor referred to otherwise the frequent tag line is "whose incorporation into Indonesia has never been accepted by the United Nations". Well that is true, but I think in practical purposes what was important was that Australia and the United States accept it and that others such as Japan and China not challenge it, which they don't.

So, Australia had mixed feelings about Indonesia just as Indonesia did about Australia and, yes, we did watch the relationship quite closely. As I mentioned, by '89 Try Sutrisno visited and the Indonesians had sent a very savvy ambassador, a journalist named Saban Seigyan who started to improve relations. But in '86 when I got there, due in part to the Jenkins article and the freezing of relations, things were pretty frosty. I remember going to pay a courtesy call on the Foreign Secretary, that's the senior public servant in the Department, and he kept me unusually long and got off onto subjects of conversation that I hadn't imagined he would raise. So the result was that our meeting went maybe half an hour beyond the appointed time. On my way out I saw the Indonesian Ambassador waiting to see him. I think what happened was that he used me as a device to keep the Indonesian waiting and demonstrate, or make a point, shall we say?

Well this goes way beyond my direct experience, but later on, in the '90s, Paul Keating, who had succeeded Hawke as Prime Minister, worked out a sort of loose defense cooperation agreement with Suharto and did it in great secrecy. We did not know that was coming. There were only four or five people in the Australian Government who were involved in the negotiations and I think a similar number on the Indonesian side. That came as quite a surprise, but we thought at the time that it was a good thing. One reason the Australians did it, I think, was to assuage any feelings of isolation on Indonesia's part because Australia has been involved for many years in a five power defense agreement which links it with both Malaysia and Singapore. So now there is something more like parity in Australia's relations with those countries.

But Australia in my time at least paid a lot of attention in intelligence terms to what was going on in Indonesia.

Q: Did we ever find our embassy in Australia sort of offering its good services for any problems between Indonesia and Australia or not?

TEARE: I can't remember that that came up. I think the Australians knew plenty about Indonesia and were fairly confident of their ability to handle things over time.

Q: Later you'll have, I'm sure, a closer view when you were in New Guinea, but what was the feeling about Australia's colonial or custodial role in the islands in the South Pacific?

TEARE: I had developed some feelings at that time partly because several people on our staff were accredited also to Papua, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and used to travel there. I did not. I never even saw those places until I became Ambassador in '93.

I knew some of the Australians who themselves were posted up there. I remember one of them who came back to Canberra after his first six months in Papua, New Guinea, for consultations and I saw him and I asked him for his shorthand appraisal of that country. He said he was "cautiously pessimistic", which turned out to be a very good characterization. The one point I heard in particular was that the Australian military contingent in Papua, New Guinea, a training mission of several hundred people, were not very successful with the Papua New Guineans because of the Australians' racist attitude. That came from U. S. officers who had observed them in the field and I later saw some of that for myself.

There was also a sort of a competition between the Australians and New Zealanders. To some extent they had different spheres of influence. New Zealand's influence was strongest in Samoa and in Polynesia and the rest of Polynesia. New Zealand having administered Samoa before it obtained independence. Australia was stronger in Papua, New Guinea, which it administered and the rest of Melanesia. But the Australians would say that they knew their way around the Pacific and were not ignorant and clumsy the way the Americans were. The New Zealanders would say they were much lighter on their feet than the Australians were and much more simpatico with the islanders than the Australians would ever be. And I think there was some truth to that.

So we were conscious of it, but it was not a subject in which we immersed ourselves. We were aware of Australia's participation in the South Pacific Forum and other bodies for which we were not eligible not being located directly in the Pacific. Some of our territories and freely associated states could participate more directly. We are and have been in the South Pacific Commission all along. We, of course, knew that the Australians were devoting a large percentage of their aid budget to Papua, New Guinea and other South Pacific nations.

Q: What about Tasmania? Is it just a little offshoot, the equivalent of Alaska for an Australian diplomat in Washington or something?

TEARE: I'm sorry to say I never got to Tasmania. I had a couple of invitations and it just never worked out somehow. The consulate general in Melbourne covered it. I don't think it's that remote. There are lots of jokes about Tasmanians being isolated and in bred and so forth. But not having seen it I find it difficult to say. I know plenty of Tasmanians and they seem to me like normal people. I think maybe the more ambitious ones leave and come to the Australian mainland. It is the seat of their Antarctic program, by the way, and there were suggestions that the United States as a result of its dispute with New Zealand over nuclear capable ships ought to transfer its Antarctic operations to Hobart. But Hobart is farther away from McMurdo Sound than is Christchurch and there would have been a lot of expense in relocating and the conclusion was that we didn't need to leave New Zealand for doctrinal reasons so we didn't. But I hope to get to Tasmania some day. I would like to see it.

Q: Were there any major issues between the United States and Australia during this time?

TEARE: Not that I haven't covered. The big one was trade. They wanted freer access for beef and they wanted us to stop subsidizing, through the export enhancement program sales of grain to what they regarded as their traditional markets in places like Egypt and so forth. There was a lot of back and forth about that. What I strove to do was to separate trade issues from defense issues as I mentioned earlier.

There were occasional calls for cutting back on the joint facilities. The leadership of the major political parties shared my view. The call for defense retaliation usually came from backbenchers in the Parliament, aggrieved wheat farmers or whoever it might be. I used to kid the Labor politicians and ask why did they care about wheat farmers, they were never going to vote Labor anyway; they always vote Liberal or National, the two parties of the Conservative coalition. But obviously the Labor Party couldn't ignore them. But thanks again to Beasley primarily we were successful in sort of removing the defense facilities as a subject of controversy.

Q: I'm not sure where the North American Free Trade Agreement was. There was one between Canada and the United States. We were seeing the European Union developing its own dynamics but particularly a concern about being a closed market. Australia is sort of outside this and the United States has its own market. Was this a problem that the Australians were seeing?

TEARE: Well, the Australians have been hurt by the Common Market. Not to the same degree perhaps that the New Zealanders were. But they've been sensitive about this at least since the early '70s and, as I've mentioned, wanted a bigger share of the U.S. market for various products. In general the Australians and we were on the same side in the international trade picture though.

I remember the Uruguay Round. The Australians were encouraging us to make it big and dramatic and we were duly reporting this back to Washington. Then Reagan came out with his proposal, was it in 1988? It said we were going to eliminate all tariffs by the year 2000? The Australians came back the next day and said that was too dramatic and would never sell, we'd never get the votes for that internationally or domestically. And I asked well which way did they want it? They urged us to be sweeping and dramatic and the President was and now they were saying it was too much. They should decide.

But also in that period Bob Hawke came up with the proposal for APEC, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. This took everybody by surprise, including his own staff. He developed this on a flight to Seoul in January 1989, as I've always heard it. He didn't staff it out with anybody. His own people who stayed behind in Canberra were dumbfounded when they read about it. He delivered it, put it before the world in a speech in Seoul, the first stop of a trip he was making through three or four countries.

So the question became what did it all mean? Hawke's original idea was to provide some way of implementing on a continuing basis the agreements reached at periodic meetings of heads of government and ministers of trade and foreign affairs. He said I think in that speech that we get rhetorical agreement but then there is no follow through and APEC he envisioned as a mechanism for follow through.

The United States at first was a little bit suspicious of this idea. There was some question as to whether it was going to include us but it was made clear that it would. Implicitly this was perhaps an offset to European Union. It was certainly a trade expanding device as we saw it. And from skepticism in the first few weeks the United States went very quickly to wholehearted support for it and indeed Secretary Baker made a speech by June of 1989 I think in which he almost seemed to be taking over the idea. I began to wonder if it was going to be co opted.

Well it wasn't and APEC has continued down to the present day. At first it was going to be without any bureaucracy then it established a small secretariat in Singapore in which our colleague, Bill Bode, was involved. Then President Clinton sort of upped the ante with the first meeting of APEC leaders at Blakely Island, Washington, in 1993 and that has now become an institution in its own right. When Clinton did not go to the APEC leaders meeting in Japan in 1995 because of the shutdown of the government here at home that became an issue. So traditions get established rather quickly.

The basic point was, yes, Australia wanted to be part of a larger economic bloc, if you will. It already had a very good relation with New Zealand, a closer economic relations treaty. But it wanted to lower trade barriers and indeed that has been one of APEC's pushes and of course the Southeast Asians have come to that only with some reluctance. But nevertheless APEC is a going concern.

Then there was the subsidiary problem of Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia wanting to establish EAEC as he called it, the East Asian Economic Caucus. This would have excluded the United States and Canada and maybe Australia and New Zealand but left Japan in with Southeast Asia. We didn't much like that idea and we have resisted it down to the present day. But again I think the crisis over the last year or two has put EAEC off to one side.

Q: We are talking about the financial crisis?

TEARE: The financial crisis of '97, '98.

Q: Well when this Australian APEC proposal came out originally was there a great scurrying at the embassy to figure out what he was after, what this was all about and that sort of thing?

TEARE: There was a certain amount of scurrying. Yes. Definitely. I remember a couple of sessions with one of the third echelon guys at Foreign Affairs and Trade, Andrew Vilek, about exactly what Hawke had meant and he had to do some scrambling himself to find out. But it quickly became rather evident what Hawke was driving at and as I say the United States went from reluctance to enthusiastic adoption.

The first APEC ministerial meeting I believe took place in Canberra shortly after I left. Things have come along with other initiatives in subsequent years including the Chemical Weapons Treaty. They like that sort of thing. They do it well. They generally line up their support. They have a very skilled Foreign Service and they are good at it.

Q: Did being part of the Commonwealth mean much at that time from the way we looked at it?

TEARE: Less and less. There were some Commonwealth exercises going on particularly trying to mediate things in Africa, South Africa and elsewhere. I recall just before I left in 1989 there was a Commonwealth ministerial meeting to deal with the issue of South Africa. My successor as DCM, Gib Lanpher, had just arrived. He was an expert on Southern Africa. His next post after Canberra was as Ambassador to Zimbabwe so he knew all about this and knew a lot of the players and I steered him over to that meeting.

Just before I left there had been a group of eminent persons from the Commonwealth. I forget now who they were except that the Australian one was Malcolm Frazier, the last Labor Prime Minister...sorry, the last coalition Prime Minister before Hawke came into office. Frazier has a reputation for arrogance and being difficult so the guys at the Australian Foreign Affairs Department refer to him as 'the' eminent person although in fact he was only one of a committee.

But in general day to day did the Commonwealth account for much? No, not really except maybe in sentimental terms. There has always been a certain streak of republican sentiment. Again it is substantially stronger in Australia than in New Zealand. Again another of the differences between the two countries. It has become considerably stronger in the '90s to the point now where I think Prime Minister Howard, who is himself not a republican, has had to commit to some sort of referendum on the subject. So Commonwealth means less and less in short.

Q: Were there any state visits or visits that were important while you were there?

TEARE: None at head of government level. I think there was some thought that Reagan might have liked to come but it was too much of a trip for him. Bush talked about coming from the day he took office and I think the original intent was for him to come in late 1989, which would have been shortly after I left. But he didn't get there until the end of '91 and that was the start of the famous trip on which he vomited in Japan and did serious damage to his re election prospects.

Dan Quayle came.

Q: The Vice President.

TEARE: In April 1989. In fact Bill Lane, who had officially said his goodbye and gone back to California with his wife, returned in order to be on hand for the Quayle visit. Then he left again I think even before Quayle left Australia and I became Chargï¿½ at that point again and stayed so until I left in August.

The Quayle visit was not particularly notable or successful.

Q: Dan Quayle as Vice President certainly by the American media has been portrayed as a lightweight. What was your impression?

TEARE: I saw nothing to contradict that. Furthermore he failed to keep to schedule and inconvenienced a lot of people along the way although this was after he had cleared Canberra. I didn't travel with him outside of Canberra. He stayed for a couple of extra hours of skin diving up on the Queensland coast, I think, and as a result was late arriving in Djakarta when President Suharto was expecting him at Merdeka Palace. One doesn't keep Suharto waiting. So my impression was, in all candor, that he was rather self indulgent and he was not particularly well briefed.

The first thing he did on arrival in Canberra was go play tennis while there was a group waiting to talk with him, people at the embassy, staff. So he arrived late for that with his hair still wet from the shower. That in turn kept the school kids, Americans, children of embassy people, waiting out in the cold where he was going to plant a tree on the Residence grounds which was one of the traditions.

The most fun was an Australian US ministerial meeting or AUSBEN in 1987 at Sydney. This was a successor to the ANZUS Council after New Zealand had disappeared from it. That was attended by George Shultz and Casper Weinberger and Admiral Ron Hayes who was CINCPAC at the time. That was a great event.

It was all sweetness and light for one thing and for the Weinbergers it was a sentimental journey because they had met on a troop ship going out to Australia in 1942 and had been married in Sydney. Everybody enjoyed it, banquets, toasts, and communiquï¿½s. A lot of good feeling!

Q: George Shultz's experience in the military...he was a marine who fought in the Pacific....

TEARE: Yes, he did. He liked it there too and they liked Shultz and Weinberger. And again this was a Labor Government but....

Q: The problem was that Shultz and Weinberger didn't like each other!

TEARE: Well, yes, but the town was big enough for both of them at least for those couple of days.

Then we had some drama at the end when the NCO from our Defense Attachï¿½ Office in Canberra who was in charge of passports overslept. He had switched hotels because he thought the place he was assigned to originally too noisy. Nobody knew how to reach him. The result was that the Shultz party took off without their passports. However they were stopping in American Samoa, I think, maybe Western Samoa, on their way back to Hawaii. Somebody else who was traveling straight to Hawaii from Sydney got there ahead of them with their passports.

Q: I'm told that to anybody who serves in Canberra the Coral Sea Day is always a big deal.

TEARE: Yes, yes it is. It is not as big as Anzac Day but in terms of U.S. involvement Coral Sea Day, Coral Sea Week for that matter, officially known as Australian American Friendship Week, is important. The Australian American Association organizes events in the capitols, state capitols. The United States always has a Coral Sea visitor who hops from one to another of these. Somewhere at home I have a list of all the Coral Sea visitors up through 1989.

One year we got kind of nervous. Although it sounds attractive it is difficult to get people to do it. One year the guy who came was Fred Fielding, who was White House Counsel. He didn't bring his wife, which was not good because there are banquets and balls. And furthermore there was considerable speculation that he might be indicted himself for something. So we rather sweated that one out. Another year it was John Marsh, the Secretary of the Army, who was not bad but was only found a few days beforehand after several others had declined the honor.

One of the most successful Coral Sea visitors of all time, not in my time, was Fess Parker. Lots of Australians had grown up watching him as Daniel Boone on television...or was he Davy Crockett?

Q: Davy Crockett.

TEARE: That was it. So he was a popular figure and apparently carried it off very well. Usually it has been an Admiral, government official, Secretary of the Army.

Q: When you left Australia in '89, whither?

TEARE: Back here to Washington.

Q: Doing what?

TEARE: I became Director of the Office of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore Affairs, the East Asia Bureau.

Q: You did that from '89 to?

TEARE: '92. Three years just about on the nose.

Q: Were you beginning to feel that you were being typed?

TEARE: Yes, sort of. Let me add a couple of things though first.

Late days in Australia...you talked about issues between us. There were as I've mentioned a few. But more often it seemed to me we were working cooperatively. In one instance after the Tiananmen Square incident in Beijing in 1989 we were definitely in parallel. We were harboring the physicist Fang Lei Ja in our embassy and the Australians for at least a few days were harboring somebody in theirs. This led to some EXDIS cables and again very close cooperation with people I had been working with in Australia for years.

The other incident that I wanted to mention, well actually a series of incidents, involved the firebombing of a South African diplomat's car at his residence in Canberra. It destroyed the car but didn't hurt a baby who was sleeping in the adjacent room and the attempted firebombing of two of our cars. One was the Defense Attachï¿½'s at his house and the other was a First Secretary's at his house. In both cases the bombs didn't really ignite or didn't stay ignited so there was some paint damage to the Defense Attachï¿½'s car and none at all to the other property.

But while I was there also, this was late '88 I guess, we received a threatening letter to Ambassador Lane, done in block printing on bright red construction paper or I guess it was photocopied in red. That letter came to me the way all of the non expected correspondence did. I immediately recognized it as something sensitive so I tried to keep my hands off it. I picked it up with a paper clamp and carried it over to the copy machine and made a copy right away. I called the RSO and he got the Australian federal police in.

There was a long investigation and it eventually led to the arrest of an Australian woman and her African husband. I think he was from Botswana although I am not sure if it was ever clarified. She was the more vicious of the two and she was eventually put on trial. In 1991 the Australians brought me back from Washington to testify about the letter. They also brought a couple of other people back. That was the one count on which she was convicted. The evidence in all the fire bombings was really circumstantial although I am sure she was responsible for them also. But in the case of the letter there were a couple of her fingerprints on it big as life and that convicted her. To my disappointment she was given a suspended sentence. She had already spent some time in jail awaiting trial, not the whole two years, two and a half.

Q: What was her point?

TEARE: Well, that the United States was in league with South Africa, the apartheid government there. That we were about as bad as they were and we all ought to suffer or at least we were fair game for symbolic acts. There was a South African...had been a High Commission in Commonwealth days, it reverted to embassy when South Africa was kicked out of the Commonwealth. It was very near our Residence and Chancery and then on a piece of vacant land near it was the Free South African embassy put up by a handful of people who opposed South African policy. Many in Australia opposed the policy but this was a handful of activists who operated this Free South African embassy. They had a placard out by the road some days saying, "honk if you oppose apartheid" and so forth. So there was this sentiment. And Kerry Ann Browning was her name, and she was determined to do something about it.

I was very glad to see that the Australians went to this extent in prosecuting terrorism.

Okay, '89 to '92 back in Washington.

Q: Probably this would be a good place to stop because we have already gone two hours. So we will pick up '89 to '92 as the country director for Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei. Okay? We'll do that.

TEARE: Fine. Good deal.

Q: Today is _____ 6th, 1998. Well, Dick, where are we now?

TEARE: 1989 to 1992, my tour as country director for Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore in the EA/P Bureau.

Q: What was sort of the order? This was the Bush Administration?

TEARE: It was all Bush Administration, right.

Q: Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia...who was the head of East Asian Affairs?

TEARE: It was Richard Solomon.

Q: Whom I've interviewed. He is pretty much a China hand.

TEARE: Yes.

Q: Did you find you were off in left field or something?

TEARE: I would say that we were in the middle or outer orbit, yes, because a lot of his time and attention went to China and then to Japan and Korea. Southeast Asia got less attention although more I suppose than Australia, New Zealand and the Islands. The East Asia Bureau had gone through a number of re organizations. Holbrooke back in the '70s pumped up the importance of the Islands and created a separate Office of Pacific Island Affairs under Bill Bode apart from Australia and New Zealand. And then later, after the Compacts of Free Association were negotiated with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, a third office came in. It was my old negotiating office transmogrified. It was the Office of Freely Associated States Affairs. So at one time there were three offices dealing with the South Pacific. Now they are all combined into one since 1997.

Q: I suppose the best thing to do is to go through these because these are all very separate places really.

TEARE: They are.

Q: During the '89 to '92 periods, let's take Indonesia first. What was the situation there?

TEARE: That was the biggest and it became the most complex. I imagine it would be hard to sort out the time I spent but I would guess that over the three years it was something like this: Indonesia 40 percent, Singapore 30 percent, Malaysia 20 percent and Brunei 10 percent. That is very rough but it adds up!

With Indonesia we were then in, I forget, but Suharto late in his fourth term and eventually his fifth term. We had a continuing series of issues. One of them, for example, was worker rights. Labor unions in the United States would regularly challenge Indonesia's GSP.

Q: GSP?

TEARE: Generalized System of Preferences, the break that Third World countries get or used to get for duty into the United States. The challenge from U.S. unions was that workers in Indonesia were treated badly, underpaid, underage, working under inhumane conditions and all of that. A lot of it was in the athletic shoe business. It would frequently emerge that the actual company in Indonesia was owned and directed by Koreans but those Koreans would be selling virtually their entire output to Nike or somebody like that.

The Indonesians would be...I can't even remember now the name of the body before which they were hailed but essentially they had to make a case to somebody here in Washington. Was it the International Trade Commission, the Federal Trade Commission?

The Indonesian approach typically was to shrink from any direct representation by them but rather to get their law firm to do it. So they had the firm of White and Case which is a big and expensive Washington firm. Their lawyers would come in with 75 page briefs which were not of interest to the Commission, or at least made little impact on the Commission. What we urged and finally got the Indonesians to do was to get a Minister here to appear before the Commission and make their case. I would have to do the research to be able to tell you for sure but I think the Indonesians managed to fend off sanctions, but it was something of a cliffhanger each time.

Q: We seem to be playing an ambiguous role talking about the Department of State.

TEARE: We thought the Indonesians were bad but not that bad. That the best hope of achieving reform in their practices was to have them keep their preferred status but under some threat so there was incentive for them to improve. Our calculation was that if they lost their preference they would simply go home with their tails between their legs and meanwhile of course some importers in the States would be at least inconvenienced and maybe worse. I don't recall that we had a lot of political pressure in favor of Indonesia. It was rather a case of trying to get Indonesia to put its own best foot forward or to polish up the shoe on that foot, if you would.

Q: I think at this point for the benefit of historians could you explain the role of sport shoes at this particular time in the United States?

TEARE: Well I'm not the sociologist of dress or manners but indeed it seemed to me that just about everyone under 60 or so was wearing them a lot of the time, including virtually all of the women at the Department of State, particularly the secretarial force. They would commute in their athletic shoes, their sneakers, and then at the office some of them anyway change into other shoes and that goes on, of course, to today.

Q: One of the things, too, is that these things were, particularly among youth, were endorsed by and highly advertised. I mean all sorts of things were done with them all of which to show that if you wore certain shoes you were really better than the person who didn't wear that particular shoe.

TEARE: That's right and Michael Jordan was and I guess still is the leading advertiser and endorser.

Q: He is a very famous basketball player. So this was a big social item?

TEARE: Yes and a big business.

Q: A very big business. Essentially the major manufacturers didn't manufacture them. They had the names and then they went to Koreans who went to Indonesia to turn out the shoes.

TEARE: That's right. I don't remember all of the brand names. I don't know the nationalities of the brand names but certainly Nike, Reebok, Puma, Adidas and a lot more.

Q: What about what we were getting from the ground? I mean this must have absorbed a good bit of time from our embassy going out looking at factories and that sort of thing.

TEARE: The embassy did some of that and there was a considerable degree of overlap between that and the Human Rights Report. That was always a big issue with Indonesia. Particularly because of the separatist movements in East Timor, in West Irian or in Irian Jaya and in Aceh in Northern Sumatra, and the heavy handed way in which the Indonesians sought to keep those movements under control or eliminate them if they possibly could.

That led to the single biggest incident on my watch. On November 11th, 1991, a demonstration by Catholic East Timorese in the town of Dili, capital of East Timor, caused some I would say rather raw junior Indonesian troops to panic. The troops pursued some of the marchers into a cemetery where, we don't know how many but probably 175 to 200, Timorese were killed.

Q: Good God that is a lot!

TEARE: A lot. That became known as the Dili massacre. It was the worst incident in Indonesia for many years before and since. It was, I think, in several respects a watershed. I think it caused Australia and the United States who had recognized with qualifications the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia to do some serious thinking and it got the United Nations back on the case. I don't want to exaggerate it, but soon after that the Secretary General was involved in brokering meetings between the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers working for some sort of compromise there.

The history is that East Timor had been under Portuguese rule whereas the western half of the island and virtually all of the rest of what is today Indonesia were under Dutch rule. When the Dutch gave up in 1949, the Indonesians took over, but the Portuguese stayed on the eastern half of Timor. It was only in 1975, after the fall of the Salazar Government in Portugal, that the Portuguese authorities literally bugged out of there. They stayed in Macao. I guess they had already given up Goa. But they left East Timor in a hurry. Left the keys to an arsenal with, according to the Indonesians, a group that came under Communist control. This in itself seems implausible, but Indonesia took the occasion to go in and occupy the eastern half of the island. Furthermore, Indonesia did so in December, 1975, right after a visit by Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger to Djakarta. Although I have not read Kissinger's memoirs on the point, I understand he denies it, but the allegation was that the Indonesians sought and obtained Kissinger's blessing and went ahead with the military occupation - Ford apparently being sort of a rubber stamp. That is, Ford probably didn't know where Timor was but he was President then. Also American weapons, M 16s. were used in the takeover and in fact that is a standard issue weapon now.

Q: This is Tape Six, Side One, with Richard Teare.

TEARE: FEDTALINE...I'd have to think back and work out what it precisely stands for but essentially it's the National Front for the Liberation of East Timor, some of whose leaders reside overseas in Australia and Portugal. Its best known figure, Jose Ramos Horta, shared the Nobel Prize with a Timorese bishop, Bishop Bellow, three or four years ago which outraged the Suharto regime.

As it happened our desk officer for Indonesia, a man named Larry Dinger, was planning a trip to Djakarta. He had just joined the desk; he'd been away from Indonesia for a year and a half, so it was his refresher. He was going to take a plane that holiday, Veteran's Day, 1991, to go to Djakarta. So I said he should keep on going and when he got out there to get on whatever investigating team Ambassador Berry sends to Timor itself and he did that. He spoke the language. Although circumstances were not the best, Larry and the embassy officer whom he accompanied out there went to the cemetery and were able to pick up some shelling casings and so forth. They did not get total or an independent account of the casualties, this was within the first week after the event. But they were confident that at least 75 to 100 people had been killed. They said that estimates of half again that or double that were entirely plausible.

The Indonesians didn't deny it. We urged them to do the right thing. To appoint an investigating commission, punish those responsible, and eventually Indonesia did that. It ended the careers of a couple of general officers including the major general who commanded that CODAM or military region. But at the same time the punishment to the actual participants, those who worked on it, was minimal, only a few months in a stockade. Some of the leaders of the march that had precipitated all this were given longer sentences for disturbing the peace and violating martial law or whatever the charge was. So in other words the victims, if you will, were punished more severely than the true wrongdoers were.

This was a continuing problem. I called in the Indonesian Chargï¿½ a couple of times and chewed him out and we made representations in Djakarta. Although the Indonesians made the right initial steps they didn't follow through and they were not in my view at all consistent in the way they punished the people involved. So it was a lingering issue and it is I think still remembered. It was one of the chinks in Suharto's armor and, of course, earlier this year he packed it all in in the face of demonstrations and the killing of a handful of university students in Djakarta, again by government forces.

Q: Prior to this Armistice Day, 1991 massacre what had been our attitude towards Indonesia? Policy towards Indonesia?

TEARE: Our policy for really 25 years before that had been that Indonesia was a bulwark against Communism in Southeast Asia. That was the original thought back in the mid '60s when Sukarno was forced out and Suharto took over. We saw Indonesia as a country with enormous problems but going in the right direction generally, particularly in economic terms, reducing poverty, raising the standard of living of much of the population rather dramatically, partly through employment at athletic shoe factories. But through other things as well. It had achieved self sufficiency in rice, which was a major achievement. Its population was growing fast. By the late '80s it must have been 170 million and now, today, it is 200 million or more...180 million in the late '80s, I guess.

At the same time it had a rather embarrassing human rights and worker rights record, as I've already mentioned. And that was something that we tried to minimize for some purposes, mostly public purposes, and something to work on them about in private. And I'm not sure that we were terribly successful there. But, for example, in the annual meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission or in the Donors Group, which is called the IGGI, I think, Inter Governmental Group for something to Indonesia, of which we were a member, we tended to overlook some of the worst aspects of Indonesian behavior. We believed that they were more likely to remedy their behavior if they were coaxed along than beaten. And I think in most respects that was probably true but it was usually a case of two steps forward and one step back with them.

Let me go back to the Dili massacre just for a moment because it is frequently alleged that similar incidents had occurred over the '70s and '80s in Indonesia and were hushed up and not only in Timor but in other parts of the country as well. That may be true, although I personally don't know of any that was of the magnitude of Dili. However, what guaranteed the prominence of the Dili incident was that there were some foreign journalists on the scene. Two of them were Americans, a man named Allan Nairn and a woman named Amy Goodman. Nairn had been a stringer for the New Yorker, I think, and Goodman worked for Radio Pacifica, which is sort of an alternative radio network.

Q: It is basically a relatively Left Wing organization.

TEARE: Yes. And there was a BBC cameraman, a television cameraman. So two things happened. Nairn and Goodman both got beaten up somewhat and Nairn had his head bashed with the butt of an M 16, or so he later claimed. They essentially got out of the country as fast as they could and were back in Washington within a matter of three or four days. The BBC cameraman had Indonesian troops coming in to surround him in the cemetery. He managed to secrete a roll of his videotape. He went back to the cemetery that night and got it and it was shown on the BBC. It is kind of murky, obviously he was not operating under ideal conditions, but you can see soldiers running through the cemetery pointing their weapons, you can hear gunshots. So it was pretty damning. The combination of his footage and the first hand testimony of Nairn and Goodman was more than enough to guarantee that it was a top drawer issue.

Nairn and Goodman in fact came to the Department of State and saw Assistant Secretary Solomon and a group of others of us. That was by arrangement I think through Senator Baucus and Bishop Paul Moore, retired Bishop of the Episcopal Church. No, maybe it was through Senator Wallop, because I think Moore and Wallop are cousins. But whatever the case....

Q: Wallop is from where?

TEARE: Well Wallop was from Wyoming. Moore had been, I think, the Auxiliary Bishop of New York and was now retired. He was a Marine Corps veteran.

Moore had been active in organizations critical of Indonesia's human rights policy for a number of years.

What they wanted to do was get maximum attention to this gross violation by Indonesia and they succeeded in doing that.

The Indonesian Ambassador to the United States at that time was Abdul Rachman Romle, who was a guy from Sumatra, a Batak as they are called. I had worked with him for two years plus at that time and knew him quite well. He was supposed to leave Washington at the end of 1991 and very much wanted to do so. He wanted to get back to Indonesia. He had been gone for several years and wanted to be around his grandchildren and so forth.

I organized a farewell luncheon for him in Solomon's name or the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ken Quinn, I guess, by that time. Then there was an Indonesian community farewell reception for him at the embassy about two days before he was supposed to leave. During that reception he got a call from the old man, Suharto, in Djakarta, asking him to stay on to help deal with the public relations fallout of the Dili massacre. The Indonesians had already planned to renovate Romle's residence and his successor was going to go into rented quarters. So Romle wound up staying virtually another year. He had already moved out of the house and he went into the rented quarters out in Bethesda somewhere. He was pretty unhappy about the whole thing, but it demonstrated that what Suharto wanted, Suharto got, and this guy was one of Suharto's old associates.

Q: The accusation comes up quite often that the Department of State doesn't like to see things change. You know, it generally keeps on course and if you have something like a horrible massacre and all it generally wishes that it would go away...there is a certain inertia and it takes almost outside forces to make a reaction. Did you find sort of the establishment above you really didn't want to hear this?

TEARE: No. I think that the establishment recognized the problem and I think it comes back to the dilemma we faced in so many countries over the years. Do you deal with the people who are there or do you try to encourage alternatives? In general we have dealt with, and in reality I would say we usually have little choice, but to deal with the people who are there...Brezhnev, Mao Zedong, you name it. Now granted there are cases where we have been more comfortable with bad guys, if you will, the Shah of Iran or Ngo Dinh Diem, or somebody than with other less conservative, less comfortable people. But not that we should have been comfortable with Diem or the Shah or anybody like that. But we simply can't go around breaking governments when we feel like it. We tried that in Vietnam after Diem and it didn't work very well. It was one thing to get a government out it was something else again to put in a satisfactory substitute.

So our emphasis with Suharto, and as I said in a previous session about Ferdinand Marcos during my time on the Philippine desk, was to try to get them to clean up their act rather than to deplore publicly what they had done or to go around courting alternatives.

Q: What were we doing other than talking to the Indonesians, saying isn't this awful and so on?

TEARE: I think one thing we did, certainly in the AID Program, was to channel quite a bit of it to non governmental organizations that were either implicitly or explicitly critical of the Indonesian Government. They were doing things that we thought ought to be done such as environmental protection, legal rights. I can't remember now the acronym for one legal organization in Indonesia that was quite courageous and worked on behalf of a lot of interests.

Another issue with Indonesia was trade unions. There was one authorized trade union and the Indonesian Government effectively prevented the formation of any others. That was of concern to the U.S. Government, to the AFL CIO, to everybody. Again, we worked on that.

We also tried, and this has become much more controversial in the last year or two, to shape the Indonesian military, the armed forces. We would bring officers to the United States, a couple of hundred a year at the peak, to send them to professional training at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Campbell, any of the service schools but particularly the command and staff colleges. This was to increase their professionalism but also to inculcate in them some idea of a functioning democracy and of civilian supremacy over the military and so forth. This was considered particularly important in the case of Indonesia because of the very prominent role of the armed forces in civil administration as well as in military affairs. Typically the provincial governors are military officers. The whole area has a mission known as drie funcse, two functions, civil and military.

Romle, the Ambassador to Washington whom I mentioned, had been consul general in New York, but before that he was a major general. He had also helped clean up the national oil monopoly after some scandal back in the '70s. So the military was all over the lot, if you will, in government, politics, and administration in Indonesia. Suharto of course being a four star general.

Q: What about the administration of what do you call it, Irian? I want to say New Guinea.

TEARE: It became a Province of Indonesia, the 27th Province, I believe. I can't remember the year. I think it was in the earlier '80s, before I came on the desk. Again something we were very much aware of was Indonesia's policy of transporting Indonesian people, mainly Javanese, that is ethnic Malay people, to Irian Jaya and settling them in towns around the coast and giving them some agricultural land. This was to dilute the original Melanesian population of about half the island.This is a formal policy of transmigration that the Indonesians have used to send Javanese to many of the outer islands, not only to Indonesianize them as in the case of West Irian, but to relieve some of the population pressure on Java, which I think has 120 million people.

Q: Well when you do that in a way this doesn't sound like our business?

TEARE: No and I think you could argue that it is not. Except that, again, we have to look at the annual Human Rights Report, and for other purposes, we would find that indigenous people in West Irian were being dispossessed of land claimed historically by their tribes. They were being sent away from the coast and to maybe less desirable areas, more malaria, that sort of thing. The Javanese were being favored even if some of them really...well I think transmigration is essentially voluntary but I'm not sure the poorer Javanese were given a lot of choice in the matter either.

Those were internal policies of the Government of Indonesia. It is not too easy to complain about those except maybe when they wind up constituting what is arguably a violation of somebody's human rights.

Q: Well as we were looking at Indonesia it certainly was in the last year or so with the overthrow of Suharto, but it must have been obvious prior to that, the corruption particularly of Suharto, his family and entourage. How did we view that?

TEARE: I think we viewed it as unfortunate and undesirable but maybe ultimately part of the price, I don't mean literal price, that we paid for good relations with Indonesia. Indonesia among other things back in the '70s had supplied observers for Vietnam when the Paris Agreements came into effect. The original four were Canada, Indonesia on the western side if you will and Poland and Hungary on the Communist side. Canada pulled out in calculated frustration and was replaced by Iran as I recall. But Indonesia stayed throughout.

We saw Indonesia as essentially a constructive actor. Indonesia tended to be looked to by the other countries of Southeast Asia as their natural leader. This was particularly true after Lee Kuan Yew retired.

Q: From Singapore.

TEARE: Of Singapore...moved upstairs to become senior minister in 1990. Suharto, given his style, was never a dynamic leader of ASEAN or anything else. Dr. Mahathir of Malaysia, who is so much in the news right now as he fires and then persecutes his Deputy, former Deputy, I think, began to figure that if Suharto was to leave a vacuum he, Mahathir, ought to step forward as the leader of ASEAN.

Q: What about things like the environment, the cutting down of trees and all? Was this of concern during this particular time?

TEARE: Yes it was and it is. I think we did not have a lot of money or other tools under our direct control but we certainly did favor the work of NGOs and indeed there are some people in Indonesia who themselves want to conserve forests and habitat and so forth. One of the more dramatic that crossed my desk anyway was the plight of the orangutan and specifically in the Indonesian part of Borneo there is a sanctuary for orangutans directed by a woman, Dr. Birute Galdikas, who I think is Latvian in origin, a Canadian citizen. She draws much of her funding however from sources in the United States. She is to orangutans what Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey were to other primates.

Galdikas and her sanctuary came under threat. The Provincial Governor wanted to take over the land I suppose for plantation crops and Galdikas and her supporters mounted a very effective campaign of letter writing about the scientific merit of keeping orangutans safe and under study. They sent letters to leading academics and institutions in the United States which in turn would write to us forwarding the letters and so forth. What we did mainly was to redirect a lot of that to the Indonesians, to the embassy and direct to the Government in Djakarta, which for all its failings nevertheless had some sense of public relations and I think was under retreat from all this scientific eminence. It wasn't only from the U.S., I'm sure, but from the Netherlands, UK and elsewhere. Finally it called the Governor off and I think Galdikas was left pretty much with what she had to start with and was spared.

Q: Were there any problems with American tourists going there? This was a prime spot, Bali and other places, for people who wanted to get a little away from the normal tourist spas and all that.

TEARE: I don't remember any particular problems apart from Timor from November '91 onwards. I'm not sure we even had to adjust any Travel Advisories up until then, the first two years I was there.

Q: We weren't losing our tourists, having problems or anything like that?

TEARE: No, I don't think so. There may have been occasional incidents but Indonesia is not a bad place for crime. No. No particular problems.

Q: Were we a prime mover in the international world or was Australia sort of a co equal or other countries at putting pressure or more sway or whatever you call it on the Suharto Government?

TEARE: I think we were probably the biggest single factor on Indonesia. But Indonesia was never more than a relatively minor preoccupation for us whereas for Australia it's the big neighbor and potentially the threat immediately to the North. I suppose you could say that for somewhat different reasons Indonesia occupied about as much of Australia's time and attention as the Soviet Union did of ours. But I'm not likening Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

Q: No. No. But I would think with a population you say exploding there, and you've got this big empty coast to the South in Australia, that can't help but someone looking down the road to feel a bit nervous.

TEARE: Yes, of course that begs the question that who would want to live in most of Northern Australia, its swamp or desert and no facilities, no nothing. But theoretically, yes, it would be Lebensraum for Indonesians. In fact most of the immediate contact had to do with fishing and with Indonesian crews coming in searching for mother of pearl and that sort of thing. The Australian approach typically when they confiscated or seized an Indonesian fishing boat in their waters was to bring it in to Darwin or another port. Burn it down to the water line and send the crew home by air, but they might be back again in a few months in another boat.

I think I also mentioned in a previous session that because, among other things, of the Australian journalists who were killed in Timor in 1975, Indonesia was a big issue for Australia. During the time I was there, and then on the desk, there was that article about the Suharto family by David Jenkins in the Sydney Morning Herald in '86 that led Indonesia to suspend ministerial visits for a couple of years.

But Australia has an approach toward Indonesia I think rather like ours and, of course, more developed and nuanced because their relations are denser and that is to try to encourage the better tendencies in Indonesia and ignore or discourage the worse ones.

Q: How effective do you think the Indonesian embassy was in Washington?

TEARE: Quite ineffective. I'm glad you brought that up because the contrast between Indonesia and Singapore could not have been starker. Singapore had, I think, only eight or nine substantive officers in the embassy but they were all of them hyperactive. They covered State, Pentagon, NSC, and the Hill with terrific energy and great effectiveness. Indonesia, on the other hand, was shy, shrank from confrontation, and sometimes took refuge in the language although I think that virtually everybody assigned here spoke English reasonably well. Indonesia simply wouldn't do it. They took refuge behind their lawyers, as I mentioned. I think they had a public relations firm for awhile. They were whatever the opposite of proactive is, usually inactive I guess.

Q: You say one of the great factors in Indonesia when you look at it down the road is the birth rate. This is the Bush Administration and there is a strong force, in the Republican Congress anyway, opposed to efforts toward birth control basically. Did you find yourself up against this particular problem?

TEARE: No we didn't. The Indonesians are considered to have been quite successful themselves in family planning, to the point where President Suharto got an award from the United Nations, I think in 1989 shortly before I joined the desk, for his efforts in that direction. So if we think the population is enormous today think what it might have been without the efforts of the Suharto regime in the '70s or '80s. It might be 300 million! That is probably an exaggeration. But Indonesia had a pretty successful program of its own which was relatively quiet. I don't know that it was dependent on U.S. help to any significant degree. The rate of growth has declined from whatever it was...3.5 down to 2.2 or something like that. But with a population base that size you are going to keep on growing for quite some time.

Similarly, perhaps, it is worth noting that a specific cabinet minister, Emil Salim, got an award in 1990 from the World Wildlife Fund for his efforts at environmental protection.

So the picture with Indonesia was never all bad and in many respects it was pretty good. There was certainly growing prosperity. You could see it by '89 in the clogged streets of Djakarta and Surabaya. But it is also true that the distribution of income was not all that good and that too much of it was going to the Suharto family. Of course a lot of the economy was in the hands of that and the Chinese.

Q: What was our estimate of 'whither Suharto at this particular time?

TEARE: Our estimate was that Suharto would stay as long as he chose to. He probably wanted to die with his boots on. By the late '80s or early '90s, anyway, when the problem of family corruption had become so evident and so serious, he probably wanted to remain in office if only to protect his children from prosecution and retribution for their money grubbing ways. Their illegal practices, their kickbacks and forced acquisition of equity in companies with no investment by them and so forth.

All of this suggested of course that there was a day of reckoning for which Suharto was not really planning effectively. That is, he could protect the family as long as he was alive and in office but when he died what would happen? Also it was quite evident that he was not grooming a successor. He didn't want anybody out there that could conceivably challenge him. Thus he tended to change Vice Presidents each term and also to sidetrack other people who showed signs of getting too strong.

The people he kept around him, people like Foreign Minister Alafas who is I think a brilliant man and a very skilled diplomat, or Merdeonjo, who was the State Secretary I think from '87 through '97. These were people who would serve him faithfully and skillfully who weren't necessarily totally committed to him ideologically, who would recognize at least when pressed that there were faults in the regime. But they did not threaten him and continued to serve him loyally.

Somebody else, like the last Vice President, Try Sutrisno, not a charismatic figure at all but apparently acceptable to all and not unacceptable to anyone with considerable support in the armed forces, was dropped after one term. Suharto then brought in Rudy "B J" Habibie as Vice President and now Habibie is the President upon Suharto's resignation.

Q: What about financial matters? Today in 1998 we are looking at sort of a collapse of almost the whole Asian system and Indonesia is certainly one of those. Bad investments, banks, resorting to cronyism, just basically a mess. Were you getting much on the economic concerns during this time?

TEARE: I think we knew for example that a lot of the banks were closely tied in with the Suharto family or with cronies of the President. We certainly knew about cockamamie industrial projects and areas of potential corruption. For example, one of the Suharto sons had a company that was awarded a license to collect the annual tax on all television sets in the country. I think that contract was rather soon rescinded under pressure, but that was the sort of thing that went on.

We were certainly aware of the corruption and to some degree of the fragility but I don't think we then or indeed anyone in 1997 predicted the collapse that we have seen.

Q: Moving on from taking 40 percent of your time let's move to Singapore and 30 percent. Singapore is a pretty small place. What were we concerned about there during your time of '89 to '92?

TEARE: There was one particular issue that had started rolling a few months before I got there and that was access for U.S. Forces to military facilities in Singapore.

In early 1989, while he was still Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew had come forward with a proposal that the United States use facilities in Singapore under terms to be defined. As I understand it his essential motive for doing so was that he wanted to take the heat off the Philippines. At that stage the Philippines was negotiating with us for a new military bases agreement replacing the agreement of 1947 and there was some significant opposition to our substantial presence at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base.

I think Lee Kuan Yew's intention was to show the Philippines and the rest of the world, the rest of Southeast Asia at any rate, that they were not alone, that there was another country quite willing to host U.S. Forces. Not necessarily basing operational forces as we have in the Philippines but other facilities, lesser facilities, and to make some money in the process because Singapore always likes to do that. Off of ship repair, off of rentals, whatever it might be.

So by the time I got to the desk in September of that year negotiations were going on. I think they turned out to be more protracted than Singapore had imagined then. Our approach to things such as criminal jurisdiction and avoidance of the death penalty for our servicemen and so forth led to certain complications. But I believe by the late summer of 1990 we had the negotiations pretty well wrapped up including a classified Status of Forces provision. The agreement in the end was signed in Tokyo by Vice President Quayle and Lee Kuan Yew himself. I believe it was at the funeral of Emperor Hirohito...but it might have been the installation of Emperor Akihito, I've forgotten which. Anyway it was something that called for Quayle and Lee both to be there. President Bush did not go.

This is a little sidelight and it says something about atmosphere within the Bush Administration. Quayle's people, particularly someone on his foreign policy staff, checked with me and others beforehand because they thought that Jim Baker was trying to set Quayle up for a fall by having Quayle sign this document with Lee Kuan Yew. I think it also reflects a lack of sophistication on the Quayle staff. They didn't know that this Singapore thing was something important that all the Administration wanted.

Q: Jim Baker was our Secretary of State. It does point out that they didn't know what it was.

TEARE: That's right. They thought it was some sort of trap for Quayle that Baker was trying. But anyway, I think we convinced them rather quickly that there was no such problem. The agreement was signed and went into effect and has worked quite smoothly and indeed the installations that we use and the number of people we have there has grown. We now have the Commander of Naval Logistic Forces, West Pacific, COMLAW WESTPAC, which has a one star Admiral at its head. We've got a year round Air Force Unit that supports F 16s which come in from Japan five or six times a year to conduct exercises with the Republic of Singapore Air Force. A couple of other things have gone on in or through Singapore that the world is not yet ready to have revealed. It has worked out quite satisfactorily.

In 1991, the Philippine senate rejected the new bases agreement with the United States and Mt. Pinatubo erupted practically wiping out Clark Air Base. By 1992 we were all gone from the Philippines. But we still have access to facilities in Singapore.

Q: You were part of the Asian Bureau. I would have thought there would have been a certain amount of relief to get out of the Philippines thing. Wasn't there at least on the State Department side?

TEARE: Yes, in a word, because relations with the Philippines over the bases had been a headache as I experienced myself from the early '60s on through the late '80s, although I was not working on Philippine affairs in 1989 to 1992.

Q: But you were part of the Bureau?

TEARE: Yes I was around the corner and attended staff meetings all the time.

Q: The bases are almost a complicating thing in our relations with the Philippines. If it weren't for the American military... although it had been important the time had come....

TEARE: Well I don't want to draw over simplified distinctions. We in State saw the value of the bases and people in Defense, certainly the Commanders and the lawyers, saw the liabilities. It was never one versus the other. I had worked on the 1979 Amendment of the MBA so I knew the issues rather well and how they could complicate our lives. But a big difference, of course, is having bases of your own in another country versus using somebody else's bases in their country as a guest. That is what we wound up doing in Singapore.

Q: You had been dealing with the area over quite a period of time. '89 to '92 is a period which will go down in history as essentially the collapse of the Soviet Union and events in Europe. But the main thing was the Soviet Union no longer existed by the end of that period. Did you sense a difference during this time in how we were looking strategically at the area? I mean a shift in our thinking sort of geographic wise?

TEARE: Possibly but not very much. Let me backtrack one minute on the bases in the Philippines. When I was doing the negotiations in '78 '79, the view from the Pentagon was, at least as I understood it, that Clark was nice to have but Subic was indispensable. More for the ship repair facility than anything else. By the later '90s when I went to CINCPAC as the Foreign Policy Advisor, what we missed most was the Kro Valley aerial training range associated with Clark and we were looking for alternatives there. Subic is no longer so much regretted. Somehow we've managed to keep the much smaller fleet afloat without it.

Now coming back to your question about the strategic view with the collapse of the Soviet Union. I don't think that the ramifications had really changed our view of that part of the world. We had not seen the Russians, the Soviets, as much of a force in Southeast Asia for a long time if they ever had been. The collapse of the Soviet Union didn't necessarily change our view of China and its influence in the region or at least not to any degree that I was aware of. So I think that the short answer to your question is not much changed.

Perhaps of more impact around Southeast Asia was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. I was in Brunei when the invasion took place. I had gone out on Secretary Baker's plane to the ASEAN Post Ministerial Meeting in 1990 and had stayed on in the region to visit other posts. I was due to give a talk at the University in Brunei with a heavily political military audience including some British and other expatiate instructors. I tried to draw certain parallels for the Bruneians between their situation and Kuwait. For example a small oil rich country with larger, much more powerful neighbors. Two kingdoms, sultanates, if you will, sheikdoms, whatever Kuwait is or was at that time and, hey, you're both vulnerable, this is a bad sign, there are strains within Islam that can be dangerous, so on and so forth. I think the Bruneians were rather skeptical and I of course didn't know and I think Baker had just scrubbed his hunting trip in Mongolia and flown on to Moscow to meet with his Soviet counterpart. I didn't know what the response was going to be although I hoped to hell the United States would respond in some fashion. This, again, was in early August 1990.

Eventually of course we did put together the coalition, first Desert Shield and then Desert Storm and everybody knows the outcome there. I'm not sure the Bruneians drew much of a message from it even so.

We found that in the Desert Shield Desert Storm period there was considerable ambivalence on the part of the Indonesians in particular, Malaysians also, about supporting us and the coalition and Kuwait against the Iraqi invaders. Even though you might think those countries would have had ample reason to sympathize with Kuwait and with the more moderate Islamic world. We found that was for a couple of reasons at least one was that Saudi Arabia represents something of a bugbear for Indonesia and Malaysia. First of all, over time, the Saudis have tended to look down on Islam as practiced in Southeast Asia as being too relaxed and permissive. The Indonesians and Malaysians are quite conscious of that.

Another reason was that during the Hajj in 1989 or 1990 there had been a tragic accident in which a tunnel collapsed and several hundred pilgrims were killed, buried alive, suffocated. A lot of them were from Indonesia and some were from Malaysia. The Saudi Government had promised consular access to the corpses for Indonesia and Malaysia both and instead buried all the bodies before consular officers from those countries could get to the scene. So there was some animosity.

Also there was a certain amount of republican feeling, anti royal feeling, directed particularly at the Saudis from Indonesia and Malaysia. So it was not all smooth. And I think there was a belief, and this later became evident in the attitude toward Bosnia, particularly in the case of the Malaysians, that the United States was only interested in preserving oil and the flow of oil and was not interested in protecting Moslems per se. Which again, I think, is more a reflection of the Malaysian outlook on things than of anything else.

Q: Did you find yourself in the position of supporting our efforts to drum up support from Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, particularly, in our operations against Iraq?

TEARE: Yes we did quite a bit of that. I remember specifically that at one point Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia declined to make himself available for a telephone call from Secretary Baker at which we took some umbrage. At the same time there were some terrorist operations directed against U.S. interests and Malaysia seemed to be a place that Iraqis and others were using as a staging point or base of operations. Specifically in Manila a couple of would be terrorist bombers blew themselves up and there was I think a Malaysian connection there. I think they had come from Malaysia.

In another instance, in Djakarta, an explosive device was found in a flower box at Ambassador John Monjo's residence and the Indonesian police were very slow to respond, that is in the traffic. A gardener discovered the device and it was defused.

We had the sense the Malaysians were not doing all they could to control the entry and transit of people from the Arab world, although I think the Malaysians did cooperate in a couple of instances when we got them some information. There were also problems in Thailand, as I recall. So it was a fairly difficult period and the Malaysians were usually the last to come around. The Sultan of Brunei, I think, was implicitly in favor of Kuwait and against Iraq, and the Indonesians, I think, came farther faster than the Malaysians did. But it was not automatic or unqualified.

Q: Back to Singapore. Did you find there the strict laws in Singapore regarding public conduct and everything else? Was this a problem for us either in the human rights field or just the flow of tourists and all that or not during this period?

TEARE: Not particularly. The prominent episode involving the caning of the American kid came along later. However, Singapore at least in those days, and I doubt it has changed much, was a very autocratic place and that included attention to the activities of foreign diplomats.

In 1988, I believe it was, Singapore had expelled U.S. embassy political officer Hank Hendrickson on what we regarded as trumped up charges. And when he went so also did his wife who was the chief economic officer. People seemed to forget that rather quickly, but I did not and I was always somewhat resentful of the Singaporeans. I think they overreacted. We expelled one of theirs in return, but only one. I'm glad we did that. I always had that in the back of my mind in dealing with the Singaporeans.

I think surveillance and the technical intelligence effort against us remains an issue there.

Q: How did we see things working out in Singapore? Lee Kuan Yew had retired, or at least moved up. Since he had been the presence for so long what was our feeling?

TEARE: Well, as usual, there are several strains in all of this. First of all, and maybe the most obvious, is that here was one guy who could contemplate his own departure from the scene. He took, I guess you could call it, a logical step to relinquish the chief of government position while he was still in good health, had all his faculties, and could arrange for succession the way he wanted it.

Goh Chok Tong who came in as Prime Minister was 15 to 20 years younger, a respected follower, a guy who was not going to kick over the traces. Lee Kuan Yew, meanwhile, stayed on in the cabinet as Senior Minister, more or less without portfolio, but still with very considerable influence. Physically he moved, I 'm not sure now whether he stayed in his original office or moved upstairs, but to this day, 1998, they are in the same building. Goh Chok Tong is on one floor and Lee Kuan Yew is on the floor above, and what does that symbolize?

At the same time it was widely considered that Lee Kuan Yew intended the Prime Ministership to pass after a few years to his son, Brigadier General Lee Shin Lun. Lun had risen to that rank before he was 40 and had retired from the military and had gone on to a cabinet position. But about that same time it was discovered that Lee Shin Lun had cancer and although I think he is now in reasonably good health this compromised his political future or threatened to. To this day Goh Chok Tong is still the Prime Minister and Lee Shin Lun is still round. I think he was already Deputy Prime Minister in addition to holding a portfolio. I'm not sure whether he is still Deputy Prime Minister today. I think he may have taken a leave of absence from that.

So how cynical was this, in fact? Was it really sort of a disguised form of familial succession? But never the less it was all done basically respectably. Lee Kuan Yew however continued to pull strings. He is credited with, after he left the Prime Ministership, the ban on chewing gum allegedly because he once heard of a subway car door being stuck on chewing gum. So he said there was to be no more chewing gum; it was illegal to sell it or import it. That's the sort of thing that can happen in Singapore.

We also noted that Singapore was actually experiencing a slight decline in population, or at least that emigration was running ahead of immigration. I remember in one of Lee Kuan Yew's annual addresses that he referred to this fact as, I think he call it, incomprehensible. But in fact there was good reason. It was a very repressive place and a lot of people wanted political freedom or intellectual freedom or simply a better atmosphere and they left. They didn't usually stay in Southeast Asia. They would go to the U.S. or Canada, the UK or Europe, someplace, Australia, but out of Singapore. I think it was essentially for reasons of political or intellectual freedom.

There are also some exiles, self exiles. People who didn't want to go back. Francis Yao, first in New Haven and then in Cambridge, was one guy I was in touch with. Another was a former high office holder, Mr. Dun An Yer, who is in Indiana, I think. There was a fairly lively but powerless anti Lee Kuan Yew...I don't want to call it a clique or even a network but individuals spotted around the world who had come up against him and lost - usually having their assets wiped out through judgments and libel suits. That is still the way politics is played in Singapore.

Q: Did you find that there was any particular problem dealing with Congress or the media for you on the Singapore issue?

TEARE: Not very much, no. I can't remember that that was a particular issue.

Q: Well then turning to Malaysia which is very much on the front pages today what was the situation when you were there, '89 to '92?

TEARE: Well I have already mentioned some of our set tos with Dr. Mahathir and his reluctance to get involved in the defense of Kuwait if you will.

I'm not sure whether I mentioned in connection with Australia earlier on that Mahathir seemed to resent the United States influence in economic matters in Asia. After the Australians started APEC in 1989, Mahathir quickly came along with his idea for an East Asian Economic Caucus, EAEC it was called. It would be essentially all of APEC except the United States and Canada or maybe except the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It would be Japan and Southeast Asia essentially. That was something we did not want and we opposed it from its inception and continued to do so. I thought we were a little paranoid about it but anyway Mahathir wanted essentially Asia for Asians, white men keep out! That seemed to be his approach to things. And of course in the last few months we have seen his complaining about a conspiracy to devalue his currency by international speculators and it seems to have taken on an anti Semitic tone, which is truly unfortunate. It shows just how out of it Mahathir is.

Q: How did we see Malaysia on sort of the Asia scene and the world scene?

TEARE: I would say we saw Malaysia as a basically respectable and cooperative member of the international community...a relatively small one with a population of 18 or 20 million. But, and listen this is more my personal view I guess than any United States view, Malaysia is not confident of its own identity. In Indonesia, at least around the old Javanese majority, you have a sense of people who are comfortable in their own skins. They know who they are. They know they have a long ways to go in terms of development and so forth.

In the case of the Malaysians, the ethnic Malays who are a bare majority of the population are not all that secure largely because the Chinese do so much better economically. And the Indians, who are the smallest of the three groups, have done very well in public service and elsewhere. The Malays do not trust the Chinese or the Indians as a broad generalization. They have taken steps, you might call it affirmative action in the extreme, to benefit the ethnic Malays in terms of university places and jobs and scholarships and on and on and on. Help them up economically while at the same time keeping the Chinese 'capped'. So there is a lack of confidence in themselves and their own identity really.

This sometimes translated into rather bizarre behavior. At the same time, however, the Malaysians were not shortsighted. They came around to a little bit of defense cooperation with the United States themselves, again during my watch. Part of it came from a contract that a Malaysian firm won to refurbish the skin of U.S. Air Force C 130s.

Q: That is a transport plane?

TEARE: Yes. They took that contract away from a Korean firm that had held it for several years. Then they realized that along with that came a small U.S. Air Force contingent to monitor the implementation of that contract. The company itself was a joint venture, I think 49 percent Lockheed and 51 percent Malaysian. Anyway, the contract went to Malaysia, the planes started coming in, a small U.S. Air Force contingent arrived to monitor the performance of the contract. We got into negotiations about the privileges and immunities of those people. Again this was a difficult issue for the Malaysians, as it had been for Singaporeans, and again the agreement there is non published, considered classified. But the point is that we were not going to send American personnel and their dependents into a situation where people might be subject to the death penalty for possession of relatively small amounts of narcotics, marijuana even. Not that we encourage that, but we recognize that the issue could arise and we wanted to make sure that no American teenagers went to the gallows. So we have that worked out.

We did have a case in the narcotics field during my time that was rather troublesome. This was an American with very poor judgment who was normally resident in Thailand. He went on a holiday to Malaysia, maybe only to renew his Thai visa, and mailed himself a small quantity of marijuana that was confiscated by the Malaysian authorities. He was indicted and eventually brought to trial. I've forgotten the numerical limits now but essentially he had more than enough marijuana to put him in jeopardy for the death penalty. Extensive efforts were mounted by his family to defend him including the engagement of Ramsey Clark as legal consultant on the case.

Q: The former Attorney General.

TEARE: Former Attorney General and well known supporter of far out causes. So Clark made at least one trip to Malaysia and tried to advise the defense team. I don't think the case was resolved before I left but I think what happened was that they determined that there were two separate amounts of marijuana, neither one of which was over the threshold for the death penalty. But I assume that he was sentenced to quite a lengthy prison term even so. But there was a real prospect for awhile that he would face death.

Q: Well then moving to Brunei...this is a place that one only hears about every once in awhile when there is some extravaganza on the part of the extremely wealthy ruling family or that we are trying to collect money for some cause or something.

TEARE: That's true. There was the famous ten million dollar gift to the Iran Contra cause, or the Central American Contra cause, really, by the Sultan, which Ollie North put in the wrong Swiss bank account. That had happened before my time.

Relations with Brunei were relatively calm during my time. The big thing we worked on was trying to arrange a state visit to the United States by the Sultan. We had difficulty in that because those visits as you know are rationed very carefully. The East Asia Bureau as a whole could only count on two or three per year and you had to cover a six month period in advance. That is you'd have to get in by December your nominations for the January to June period.

We once at least managed to get the Sultan in as one of East Asia's two visits for the half year or whatever. Then he turned down the dates because it was too close to Ramadan. When the Sultan wanted to come was in September in connection with a visit to the United Nations and an appearance in the general debate at the General Assembly. But of course that is when everybody else wants to come to Washington also and the chances of getting in then are very small.

We also worried a little bit that whenever the Sultan did come he would be hounded by questions about the contribution that Ollie North misappropriated. We also were not certain how he would handle the matter of his wives because he has two of them and he has six children by the first and four by the second. Would he bring them both? If so how would that play out in protocol terms? He has taken both of them on state visits to other places. Not every time, I think, but some occasions.

So the whole time I was there and so far as I know down to the present he has not visited. We have never been able to work out the dates or the details. Now, since then other things have happened to Brunei including that former Miss USA who has alleged that she was taken out there to be a sex slave, law suits against the Sultan which were dismissed on the grounds of sovereign immunity, and against one or more of his brothers. And there has been a falling out within the royal family and financial difficulties and so forth. So Brunei is perhaps more embroiled in bad publicity than it was in my time.

I visited there a couple of times. Our ambassador in those years was Christopher Phillips. I saw the place and got out a little bit into the countryside. It's extraordinary. For one of my visits, the Defense Attachï¿½, who is non resident, he is the Army Attachï¿½ from Singapore, was coming over to coincide with my visit and he had lined up a dinner that we would host for the entire top brass of the Brunei armed forces. We got there, and I guess we learned the day before that his Majesty the Sultan had graciously decided to allow the armed forces to celebrate his birthday on the evening we had planned for our dinner. So our dinner was scrubbed and his Majesty went to the Defense Headquarters and received honors on his birthday.

I watched the television coverage the next night on the local news and it was all full of how he had graciously attended and graciously allowed the assembled generals to offer their good wishes and then he had graciously consented to cut the cake and so forth. That is the way things are there. I was told stories. Essentially, if there is a royal motorcade coming you get off the road. There were stories about the several hundred polo ponies that he kept. It was not true, I am told, that all of them have air conditioned stalls. Only a small percentage of the stalls have air conditioning and that is for ponies that are sick or recuperating.

Q: Were there concerns for Brunei as far as oil or what might happen? It has neighbors surrounding it who might be greedy; or are there internal issues? During this period did we sort of keep a finger on the pulse of what might happen?

TEARE: I think we tried to. I know we tried to. I think Brunei's situation at that time was relatively comfortable in that it was getting oil revenues. The oil is all done by Royal Dutch Shell. There is no primary American interest there. I think we have some drilling contractors and others who are involved on the edges but not direct or not central I should say.

In security terms Brunei has taken care of itself rather well. It has a training facility used by the Singaporeans. There is usually close to a battalion of Singapore infantry there at any given time. There is also a battalion of Gurkhas who are technically retired from the British Army and then recruited directly by Brunei. They serve there also. So I think anybody on the outside, Malaysia, whose states surround Brunei on the North Coast of Borneo there, would think twice before attempting anything. And indeed there is no reason to.

I think the Sultan has gone out of his way to maintain good relations with Indonesia.

So nobody is really threatening Brunei. It could be captured by an invading force in a matter of a couple of days I expect. But it might be rather a bitter pill to swallow. I think the main emphasis is deterrence. Now Brunei has no political party system at all. There is some intolerance of religion other than moderate Islam. Some Islamic fundamentalists or radicals were cracked down on during my time. A couple of the Christian churches and Chinese temples had problems with their land rights or rentals or whatever.

I haven't reviewed the Human Rights Reports of those periods but Brunei doesn't come out terribly well. On the other hand there were not the sorts of problems we had with Indonesia by any stretch.

Q: In talking about all of these concerns, what about the role of Vietnam? Did this loom at all during this time for you or was Vietnam quiescent as regards some of its neighbors?

TEARE: Vietnam didn't seem to be doing anything that impinged on my part of Southeast Asia. I think then the question of ASEAN membership for Vietnam had not yet really arisen. It undoubtedly was in the minds of some people like Ali Alitas of Indonesia but, no, in short not particularly. My office was I think more responsible than any other in the East Asia Bureau for relations with ASEAN as a whole. We put together the books for the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference although we rather shared the responsibility with what was then called the Office of Regional Affairs, EA/P. It is now Regional and Security Policy and I think has taken over more of the central responsibility for U.S. ASEAN relations with the addition of Vietnam and Burma to the ASEAN mix, and Laos, with Cambodia still hanging fire as this point. That makes sense but in our time I think we had more good people in INBS. I certainly had some terrific desk officers and deputies and we put together a massive briefing book for the Post Ministerial Conference each year.

Q: Did we make an effort to play up what had happened in China? I guess it was just about the time you came over there in June of '89 there was Tiananmen Square. Was this a subject that was batted around, China being the big neighbor?

TEARE: It was certainly talked about. I think Tiananmen spoke for itself really and didn't do much for China's image around the region. I would add that I expect Lee Kuan Yew and others believed also that Beijing's mistake really was letting the demonstrations in the Square go on too long and get out of hand. Had China moved earlier, maybe we talked about this in a previous section, I think they were expecting a visit by Gorbachev....

Q: And he came?

TEARE: Yes, he came. They didn't want blood on their hands, I suppose. But, no, I don't think it was a major topic of discussion around Southeast Asia in that period.

Q: Is there anything else we should hit?

TEARE: Out of that period? Nope, I don't think so. I think we've covered it pretty well. I was I suppose sort of parochial in my outlook just in four countries plus a minor in the Philippines. Plus the Thailand and Burma people shared an office suite with us so I tried to be current as to those offices, to a lesser extent Indo China.

Two of us, Phil Mayhew had Thailand and Burma and I was the senior Office Director, so one or the other of us would usually act as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the absence of the incumbents. The first one was David Lambertson '89 to '90 and then Ken Quinn came in after some gap. I think I was Acting during the gap and at times thereafter. Lambertson and Quinn both were quite thoroughly preoccupied with Cambodia and Vietnam at that period. So again, like Assistant Secretary Solomon, I think they counted on us to take care of the other countries of Southeast Asia which represented less in the way of a problem.

I remember on one occasion though when I was Acting. This was after we had failed to replace our last ambassador to Burma and had settled at the Charge level where we are still. I think Burt Levin had come out in 1990 and we have sent no one as ambassador since. The Burmese Ambassador came in to complain about something or other and at the same time to urge us to send an ambassador. We knew in advance pretty well what he was going to say. Even if we hadn't, I was quite thoroughly prepared. I heard him out and then came back at him with a bunch of points about how the treatment of Hang Son So Chee and the other selected fellow in 1989 was simply not on and that Burma needed to clean up its act and so forth.

That essentially remains our policy today.

Q: Then in '92 whither?

TEARE: Okay. October 1992, I was approved by the Bush White House as the nominee to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea with concurrent accreditation to the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. There were some others at about that same time. Now essentially these were the jobs that were coming up in '93. Another was Laos where Charlie Salmon had become Ambassador for his final year after three years as Charge, with the improvement of relations there. Another was Mongolia. Those three were about the only East Asian vacancies for '93.

The Bush Administration, as I say, approved my name and others for those posts but then came the election of November '93. The Bush people were out, heading out, and the Clinton Administration was coming in. The Clinton Administration took a long time to get around to looking at these relatively minor, very minor countries, of East Asia and the Pacific. I'm not sure I've mentioned this before but it was already June of '93 and nothing had happened.

Q: What were you doing?

TEARE: I'll come back to that in a minute. But what precipitated it was an article in The New York Times in late May, early June '93, saying that the Clinton Administration had promised the embassy in Tokyo to two people, Walter Mondale and Richard Holbrooke, and was trying to figure out what to do about that. That story, which I think was essentially accurate, prompted a flurry of activity by the Clinton Administration. They wanted to show that they had been moving on Tokyo and Seoul and these less prominent vacancies so they told State to get agrï¿½ment for these others whom we, the Clinton people, now finally bless! So my name was sent out to Port Moresby and Victor Tomseth to Laos and Don Johnson's to Mongolia.

But at least in my case where three countries had to give agrï¿½ment, and Laos, which is suspicious of the outside world to this day, agrï¿½ment took weeks and weeks to come back.

Q: You say three countries had to give agrï¿½ment?

TEARE: For me. So it took weeks and I think it was August before all three agrï¿½ment went for me. So my nomination was not officially announced until some time in August or September. My confirmation hearing was not until the end of September.

Sorry! When I say vacancies for '93...there were some big ones, too, once the election took place. Japan, Korea, Australia...but I was sort of in the little group, to which Brunei was added also. Because the Ambassadors I had sent out... had coached and taken through briefings in '92, two of them were Political Appointees, Singapore and Brunei. They both got bounced. In each case the Ambassador had children in school and so after a special appeal to Secretary Christopher, those two were allowed to stay at post until June of '93 instead of getting out by March as most Bush Political Appointees had to do. So that's what happened.

During that time in limbo I did three or four different things. First off, almost as soon as I left the desk in September, I went to New York as the extra hand for East Asia and Pacific for the first half of the General Assembly. Theresa Tull, who was in line to be Ambassador to Brunei, did the second half. Then I came back to Washington and I was grabbed by my former Deputy on IMBS, Barbara Harvey, who at that time was Deputy Assistant Secretary in Personnel, to do a study of multi functionality and what it was doing to the upper ranks of the Service. That took me essentially November through February.

I did a lot of interviewing and some statistical work and came up with a recommendation which was adopted that people promoted multi functionally to OC not have to re qualify. They effectively were forcing out a lot of administrative officers in particular at the end of their OC time because there was no way they were going to re qualify as multifunctional.

Then I can't remember all that I did after that. I finished that report the end of February. I must have done some other things. I sat on the Threshold Promotion Board in the summer of '93. All of this was possible because the White House was moving not at all on my nomination!

Q: Let me stop here for a second.

We'll pick this up next time when you were Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, and you were there from?

TEARE: It was November of '93 by the time I got there and I stayed until July of '96.

Q: Dick, how did you get to Papua New Guinea?

TEARE: You mean by what route?

Q: Yes.

TEARE: You don't mean how I maneuvered to get the nomination?

Q: No.

TEARE: Well we traveled from Washington to Honolulu for consultations at CINCPAC and then on to Australia for consultations in Canberra which is the parent post for Moresby in most respects. After a couple of days in Canberra we got back on the plane and flew to Sydney, Brisbane, and on to Port Moresby.

Q: Let's pick it up sort of there. In the first place in the Department and then we'll pick CINCPAC and then we'll pick Canberra. What were you getting from anybody you had known who had served there before? What were you getting about Papua New Guinea and service there and our interests and all?

TEARE: I got quite a bit. First of all the United States interests are distinctly limited. Australia is the dominant outside influence there and the principle source of money and so forth. United States interests at that time were essentially in the mining and minerals area. The biggest single American investment and presence was CHEVRON which was the managing partner in the development of the country's first oil field, and it is not a large one. In fact production has probably peaked in the last year or two and is now headed down although further discoveries are possible. The geology is probably promising.

So CHEVRON was there in a big way. AMOCO was invested in the Portero mining project, an oil company with a mining investment although it sold out its interest while I was there. And then Kennicott Copper had interests in other mines but Kennicott was acquired by Rio Tinto Zinc of the UK while I was there also. So in fact U.S. investment which had been going up during the '80s, beginning of the '90s, declined during my time.

Q: So you'd obviously done something!

TEARE: I don't think I've done anything at all but it happened that way.

Now there were some other American interests. For example the Parker Drilling Company, I forget where its U.S. headquarters is, maintained some rigs and staff in Papua New Guinea and did drilling for CHEVRON and for others as indicated. But it was not a big presence. There was a helicopter firm with American content. Then there were a couple of refinery groups that tried to come in, that competed to come in, during my time and two of them had American participation. In one case an American company in the lead. It was relatively small time compared with the Australian investment, Australian business, and the Australian presence generally.

We sold things like occasionally aircraft, small ones, or computer software or telecommunications equipment. We did alright in that respect but the market in Papua New Guinea and in the other island states is so small that in general U.S. firms don't spend a lot of time and money chasing contracts for sales in those parts.

I stopped in San Francisco and saw CHEVRON on the way out which was very much worth doing.

Here in Washington, though, before I set out I talked to people all over State and a little bit of Defense and then CIA and at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Wildlife Fund which was involved with CHEVRON. The contribution to the well being of the people of New Guinea and the Government of Papua New Guinea that CHEVRON made as part of its arrangement involved a three million dollar grant over three years to the World Wildlife Fund. The World Wildlife Fund was working on the ground there to establish sustainable forestry in the same general area where CHEVRON was lifting oil.

I tried to cover as many Washington area outfits as I could. There weren't a lot. But I think I had a pretty good understanding of things. Plus my predecessor got back just as I was heading out.

Q: Who was that?

TEARE: That was Bill Farrand. Robert W. Farrand known as Bill, who is now in Br?ko working for the OSCE I think it is, working for the Supreme Representative, Westendorf, in Bosnia. I saw him last week. He was back turning in his badge just as I was.

Q: At CINCPAC were there any strategic interests with Papua New Guinea or the Solomons?

TEARE: They were rather slight. Such interest as there was was mainly in Papua New Guinea. We had had in the late '80s, early '90s, a non commissioned officer Special Forces stationed in PNG. The first guy went out on a two year tour and lasted it out, in fact became a very prominent figure even once supposedly got into a demonstration by unpaid troops and got his photo in the local newspaper. A second guy was sent out and he had his family with him also but his family couldn't take the living conditions and so he was pulled out after a few months. So that idea had dropped off.

But we did have a resident Defense Attachï¿½ Office. It opened in 1990 but by the time I was headed out in late '93 it had already been determined that office would close in mid '94. We would once again cover Papua New Guinea for Defense Attachï¿½ purposes out of the embassy in Canberra with the Army Attachï¿½ there accredited as Defense Attachï¿½ to Papua New Guinea. In Australia the Air Attachï¿½ is always the Defense Attachï¿½.

Q: It's a little bit ironic to think that where you were sitting was the focus of intense interest for three or four years during World War II.

TEARE: It was indeed!

Q: It was a major commitment there. The battle where sort of the Japanese empire and the United States and Australian forces collided and fought over! Obviously this is long gone!

TEARE: Yes it had indeed. In fact they celebrated in 1992 the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal over in Solomons. That is an interesting story, too, at least to me. One member of the entire Congress asked to see me during my consultations and I guess particularly at the Senate names are circulated around. The person of interest was Senator John Chaffee of Rhode Island. So I went up to his office accompanied by someone from 'H' without any real indication of what his interests were. I had met him, although he didn't remember it, years and years earlier in 1965 when he had come to Saigon with a group of Governors. I was escort officer not for him but for George Romney. I don't know if I've told you that story.

Q: I hope you did because that's where he got brainwashed wasn't it?

TEARE: Yes, except that he was late for Lodge's briefing and didn't pay attention while he was there!

Q: We'll go back because I don't think we've covered that.

TEARE: If need be we can.

Q: But go ahead.

TEARE: Anyway it turned out that Senator Chaffee had fought in the Battle of Guadalcanal. He celebrated his 20th birthday in fact on the island in 1942 as a guy literally passing the ammunition for an artillery battery. I think it was the 11th Marine Artillery Regiment. He had missed the 1992 50th Anniversary when a lot of his old mates had gone back and he wanted to get back to Guadalcanal himself. I said I thought that was terrific and asked when he could come. He said he was thinking of the break after Thanksgiving. I said that was better still. Shortly after I got out there the United States was going to hand over to the Solomon Islands a new Parliament House built at the expense of the United States by a Japanese contractor under the supervision of a Navy Lieutenant from the Civil Engineering Corps. Maybe he could be the official U.S. representative at the ceremony. So I passed that up the line and it turned out that was indeed what happened!

The five million dollars for the Parliament House came about as the result of a visit through the region by three Congressmen, Solarz, Dornan and the delegate from American Samoa, Faleomavaega, in 1989. They said they thought we ought to do something for this country where Americans shed so much blood. So they put a line item in the Budget, five million for a new Parliament House. That was completed. The money did not cover an auxiliary generator or landscaping of the grounds or even paving the parking lot. I think Solomons are still trying to get additional contributions out of us for those purposes. I don't think they will succeed. But the building itself is very nice, far and away better than any other building I know of on the whole island of Guadalcanal.

So the way it all worked out was that I got to Port Moresby on a Sunday. Presented my credentials there on Tuesday. Left on Wednesday and presented credentials in the Solomons on Thursday and was thus duly accredited and able to greet Senator Chaffee on his arrival on Saturday. Also Delegate Faleomavaega came for the occasion and we had a U.S. Navy ship in port. One of those that carry the landing craft air cushioned. Hovercraft with helicopter engines mounted sideways.

So we had a fine time. The ceremonies were impressive. Senator Chaffee delivered an excellent speech inside the Parliament House once it was dedicated in which he talked about ethics in government. Something the Solomons certainly needed to hear. It was terrific. We spent a day chasing around battlefield sites. Senator Chaffee brought along a couple of books about the battle of Guadalcanal and he read relevant paragraphs from those books as we viewed the very places.

We went over across Iron Bottom Sound to the other side where he had never been during his time.

Q: Savo Island?

TEARE: Yes. We didn't go to Savo ourselves; we circled it in an LCAC. It was a fascinating experience. Furthermore on his plane up from Australia to Solomons the Senator had encountered another marine veteran back from Pittsburgh who was somewhat older than the Senator. He sort of took this guy under his wing and brought him along on everything. This guy was rather bewildered. He didn't know what had happened to him. He wore hearing aids in both ears and was ready to start drinking beer by 3 p.m. But he was interested in what was going on and we found his bivouac position. Although we never found the place where the Senator's artillery piece had been stationed, at least not any place he recognized. But it was quite an experience.

As to the warfare and history and so forth in Solomons, one factor that I had not anticipated was the very low level of interest in World War II history by any of the indigenous Melanesians. This was true in all three of the countries to which I was accredited.

First of all, of course, the vast majority of people there was born only after World War II and has no direct memory. Second those who were around generally fled the scene. Went up into the hills and stayed out of the way while the Japanese on the one side and the U.S., Australians, New Zealanders and others fought it out on the ground. They only came back down after it was all over.

They think of it really for the most part as not being their quarrel. So they aren't much interested except for a few who have become guides and not very good ones at that. Or the few who live near some of the sites and try to sell you old coins and shell casings and so forth. There is not a lot of interest.

The person who took Chaffee and me and our party on tour was an Australian named John Ennis who had come only four or five years earlier. He was in the business of selling computer services, data processing to various parts of the Solomons Government. But he had picked up on World War II history as an avocation and become very intense about it. He was the most knowledgeable person I found in any of the three countries on World War II history.

A lot of Japanese tourists came, not just casual tourists either, relatives of survivors. I'm sure you've seen this in various places, too. They liked to comb the battlefield themselves. There are several more Japanese shrines than there are American ones. There is one American memorial in Solomons only recently built and under the jurisdiction of the Battle Monuments Commission. But the Japanese have smaller unit or even personal shrines at several of the major sites. A few thousand a year come to the Solomons. There is at least one hotel, Japanese owned, that caters to them. They have their own buses, their own native Japanese tour guides and so forth. It is a much more polished arrangement than anything that we have. There is a higher level of interest.

The Solomons Government hoped that the 50th Anniversary would bring a lot of Americans out in '92 and subsequently. Well it brought some but not too many more. And then in 1995 they staged a re dedication of Henderson Field, the international airport there that is named for a Marine flyer. They brought out his brother, a younger brother who went on to become a brigadier general in the Marines and was of course by then in his 80s, and three of his nephews and a couple of their spouses. I came over from Port Moresby for that occasion. The Marine Corps sent its Director of Aviation, a three star from Washington, and the Marine Forces Brass Quintet out from Honolulu. It was a very nice ceremony and I read a message from Senator Chafe on that occasion but it was essentially a tourism promotion. I don't think they got many more then or since.

Q: When you got to Papua New Guinea can you describe sort of the setting of Port Moresby and life there? And then we'll move to the government.

TEARE: Right. Port Moresby is a totally unprepossessing town. I'm talking about the works of man. There are nice hills although they have been pretty well denuded, and there is splendid blue green water, pretty good reefs off shore. But don't look too closely because there is a lot of trash floating in the water. At low tide you can see all kinds of junk particularly plastic bags on the foreshore. It is in a rain shadow; so, whereas much of the country gets a lot of rain, Port Moresby gets relatively little, usually less than 40 inches a year. So it is dry and dusty much of the time. It's hot and quite humid.

In general, in the years since independence in 1975, the independent Government of Papua New Guinea has invested far too little in maintenance, repair and infrastructure. Everything seems to be in decline except for a few new buildings and most of those are outside the capital. For example, there are a couple of buildings that house all the law firms in town. They seem to have enough money to pay the rent to keep up the buildings. It would not be any exaggeration to call the place overall a dump.

Furthermore it has a serious crime problem and a crime pattern that seems to know no geographic boundaries. That is, it's everywhere. There is no nice part of town. All parts of town seem to be subject to violent crime. This is not new, but it has been getting worse over the years since independence. One of my predecessors, Paul Gardner, was mugged there while jogging in the mid '80s. The stories are dramatic and so far as I know almost all of them are true. One of our previous Peace Corps Directors, for example, was stabbed in the parking lot of the airport in a robbery attempt. There were serious incidents throughout my time there. In no place that I have ever lived have I known so many people who were themselves the victims of violent crime.

Q: What was the reason for this?

TEARE: I think it has to do mainly with a pattern of population movement in which young males leave their villages and the social control of their home tribes and clans. They come into Port Moresby or Lay or the other towns. First of all there are very few jobs that pay much of anything and even if there are jobs these guys don't have the education to fill those jobs. They tend to sponge off relatives. In fact there is a strong tradition of taking care of your own clansmen. The term in Melanesian pidgin is "wan talk", one talk, the same language in other words. If you and I speak the same language, if we are of the same tribe, which is essentially the same thing, than I am obligated to help you out. Even if I'm earning ten dollars a week and you come to Port Moresby to live with me, I've got to take you in and help feed you out of my ten dollars a week. That imposes a great strain on the people who have to provide and the newcomers to the town who, although they take it as their due, I think must be uncomfortable about.

Anyway, they see the small minority riding around in cars with air conditioning, darkened glass windows and living in nice houses on Tooagooba Hill where I lived, or elsewhere, and with television sets and buying liquor by the case and so forth and they think they are entitled to it. And so they take it. This extends to banks. Bank robberies were common while I was there. On my last business day in Port Moresby, in July '96, the bank right next store to the chancery was robbed. One of our FSNs was in there trying to cash a couple of checks payable to me. All of the customers were held inside for an hour or two after the robbery but he finally came back with my money.

It is hard to describe and after awhile you get to the point where you are perhaps outraged but no longer astonished or shocked by these crimes.

Q: Running an embassy and having Americans there, there must have been real problems because of this crime business.

TEARE: There were. And some of the victims were Americans, including long term residents. In fact they seemed to fare worse in my time than tourists. Mainly, I guess, because tourists tended not to be there very long or didn't have established patterns of movement and so forth. But nobody was really safe. Some of the crime victims were actually taken care of by their own organizations.

CHEVRON, for example, had six people, no Americans, I think they were all British and Australian. There were four men and two women and they were hiking in the national park, or the only one accessible to Port Moresby. They went down a trail and were suddenly set upon by three or four armed men who tied them up, robbed them, raped one of the women and threatened to roll the men off a cliff. This was late in 1994. A group had passed down the same trail moments before and another group came along and found the victims and untied them and gave them help. But by the time I learned of the incident, I think it happened on a Sunday and I heard on Monday, CHEVRON had already flown those who needed medical treatment or psychological counseling out to Australia. So it helped, in other words, to be able to take care of one's own as CHEVRON did and some of the other companies.

Q: What about staffing? I would think it would be very difficult to get anybody with a family, or a single woman, secretary, officer, to come out there.

TEARE: It was difficult. We had sometimes no bidders at all, sometimes no more than one or two bidders on any of the jobs. Almost all of our people were accompanied. For example our economic officer was a woman. She had her husband along. He was retired from private industry. The Peace Corps co Directors were a couple. Most of the volunteers assigned to Papua New Guinea are indeed married couples.

The experience there is that once they get out and established in their localities they are pretty safe because the local people tend to adopt them more or less and look after them. But some Peace Corps volunteers had to be moved because they were not safe in their first locations. I think there was one or two instances where a couple of unmarried women were assigned together and likewise a few instances of two men assigned to the same site, usually the school. But in general the Peace Corps aimed at getting married couples for Papua New Guinea.

Q: Did the crime problem affect the operation of the embassy?

TEARE: Well in a sense in that we were always concerned about security. You were always looking over your shoulder. We encouraged everyone to carry a radio at all times and almost everyone did. We had our own radio link and then we had another channel that linked us in with the Australians. And yet a third one I guess it was that linked us to our security company. The local agent for Warmold. But none of this gave us great confidence. If you could use your radio it meant you could probably get help in anywhere from ten minutes to half an hour, depending on where you were. But it was not automatic or immediate.

There were guards from the Warmold Company at the Chancery and at my residence, the DCM's residence and our staff housing compound where almost everybody else lived. These guards were unarmed. They were paid something less than one kina per hour which was a little more than a dollar when I got there but well under that when I left. They worked twelve hour shifts and they were not going to stop bullets for us. We were well aware of that. So we were simply very careful. There were some places we didn't go. We stuck to the main roads after dark and so forth. But as I say over time you develop a certain, or I did anyway, tolerance or indifference. Not that you are relaxed about things, quite the opposite, but it was hey, I'm here, I'm going to make a go of it and try to live as normal as I can.

Q: That brings us to what is the Government like? Public security is part of the obligation of a government. But beyond that what type of government was it? What was your impression of it?

TEARE: The Government of Papua New Guinea is a unicameral parliamentary system with 109 members elected for five year terms. So there was an election in '92 before I got there and another one in '97 and so on. It descends from the system that the Australians set up during the short period of internal self government before independence. It is not very effective at all.

The members of Parliament are elected from relatively small constituencies and the number of candidates is huge. I think they averaged 15 in each of the last couple of elections. That means that people would often get into Parliament with 14, 12 or even 9 or 8 percent of the vote. Once in, the custom is to use your office to reward the people who elected you, typically your own clan mates and neighbors, through patronage, public spending and so forth. And then you probably won't get a second term. The turnover rate is usually more than 50 percent. Incumbents are defeated because they haven't done anything for the vast majority of their voters and so the next time somebody else comes along, again with perhaps a very small percentage of the vote.

Now there are of course numerous exceptions to that. At the time I arrived the Prime Minister was Paias Wingti. He had been Prime Minister once before and he and three others had passed the Prime Ministership around among themselves ever since independence. In other words 18 years at that point. The first Prime Minister was Sir Michael Somare. Then there came Julius Chan, half Chinese and half Melanesian, who was knighted also by the time I got there, Sir. Julius. And then there was Rabbie Namaliu and finally Wingti himself. I think Somare, Chan and Wingti had all been Prime Minister twice by that point, Namaliu only once.

It was again a pattern. Not only were the MPs uncertain of having more than one term but most of them essentially were for sale. There was no strong sense of Party identity, much less loyalty. Maybe not in the first instance with Somare in '75, but thereafter in subsequent Parliaments essentially it was putting together your own majority with money as the glue. A promise of actual cash or a promise of money in pork barrel things later on. So, as you can imagine, these governments were not particularly stable and the minute somebody got into office other people began aspiring to take away members of his majority. At the same time he would concentrate on building his majority. So he might have only 57 or 60 seats when he started out but by a year or so into his term he might have 80 or 85 people voting with him, depending on how assiduous he had been in building his strength.

The parliamentary system allows for votes of confidence. This could have led to revolving door government. So they amended the Constitution a couple of times to provide for no vote of confidence within the first 18 months after an election. I think it was originally 12 and then they were going to extend it to 24. They compromised on 18. And that any vote of no confidence in the last 12 months of a parliamentary term would lead to a new election. So this had the effect of deterring and giving the Prime Minister a breathing space.

Well Wingti had been elected in 1992 and after he had spent 13 or 14 months in office, in other words his clock was ticking down towards the 18 month honeymoon, the end of the honeymoon, he abruptly resigned and had himself re elected the next day. This gave him in theory another 18 months, starting the clock again. This was seen as a pretty clever maneuver. Too clever by half, in fact, and the opposition took him to court. Almost a year later, in about August of 1994, the High Court ruled that while the resignation had been legal the re election the next day was not. It had something to do with the parliamentary calendar. I've forgotten the details.

So abruptly Wingti was gone from office. Julius Chan came, who I believe, had been his Deputy Prime Minister as well as Minister of Finance. He came forward and formed a majority, again in the traditional way. Chan remained Prime Minister through the rest of my time and on into the spring of '97. He got into a scandal of his own about employing essentially African mercenaries through their London headquarters to come in and settle very quickly the insurgency on Bougainville which Chan himself had ignored for a year and a half. The idea being to pacify that island and the insurgency by the June '97 election. All of this was exposed. The mercenaries were deported; they never got into action. Chan had to step aside as Prime Minister while the investigation went forward and a couple of months later in the June election he lost his own seat. I don't know what he is up to now. I think there are allegations that he is trying to operate from behind the scenes. So by June '97, a year after I left, they had a new Prime Minister, Bill Skate.

Q: When you were there, starting in '93, the Soviet Union no longer existed, the Cold War was essentially over. What were we watching? Was Indonesia, for example, fishing in these troubled waters?

TEARE: Not very much. Indonesia had done so in the '80s when Benni Mardoni was Minister of Defense in Indonesia and was bribing people in Papua New Guinea, a couple of whom went to prison for awhile. One of them got out and was back and active in politics again by the time I was there. But basically Indonesia had bigger things to worry about such as Timor and the indigenous insurgency in Irian Jaya. The western half of the island had continued to decline in numbers and effectiveness. The most organized and active element of that movement, which is called Organizasi Papua merika, or the Organization for a Free Papua, was located in an UNHCR funded and sponsored refugee camp about 35 miles away from the border. There were other people down by the border but they got no benefits except an occasional visit from a Catholic nun out of the province capital who would go down and hold sick call a couple of times a year.

So there was not much going on for Indonesia to worry about. The most dramatic event I guess in my time was that some OPM people attacked the Indonesian consulate general.

Q: OPM means?

TEARE: That Organizasi Papua merika. They attacked the Indonesian consulate in Bonimo on the North coast of Papua New Guinea. I think the consul and vice consul were both over in Indonesia shopping that day but there were a couple of other employees who barricaded themselves inside the building. Some minor damage was done and the OPM people left. The PNG police were as ineffective in capturing them as they were in keeping down crime in Port Moresby or anywhere else.

Our interests essentially were to keep Papua New Guinea on our side in United Nations votes and other international arenas and to look after the interests of the American citizens resident in that country. We didn't have a very good count because registration is not all that accurate. The estimate commonly used when I was going out there was 4,000 but I think it was probably down closer to 2,000 by culling our registration records.

A lot of these people are missionaries, linguistic missionaries in particular. The biggest organizations are the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the New Tribes Mission. Those organizations and others go into the bush, establish themselves with local people, typically again this is a married couple or a family. They spend years learning the local language, figuring out its grammar, and compiling vocabularies, with the eventual object of translating the Bible into the local language. Usually this represents the first time that the local language has ever been reduced to writing. So it is an important literacy mechanism also.

The Summer Institute has an arrangement with the Government of Papua New Guinea in which its work is made available to the Government and Summer Institute says it will not proselytize, although it has a strong religious bent. New Tribes Mission came along later and is essentially a split off of SIL. It does not have any such contractual provisions so it does a bit more in the way of proselytizing and it takes a less scholarly approach to languages. SIL wanted its people to have doctorates and to know Greek and maybe even Aramaic in order to do the Bible, or Hebrew, whatever. New Tribes doesn't go that high in terms of scholarship but the object is the same.

I think the Summer Institute says it has by now transcribed something like 275 of the 800 plus languages of New Guinea. Again the multiplicity of languages comes essentially from the rough terrain, the fragmentation of the people, their long years of isolation one from another. Even people in the next valley may not know there are people in the next valley! That was certainly the case up until the 1930s when the Australians started exploring the Highlands and found that there were hundreds of thousands of people living up there whose existence even had not been known to the outside world.

Q: How did you find these religious linguistic organizations? Did they pretty well take care of their people?

TEARE: They did. They were very good about that and both SIL and New Tribes had their own aircraft. They used a common airfield up at Ghoroko which was also a Peace Corps training area. There was at least one other missionary aviation outfit. So they generally handled their own medical evacuations, but we were always prepared to help. We also talked to them about warning networks, warden sort of things. We had pretty good cooperation with them.

The SIL in Ghoroko came under pressure from some of its neighbors in land disputes and we got involved in that a bit. I think we managed to help a little. I was also involved in the case of an American researcher at the Malaria Institute who came under pressure from the government. We managed to dispel the cloud over her head.

Q: What was the problem?

TEARE: Well it's long and involved, but essentially I think it is fair to say that the Department of Foreign Affairs came to believe erroneously that she was involved in taking blood samples outside of Papua New Guinea for some sort of commercial exploitation by pharmaceutical companies. In fact that was not the case, but scientific researchers are very interested in the whole history and evolution of these very isolated peoples. If you can get in and take samples of blood, of DNA, of people who have not been exposed to infectious diseases, who have a relatively limited breeding circle, you can learn a lot, including immunity to disease and how you develop it and so forth. And that was a large part of her interest. She was part of a respected institution, one of the leading malaria research enterprises in the world. But through misunderstandings, to put it charitably, her work came under some suspicion. She was able to stay on for some time after that although I understand she has now left and gone elsewhere.

We were trying to promote trade in a way but we didn't have any great success in that. I've already mentioned the indifference of most American companies to the small local market. But again things do happen slowly. In my time there were rumors that the Bank of Hawaii was interested in acquiring the local Indo Suisse Bank, French, which was getting out of retail banking in Asia anyway and since I left that has happened. I expect that the Bank of Hawaii will give the Australian Bank that dominated Papua New Guinea a run for their money as Bank of Hawaii had already done in Solomons and Vanuatu where it had acquired part or entire interest in local banks.

Q: Did you find working on commercial interests that there was sort of an old boys Australian network that didn't take too kindly to these upstart Americans coming in?

TEARE: Very much so. Yes, that's absolutely correct. It was also true in the military training field. I should perhaps get back to that briefly because the Defense Attachï¿½ Office did close in 1994 as was known before I went out. We continued on a small scale a series of exercises by U.S. Special Forces that had only started in '93. They would come in once or twice a year. The series is called Balanced Passio'P' for Papua New Guinea. 'Balance Solo' was the code for Solomons, and 'Balance' I've forgotten, for Vanuatu, but we did one or two there also during my time. But with Papua New Guinea it became rather well established. An American Special Forces Mission would come in March, April and train with one or other of the two Papua New Guinea infantry battalions. The way it worked out was that the battalion we trained with would go on its year-long deployment to Bougainville the following month. I visited each of those- (end of tape)

...or rather we took Admiral Mackey out to the PNG Defense Force Training Center and he was impressed with the potential, I guess you could say, but also depressed by the physical arrangements and the curriculum and so forth. So he decided to authorize the deployment of a Special Forces soldier. This time not for a two year tour, rather a 179 day maximum temporary duty to be replaced if circumstances warranted...I mean to be continued. So that guy came in January 1996 and he turned out to be excellent. He established a rapport with the Papua New Guineas that the Australians with their 150 or 200 man military training mission were never able to do.

Things were going quite well until the Papua New Guineans juggled their training system. They sent all the trainees up to Lei and didn't make any provision for sending Sgt. Michael Wayne along with the trainees. So Wayne was left in the Port Moresby area with very little to do so we terminated him after four months. I thought it was very shortsighted on the part of the PNG Defense Force and I think they lived to regret it.

But that was essentially our military contribution: the annual training exercises, a few training courses for Defense Force soldiers...officers, usually, in the United States, and then Sgt. Wayne for the four months that he was there.

AID had announced in mid '93 that it was closing its regional office for the Pacific that was based in Suva, Fiji. It had a branch with one American and five national employees in Port Moresby. So that phase out occurred during my first few months there. It was a modest program. We had one project to train people in fisheries. I never got to visit that one. It was essentially gone by the time I could have visited.

I did visit another project that was being done under contract by World Vision. It involved the training of village birth attendants. Those are not as qualified as midwives, but women who could give very basic instruction in sanitation and safe home delivery techniques and in theory could recognize the cases that were likely to present complications and send the mothers off to a higher level of medical care.

But these were very modest and we simply had no money after AID closed for anything else really. So the tools I was left with were this very modest military program and Peace Corps. Peace Corps operated also in Solomons and Vanuatu and I made it a point to visit them each time I went to those countries.

Q: What was your impression of the relations of the former colonial power of Australia in Papua New Guinea?

TEARE: A very difficult relation for both sides. The Australians tended to be paternalistic, sometimes even racist. Yet they had Papua New Guinea's best interests at heart and put in a lot of money. I think particularly among a generation of politicians now of mature years, typified by Andrew Peacock who is currently the Ambassador to Washington, were very protective of Papua New Guinea. I think that has died off or is no longer visible in younger generations of Australians who have experienced or at least read about the resentment of Australia on the part of Papua New Guinea. They have been brought up on the stories of crime and Aussie bashing in Papua New Guinea today.

The Papua New Guineas for their part I think are, at bottom, grateful for the help they have received from Australia over the years. But they don't like to be dependent, no one does. There is a lot of resentment of what they see as domineering by the Australians and attempts to make aid conditional. Sir Julius Chan was vitriolic in his condemnation of Australia after Australia blew the whistle on his mercenary operation in '97. After my time. But the resentment of Australia was palpable throughout the time I was there.

Yet what the Australians were doing was essentially right in almost every instance. In one case, and this was a fairly long running one, there was strong reason to believe that the Chan Government was trying to eliminate in third countries, representatives of the Bougainville period. The Australians, seconded by us, told Chan to knock it off. I think that had some effect. It was certainly the right thing for the Australians to have done.

So it was a constantly prickly relationship. The High Commissioner twice removed before my time had taken a very hectoring attitude toward the Papua New Guineas and wound up getting himself withdrawn. The next one, Alan Taylor, who was there from '89 through the end of '92, was someone I had known in Canberra. He told me on one of his visits back, first visit back I guess after a few months in PNG, that he was "cautiously pessimistic" about the prospects of the country.

The guy who was there during most of my time, Bill Farmer, was a marvelous guy who soldiered on through all of this. He took a lot of abuse but also did the right thing. He gave often the heavy message to Julius Chan.

The last one I knew, David Irvin, came out the beginning of '96. He was still in place in '97 and was in effect telling Chan either he got the mercenaries out of there or he would lose Australian aid.

Q: I would think that this situation where the Australians were doing what we considered to be the right thing but having a legacy and maybe an attitude that didn't really help in a way wasn't our attitude or legacy. But at the same time we would in general want to support them. But again there would be quite a bit of difficulty for you in determining what role to play. Whether to be sort of the supporter of the Australians or coming at it from a different angle of trying to play that we were Americans and not tainted with this other problem. Did this present a problem to you?

TEARE: It turned out to be less of a problem than you suggest although you presented it very well, I think. There was certainly during my time that danger, pitfall really. But in practice it did not seem to pose that much of a difficulty because in every instance I can think of the Australians were right in their objectives, even if they were not necessarily as smooth as they might have been in their approach.

For example, the environment. Papua New Guinea was quite content to hand out vast logging concessions to Malaysian companies in particular which caused great problems of conscience for my friend, the Malaysian High Commissioner. Whereas Australia was trying to get Papua New Guinea and Solomons interested in responsible logging. Solomons was even worse because they are a smaller place with fewer forests and much nearer depletion.

In the case of the mercenaries, for example, in '97 Australia was clearly in the right. In getting Chan to knock off his plots against the Bougainville insurgent leadership, again Australia was correct. I could not fault them and in general I was coming in behind them and reinforcing where I could, even though I didn't have tools. This was clearly Washington's view also. I can't say Washington was terribly interested but no objection was raised. New Zealand was in there too, and often the British, although they had smaller missions than ours. Australia's of course was much bigger. We were sort of tied for second, about the size of the Japanese who had a lot of money to spend, and did, and weren't quite so conditional about it. The Japanese were a good influence, too.

So it was really the western world and Japan trying to influence Papua New Guinea toward better behavior, and I think we were unanimous in that and it didn't present much of a problem for me in the end. In some ways in fact it was a relief to have somebody else out there on the point in the case of the Australians. In so many other countries where I had served including Vietnam and Mexico and Australia itself, relations with the United States were a big problem, also in Laos after the Communist takeover. We were usually the big villains.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a bit about the Bougainville situation? You might explain what Bougainville was because I assume there are a lot of people now, as we move farther and farther away from World War II, who don't understand how this was one of the key islands. Could you explain?

TEARE: Well in World War II it was an important place. The Japanese were there and had to be dislodged. It was a staging area for movement of U.S. Forces up along the northern coast of the island of New Guinea toward Wewak and Jayapura.

It was also the locale of a major copper mine. Copper was discovered I think in the 1960s. Mining began in the '70s. There was an Australian company doing it. Arrangements with the first generation of local landowners were seen by the 1980s to be unfairly small, that is, compensation to the landowners. A new and more militant generation of landowners came forward and tried to get a bigger shake from the Australians. When negotiations broke down the landowners took to menacing and eventually interfering with the operations of the mine. It didn't take much to do this because there was a single road leading from the coast up to the mine at Pangoona. It was no great problem to cut off the power supply that ran up on one line with poles, and then to interdict the road itself.

The real dispute started in 1988. By 1989 the landowners and their followers were shooting at people. The mine was closed down by about May of '89 and a small scale insurgency by that time had taken root and continued thereafter into...well, if it is stopped now and I'm not certain that it is, that it has, until '97 or early '98. During that time, successive governments of Papua New Guinea tried different methods of dealing with it...military and police suppression, then backing away and blockading, then going back in with the military. No method was really successful.

Meanwhile a lot of people left Bougainville for other parts of Papua new Guinea. Some fled over to the Solomon Islands, probably only a couple of thousand. Others simply stayed there and suffered. Virtually all of the schools were closed down. The provincial capital itself at Arlus was burned out. The hospital, which was probably the best in all of Papua New Guinea according to the people who were there in the '80s, was destroyed. Local transport broke down. People couldn't get their goods to market. There are kids who missed seven or eight years of school and maybe aren't back in school yet. So it was a real breakdown.

Furthermore I should talk about the ethnic part of it. The people of Bougainville are related ethnically to Solomon Islands and not to the rest of Papua New Guinea itself. This is not to say that there is one Bougainvillean identity. There are, I think, 23 different tribes on the island, a point that Sir Julius Chan used to make in claiming that this was not a serious problem. Only a couple of tribes are involved in the leadership of the insurgency but there is a lot of disaffection all over Bougainville I believe against the central government.

It is an accident of history that Bougainville today is part of Papua New Guinea rather than part of Solomon Islands and it has to do with the drawing of boundaries and sales and exchanges of islands between the British and the Germans back in the late nineteenth century. Essentially the Germans turned over Solomons to the British but not quite enough; the British should have taken Bougainville along as part of the Solomon Islands but they didn't. It remained part of German New Guinea and then became part of the combined Papua and New Guinea territories at the outbreak of World War I when the Australians seized the German northeast quadrant of the island of Papua New Guinea, plus the offshore islands, such as Bougainville.

Anyway there was a definite ethnic difference. You can tell a Bougainvillean usually by the extremely dark skin, ebony, and they look very much like the people of the western Solomon Islands. They look not very much like the mainland Papua New Guineans. Partly because the Bougainvilleans didn't want to work at the mine, the mine Pangoona on Bougainville, the Australian operators brought in people from Papua New Guinea itself, from the Island of New Guinea who were called by the Bougainvilleans 'redskins' because they were not so black as the Bougainvilleans themselves.

So there was race, there was history; there was culture involved and a strong separatist sense on the part of Bougainville.

Q: Was this insurgency pointed toward Bougainville independence?

TEARE: At its most adamant, yes, independence was the stated goal. For Papua New Guinea there was also the fear that if Bougainville split off, some of the other islands such as Manus and New Britain and New Ireland might seek to do the same and that would be dangerous for the nation. It is the same sort of fear on a much smaller scale that you see in Indonesia where separatism, irredentism, secessionism are considered very serious threats.

So, partly as a result of the collapse of the mercenary scheme in '97, peace talks with respect to Bougainville advanced rather dramatically later in '97. I think now there is a cease fire in effect and there is a modest UN presence on the island. I think some restoration is underway but I am not up to date on the details.

Q: What about some of the other places, like New Britain? Rabaul was a major Japanese strongpoint. It was never actually taken. Bypassed. Are these areas of interest to anyone anymore?

TEARE: In the sense of military installations?

Q: Say New Britain. Is this a viable area?

TEARE: Probably not in the ultimate economic sense but the people of the islands, and Manus most notably, the smallest, tend to be better educated than the average Papua New Guinean. They are maybe a little bit more prosperous. They have been exposed to the outside world longer and they see themselves as generally superior, particularly to the Highlanders. In fact, apart from all the other divisions, maybe the biggest one is between Highlanders and Lowlanders, both of the South Coast Papuans and of the North Coast on the New Guinea Islands as they are called.

Highlanders are seen as tough, grasping, crude, under educated. Highlanders, I think, in turn, see Lowlanders as lazy, less than enterprising, sort of if they can't get their act together then they ought to get out of the way. Highlanders have migrated to the coastal towns in considerable numbers and in Port Moresby, for example, they totally control the local transport industry which is mainly buses, known as PMVs, Public Motor Vehicles. They roar around town belching exhaust fumes and driving insanely. But it's a Highland monopoly. Once, when a Highlander was killed by a Lowlander, the Transport Industry declared a strike. A lot of people could not get to work for a couple of days. It was essentially a one day thing. The Minister for Transport threatened to move in and pull their licenses and that was effective in that instance. Buses went back on the streets and that was it.

Q: I would have thought that it would have been very difficult to try to do anything with the people tripping out of the Highlands. They were broken up in these small valleys and tribal groups with no written language and all that. I would have thought this would be a hard group to both absorb and to use within the government.

TEARE: Well I guess that is true although the Highlands have produced some upstanding figures. One guy I came to know rather well, for example, is the Minister of Mining and Petroleum in Chan's Government and then Acting Prime Minister briefly after '97 in the mercenary scandal, John Giatno. You can't generalize, I guess. But the question of integration generally, not just of Highlanders with Lowlanders, but of trying to get people from all parts of the country to pull together as one nation is a continuing problem. For the 20th Anniversary the Chan Government had a slogan of 'One Nation, One Country, One People' which sounds redundant but indicates the problems that I think any national leadership there sees in trying to integrate the place.

Q: We'll talk about your other two responsibilities, but when you left Papua New Guinea whither the PNG in your feeling as far as a viable country?

TEARE: I was and I still am discouraged. I don't think the trajectory has been upward, in fact I am sure it has not since independence. I think a lot of things have declined. I would like to think that the scandals of '97, the mercenary business and Chan's defeat, mark a sort of a low point but I'm not sure they are in upturn even now. Then in '97 they were hit by further problems. Frost in the highlands and drought attributed to El Nino and then this year, although in an isolated area, that tsunami on the North Coast of Ikapi which killed several thousand people. So natural disasters on top of bad politics, poor leadership, rampant crime, economic stagnation...it is not a good picture.

Papua New Guinea ought to be, could be, a prosperous place I think. It has got oil, at least in limited quantities. It has quite a bit of natural gas. It has got copper, gold, silver and other minerals, metals. Somebody described it as a rich country full of poor people, and I think that is the tragedy of it to date. Maybe something can be made of it. But in general the declines in education, health care and public morality have been the story of the country up through my time at least.

Q: You served in a number of countries in the area. What was your impression of the public servants including up through the Foreign Ministry?

TEARE: Most of them were not very competent, not necessarily very honest, difficult to pin down, and ill informed. They were just not very impressive at all.

Q: Well let's go over to the Solomons. What was the situation there and what was our interest there?

TEARE: One more thing on Papua New Guinea. That was the question of getting attention and outside visitors and so forth.

Sir Julius Chan had come to the United States in the autumn of '93 in his capacity as Finance Minister, but he was also Deputy Prime Minister for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings. He thought that by virtue of his rank and positions he should have been able to see the Vice President and the Secretary of the Treasury. I think we couldn't get the desk. I couldn't get those appointments for him.I think he was offered a lower ranking official at Treasury and he turned up his nose at that. So he was already ill disposed, if not earlier, certainly by that experience. I think quite unjustly.

His attitude was that senior officials of Papua New Guinea, Ministers, were going to the United States all the time, but no one from the United States of any rank ever came to Papua New Guinea. Well when Admiral Mackey came in '95 he was treated well by the Defense Force but we could not get him in to see the Minister for Defense.

Winston Lord came to Papua New Guinea as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs twice. In 1994 just for a couple of days bilateral visit. We could not get him in to see the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister. I guess it was one and the same by that time, Chan.

Lord came again in '95 for the post Forum dialogue with the Pacific Forum nations. They had met in Papua New Guinea because it was the 20th Anniversary of Independence. He came also as the official U.S. delegate to the 20th Anniversary and again we couldn't get him in to see Chan.

So here we are. When we finally get somebody from Washington, even if not of Cabinet rank, Papua New Guineans did not accord them sufficient respect I would say. Now you can say that an Assistant Secretary shouldn't necessarily be able to call on a Prime Minister; there is a disparity of rank, but from our standpoint an Assistant Secretary was pretty good. We thought that Papua New Guinea should have received him at higher levels. Other countries experienced somewhat the same. The Australians generally got to see Ministers, although sometimes that was in doubt. But they were Ministers themselves coming up. In fact they met at ministerial level all the time. So this was another frustration.

Q: In a way by taking this attitude they were really sort of cutting their nose off to spite their face.

TEARE: Exactly. That was my judgment, too.

Q: It helps in a way to isolate and to marginalize the country.

TEARE: Okay, Solomons. At the time I went over and presented credentials the Government had just emerged from elections earlier that year. The Prime Minister was Francis Billy Hilly. That was his name. And I think Hilly was the surname but it was rather difficult to alphabetize. He was a nice man, not very strong and he had a coalition that only lasted a year or so.

The leader of the opposition was a guy named Solomon Mamaloni who had been Prime Minister for several years up until that election. The opposition started picking off members of Hilly's coalition one by one until by sometime in late '94 it got down to the point where Hilly no longer had a majority. Mamaloni declared himself Prime Minister but he wasn't legally yet. The country seemed to have two Prime Ministers for a month or so.

We reported all of this to Washington. I don't think Washington much cared but eventually Mamaloni got back in office. He was maybe a bigger crook than anyone was in Papua New Guinea. He dominated the political life of Solomon Islands through fear I would say. He was very sly. He reportedly had enough information on virtually everyone else in Parliament to blackmail him or her. He was reputedly very corrupt himself. He allowed a certain amount of corruption on the part of those in his cabinets. I came to think of him as kind of an evil genius sitting at the center of a spider web. Sort of like Dr. Moriarty in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Not out and out crime but certainly corruption and concentration of power.

The name of the game in Solomon Islands was logging. What was happening was that the native hardwood forests were being stripped away literally before our eyes by foreign concessionaires who paid off people, Mamaloni first and foremost, to get their concessions. It was very discouraging.

The Australians tried both carrot and stick to get some sort of rational logging policies in Solomons and Mamaloni brushed them off. By this time he was back in as Prime Minister. The country was in serious decline economically. It was just a sad, sad story. Population growth was about the highest of any place in the Pacific, I think, close to four percent, three point seven something. So it was very discouraging because the Solomon Islanders one on one are very nice people. They are more relaxed than the Papua New Guineans. They can be charming but they seemed to be saddled with this unfortunate government.

I came to see governance in Solomon Islands as sort of a battle between Mamaloni and the good guys. In 1994 the leading good guy I thought was the Commissioner of Police who refused Mamaloni's order to arrest Hilly. This was during the period of the two competing Prime Ministers. My man of the year in 1995 was the Governor of the Central Bank of Solomons who refused to let Mamaloni borrow more money than the statutory debt ceiling. Mamaloni, I believe, was finally ousted from the Prime Ministership in '97, but again I haven't kept track. But the country seemed to be sliding down a steep hill economically.

Q: How about copra? At one point before World War II this was the main thing they did.

TEARE: They still do some of that and the Commonwealth Development Corporation had a copra processing plant and in Papua New Guinea also, palm oil, but not a very well developed industry. Again the work was mainly done by outsiders, outside countries let's say. We visited a palm oil plantation in Papua New Guinea where the ownership was Malaysian. After a first run at refining in Papua New Guinea the product was then shipped to Malaysia for further refining.

Solomons...about the only thing they had going for them was timber and they were depleting their forests at an alarming rate.

Q: What about Vanuatu?

TEARE: That was the former New Hebrides, a British and French condominium or as local wags called it, pandemonium, before independence which came only in I think 1980. I'll have to check that. Again it was a country with a surprising number of tribes and linguistic groups. A lot of highlands of equal size, of relative equal size, not dominated by one big island as in Papua New Guinea or three or four fairly sizeable ones as in Solomons. Again a pattern of shifting coalitions, revolving door governments. Not so much during the time I was there but until my final months, after elections people unable to sustain the majorities they would put together hastily. There was no sense of party. There was a lot of personal, factional government within the Parliament.

I had wanted to go there early on to present my credentials and I had this remarkable cooperation from Solomons enabling me to do it in time for the ceremony as I described. But in Vanuatu they were replacing the President in early 1994 and they received foreign diplomats at the rate of only one or two per month. So I was unable to get myself scheduled in for credentials until July. So I finally got there, presented credentials and was back again five times after that over the next two years. But I didn't get to know Vanuatu so well as I did Solomons even. The Prime Minister in my time was Maxine Carlot Korman. I think Carlot was his father's name and Korman was a tribal title that he received later on. Names are enormously complicated there in Vanuatu.

I generally tried to deal with him in French although I think his English was better than my French was. But again in Vanuatu you are identified as either Anglophone or Francophone and it matters, believe me, which linguistic tradition you come from.

The politics of Vanuatu in the 1980s were dominated by an Anglican priest, Fr. Walter Lini who suffered a stroke while visiting the United States I believe in the late 1980s. He never fully recovered but was still in Parliament and was all the time scheming to get back in, get his party back into power. I called on him on one of my visits and found him less wild and far less anti American than he had been earlier on. In the 1980s he wanted nothing to do with the United States or with the Soviet Union for that matter. I think it was not until they had been independent for five years that he consented to receive an American Ambassador from Port Moresby to present credentials although by the '90s we had a Peace Corps program going.

At one point Lini had bodyguards who we were quite certain were being trained in Libya and I think passed through Malaysia in order to get there. This was worrisome. There was also a strong anti independence movement in the late '70s, early '80s, of Francophones aided and abetted from New Caledonia. There was interest by American criminals, essentially gamblers I think from Nevada. They wanted to go in and establish a hospitable governmental arrangement. And Vanuatu was trying to get into the flags of convenience business and was already pretty well established in offshore banking. There was sort of a vague belief that it was a center of criminal activity. That was never very clearly established but we did on one occasion persuade the authorities of Vanuatu to arrest an American fugitive there, a guy who had escaped from a minimum security prison in the United States and was sailing around on a yacht. So we could get a little cooperation from them from time to time.

Q: You mention yachts. Were people, Americans, messing around with boats a problem?

TEARE: Yes in short, but not too numerous and not terribly serious. First of all, sailing around those waters can be hazardous. I remember back in my New Zealand days a visit from the parents of an American who had disappeared while crossing the Tasma. There were occasional problems in my Papua New Guinea tour, including at least one or two search and rescue searches.

This fugitive however didn't have any problems himself with the yacht. In fact that was how he was living with his wife and children, trying to stay out of reach of the law. But we were able to get him arrested.

Q: How did you cover these areas? Not just you but your embassy. You say you had an Economic and also a political officer?

TEARE: We did. We didn't have a lot of money for travel. In fact that was one of the few semi discretionary parts of our budget. But we tried to get somebody to each country, each of the other two countries, roughly quarterly. Airfares are high, both internally in Papua New Guinea and throughout the region. Relatively speaking we could do it economically by using the carriers, Air New Guinea or Solomon Islands Airlines from Port Moresby to Honiara you'd stay three days, you could go on to Vanuatu and stay another three days and come back the same way. If you went by way of Australia which was sometimes faster it was nevertheless a good deal more expensive so my policy was that people should not travel by way of Australia except in highly unusual circumstances which had to be justified. We planned our travel carefully and I rotated it. Often two officers would go together. For example when I got a new political officer in '95, I took him along on a trip to both countries. That way we developed some continuity also...overlap.

The DCM traveled, the economic officer would travel, the public affairs officer and the consular officer. So one way or another we had somebody over to Solomons and Vanuatu I would say five or six times a year. Which was not so much as they would have liked. In fact in Honiara we had a resident, one officer post that closed before I got there.

Q: Honiara being?

TEARE: The capital of the Solomon Islands. We had a one officer post there for several years. We closed that in '93, shortly before I arrived. So when I presented credentials to the Governor General of the Solomon Islands I had to listen to him say how much they regretted the closure of that embassy.

The street address was Mud Alley, which was apropos. The building was quite a nice one. The Peace Corps moved into it when we left. The house where are Charge had lived and which the United States owned we eventually sold to Papua New Guinea which wanted it for the residence of its High Commissioner who was living in a hotel almost the whole time I was there. The problem was that Papua New Guinea couldn't come up with the money to pay for the house and we finally offered them an installment plan and then late in my tenure they surprised us by buying it all at once.

I should add that just last month, September 1998, at Pacific Night at the New Zealand embassy here in Washington Assistant Secretary Stanley Roth said that it is his intention to re open our post in Honiara which, again, probably will be with one officer. We similarly had a one Officer post in Apia, capital of Western Samoa now known simply as Samoa. That also was threatened with closure in 1993 but the congressional delegate from American Samoa, Eni Faleomavaega, whom I mentioned earlier- (end of tape)

Q: This is Tape Eight, Side One with Richard Teare.

TEARE: Just to finish that sentence if it didn't catch on the last tape.... The one officer embassy in Honiara is now perhaps going to be reopened.

Q: You mention the Peace Corps in all these places. What was your impression of the value of the Peace Corps in your time on these places?

TEARE: I think it was first of all one of the few manifestations of our presence. So in that sense it was a good thing. For the individual volunteers I think it was for the most part a valuable experience although some of them suffered health problems and I would say adverse living and working conditions. How much they contributed to the development of their respective countries I think is very hard to say. Most of them in all three countries were at schools. They were teaching English and math and science, which no doubt benefited their students. Few of them had much experience at teaching. I don't know whether they were better than the native Solomon Islanders, Vanuatu or the Papua New Guinea teachers whom they supplemented or perhaps supplanted in a few cases.

Others were involved in trying to get local handicraft industries going, something we tried to help with by sending samples of work back to the states. I am not aware of any very significant handicraft or other sort of business that developed. Still others were utilized for example in establishing data processing for provincial governments. I remember that happening in Banemo.

I don't know that there was much of a lasting contribution or influence or anything you could measure tangibly but in general the host governments liked the work of the Peace Corps volunteers and of simple groups from Japan and Canada and elsewhere. They wanted it to continue and to expand for that matter. Although in the Solomons under Mamaloni there was a certain amount of suspicion that somehow we were taking jobs away from Solomon Islanders. Peace Corps had to thread its way a little bit there. But again this was obscurantism or jealousy or local ignorance that we were running into from some not very upstanding politicians.

Q: Did you find that when Winston Lord would come, the Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific, and others would come through, did you find much interest in what was going there or were you kind of on your own as far as American policy?

TEARE: Well first of all there weren't many others! Apart form Winston Lord and the occasional visit by a country director or a desk officer, and then Admiral Mackey whom I mentioned, plus our DATT, the Army Attachï¿½ to Australia coming up two or three times a year, there was not a lot of outside interest. I think the Pacific Islands themselves don't loom large in our thinking. The one time when Papua New Guinea has come to serious attention, and I saw this from my next job at CINCPAC, was in 1997 during the mercenary crisis when there was serious discussion of possible evacuation of Americans and by the Australians of their nationals and New Zealanders too. There was quite a flurry of planning.

Q: Was this limited just to Bougainville or the area?

TEARE: No this was throughout the country although I did not regard it as a realistic prospect. I didn't think that foreigners would be in danger. But there was enough maneuvering and a lot of anti Australian feeling. For example PNG Defense Force soldiers went around and surrounded the Parliament building and Prime Minister Chan allegedly sneaked out in disguise, things like that. We weren't worried about things on Bougainville per se; it was rather the consequences back in the capital of the proposal to bring in mercenaries to put an end to the insurgency in Bougainville once and for all.

Q: You left PNG in 1996?

TEARE: In July '96 before all the drama of the mercenaries.

Q: And then you went where?

TEARE: I went straight to Honolulu to become Foreign Policy Advisor to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command.

Q: And you did that from when to when?

TEARE: I did that from July '96 through the end of June '98.

Q: Who was the CINCPAC at that time?

TEARE: Throughout that time it was and still is Admiral Joseph W. Prueher. He had succeeded Mackey. Mackey was relieved really on the basis of one remark at a press meeting. I think it was a Spurling breakfast here in Washington that was supposed to be off the record in which he referred to the case of the young girl raped by three marines on Okinawa. This was late in '95. Mackey said something like this, "With the money they spent renting that car they could just as well have gone out and hired a prostitute." And that was it. Word of that quickly got out and by the end of the same day it was announced that he was being relieved.

I believe Ambassador Mondale had weighed in from Tokyo and said that this was intolerable.

Q: This was the case of three marines that grabbed a schoolgirl off the street, wasn't it?

TEARE: She was I think twelve years old.

Q: Twelve years old. Just awful.

TEARE: It was terrible and had major repercussions for our relations with Japan. By the end of January Admiral Prueher had relieved Admiral Mackey. Prueher had been the Vice Chief of Naval Operations here in Washington. Then just about four months after that, I think it was, in May, Admiral Borda, Chief of Naval Operations killed himself. Prueher, had he stayed in Washington, might have moved up to become CNO, but instead he was already out at Pacific Command.

Q: What was your job?

TEARE: Essentially to be at the Admiral's elbow and to give him the best advice I could on all sorts of foreign policy issues region wide and how the U.S. military might deal with them.

Q: Including being there to watch and see him make any off the cuff remarks!

TEARE: Well that I think would have been very difficult to prevent. In fact he did make one remark that got some attention, particularly back in Indonesia, and I was sitting in the audience. But I was powerless to prevent what he said. In the case of Mackey and his remark my predecessor, Charlie Salmon, was not with him at the event but I don't think he could have prevented it had he been there.

Q: While you were at CINCPAC what were its major concerns whither the Pacific?

TEARE: There were several of them. Perhaps the biggest had to do with our continuing presence on Okinawa. The continuing problems there had been highlighted by the rape case but most of them did not have so much to do with troop behavior, in fact very little to do with troop behavior, as with our continued heavy presence on Okinawa. Our use of land, our exercising, artillery fire over traveled highways, even marines jogging along the road as part of their training. It was simply the idea that we were too much in evidence on Okinawa and how were we to slim down there?

They established a process called the Special Action Committee on Okinawa, or SACO, that identified a number of things that the United States could do to reduce its presence. The big one however involved our relinquishing Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which we agreed to do once a replacement facility was in existence. That is going to take a long time. There were three or four different proposals, a couple of them involving offshore floating installations. Huge platforms the likes of which have never been built and perhaps are feasible and perhaps are not.

Q: In an area where typhoons do come up?

TEARE: Yes. Exactly. A lot of the smaller recommendations of the SACO process have been adopted and implemented. But the creation of a facility to replace Futenma still has not been agreed upon and has been only slowed down by now the departure of the Hashimoto Government and the arrival of a new one in Tokyo.

Q: How did you find the military in CINCPAC responding to this? I've talked to people earlier on when it was reversion of Okinawa and all it was very much the attitude that we won it with our blood, by God, and we should keep it as far as bases in Okinawa. This was coming particularly from the Marines. Did you find them more sensitized to the problem?

TEARE: Yes. I think there has been an evolution in that attitude and I think they realize increasingly that, yes, our presence is intrusive and what would we think if there were foreign troops quartered on our soil no matter how munificent in their purpose and outlook? But there is also a belief that so long as we have responsibility for the security of South Korea and for Japan itself we have to maintain operational capability. That means, in turn, adequate land areas and harbors from which to operate and the ability to train close by and so forth. But it's very much a political military job and the people we have had as Commanders in Japan have been very sensitive to the matter and have been some of our very finest officers.

It is going to be a continuing issue for so long as we are there. At the same time there is a sort of hesitant, looking over the time horizon. Suppose that Korea is one day unified or at least that North Korea no longer represents a threat to the South and other neighbors, then what? And then you can imagine various scenarios but most of them would involve a very substantial reduction. Such a reduction would then be possible in our presence on Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan.

Q: Okinawa represents the base position in case all hell breaks loose on the Korean Peninsula?

TEARE: Yes, although bases in Japan, in the home islands of Japan, would also be important.

Q: You mention Okinawa as one of the major focuses. What were the others?

TEARE: Well another very big one was China. In the spring of 1996, before I got to Honolulu, but only a matter of weeks after Admiral Prueher took over, there was the Taiwan Strait crisis in which China had fired missiles sort of bracketing Taiwan. It had done so presumably because it wanted to intimidate Taiwan. It thought that the elections about to be held threatened an attempt by Taiwan to go independent and wanted to head that off. The mainland government did. The effect of the missile tests was probably to strengthen the hand of President Lee Teng-hui and not what the PRC intended.

Furthermore, the missile shots provoked a response by the United States that was I think stronger than the PRC Government had anticipated, and that was the sending of two carrier battle groups to waters near Taiwan. In fact there was only one there at the time. The Independence battle group came over from Manila where it was visiting in relatively short order. We announced the sending of a second carrier battle group that would have to come all the way from the Mediterranean. By the time it got anywhere near Taiwan the Independence was back at home port in Japan. But it was the fact of the announcement that seemed to have tipped the balance with Beijing.

I believe it was then Secretary Perry....

Q: The Secretary of Defense?

TEARE: The Secretary of Defense who ordered the announcement of the sending of the second carrier battle group. He got the President's blessing of course, but it was his idea that one was good but two might be better, and I think it was decisive in this instance.

So what we were trying to do thereafter was to establish, or maybe re establish is a better term, a functioning military to military relationship with the Government of the Peoples Republic. Admiral Prueher often said that when he was faced with the crisis soon after taking up his duties he had no one in Beijing whom he could call to try to defuse the situation. He had, or soon developed, good telephone relations with counterparts in Japan, Thailand, Australia and so forth. But those were all essentially friendly countries and people with whom he could deal very easily. But he didn't have such a relationship with China and wanted to build one. We tried to do so.

He made a trip on which I accompanied him to China in the early autumn of 1996. We went again in December of 1997 and were back again in January 1998 for the China portion of Secretary Cohen's trip through the region. Admiral Prueher was scheduled to go again in August 1998. That has now been postponed until November. So that will be essentially his final one, I'm sure. But the basic idea was to try to establish some sort of relations of trust and confidence with the Chinese military and I think to some degree we succeeded.

Meanwhile there has been a visit to the United States by Cher Ha Tien, the Chinese Minister of Defense, and then more recently by President Jiang Zemin, a trip in late '97 that began in Honolulu. That was his first stop and his co hosts were Governor Cayetano of Hawaii and Admiral Prueher, CINCPAC. In return then we had an audience with Jiang Zemin when we visited China a couple of months later in late '97. That is, Admiral Prueher did, and I was along.

Q: Were you able to find a military or what would pass for a civilian equivalent in the Chinese military with whom there was some rapport developed?

TEARE: Not a personal counterpart, no. In fact I think I was regarded as sort of a rare bird in China and in a couple of other countries because I don't think they tend to have civilians at those levels. Now you could say perhaps in some ways my theoretical counterpart would be a political commissar. The position is usually called Political Advisor, POLAD in a lot of places. It was changed sometime before my incumbency I think on the basis that Political Advisor sounds too much like Political Commissar of the Peoples Liberation Army or the Peoples Army of Vietnam, perhaps. But anyway, no, I didn't find one and wasn't seeking one really.

Q: As far as the Admiral, was he able to establish someone?

TEARE: I think he did although with two or three different people over time. But part of the problem for the Chinese was that they didn't have any real direct counterpart to him. They have a counterpart to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and they have several deputies and it was generally one of those they put forward. But that guy usually had a functional domain rather than a geographic one. Of course no nation really has anything comparable to our regional unified Commands. So it's not the perfect match.

Q: How did you find the Chinese on this military to military thing? Were they receptive?

TEARE: The Chinese are tough, generally uncompromising - particularly in formal sessions and on public occasions. They saw fit to lecture us about what they called our 'adventurism' in the Taiwan Strait business. They particularly lectured us about the Japanese and how militaristic, how dangerous Japan is. Then they would sort of give us generalized lectures against hegemonism of which they accused us. They professed not to be able to understand why we maintained forces in Japan or why we exercised with the Thai Armed Forces, for example, because according to them China represents no threat to anyone and that's clear enough and so what is the idea of any need for defensive alliances. Against whom is the U.S. Japanese alliance directed?

Q: Did they see either formally or informally what represents a damn good reason to have the Americans there? If we were not there it means the Japanese will develop their own capabilities. In a way we are helping, from their point of view, to sit on the development of Japanese militarism.

TEARE: I think that is acknowledged implicitly but it is very difficult to get anyone in China to state that on the record and of course its not the sort of thing that we'd like to talk about too loudly either for reasons of Japanese sensibilities.

Q: Absolutely.

TEARE: There was a Marine Forces Pacific Commander who got into some difficulty a few years back, I understand, for referring publicly to United States Forces as being like the 'cork in the bottle'. It contains Japanese militarism. So, no, you are not supposed to go around saying things like that.

On the other hand, I think North Korea is a particular case in point. I think the Chinese do recognize North Korea as a regional threat although I have heard Chinese general officers say you don't need to worry about North Korea, we won't let it get out of hand either from implosion or implicitly internal aggression. But, again, I would like to think that deep down the Chinese must be rather glad that we are there posing as a deterrent to North Korea.

Q: What about looking ahead? Had we accepted the Philippines as no longer a base with a certain amount of equanimity by the time you arrived?

TEARE: Yes. That I think was quite well accepted. Our biggest problem with the Philippines in my tour at CINCPAC had to do with legal protection of visiting American personnel. I am very much attuned to this because I remember people being hailed into court back in my days there in the '60s and also of our occasional practice of shipping out people who ought to have been brought to trial there by Philippine courts under the Military Bases Agreement. This over the years has led to a nasty situation in which we don't trust the Philippine courts and the Filipinos don't trust us to see that people get punished.

In 1993, after the closure of Clark and Subic we had established an interim arrangement with the Philippines under which visiting U.S. military personnel for ship visits or exercises or whatever were to be considered to have the status of technical and administrative staff of the embassy. That is the NT status, administrative and technical. That temporary agreement in '93 had continued through late 1996. Then, just on the eve of a visit that Admiral Prueher was scheduled to make to the Philippines and did make for a meeting of the Mutual Defense Board, the Philippine Government decided that that interim arrangement was invalid. It amounted to an amendment of the Philippine Criminal Code by taking somebody out of the jurisdiction of Philippine courts and that could only be accomplished by legislation that had not been enacted...not presented even. So it was suddenly off the books.

That was communicated to me by our Ambassador, Tom Hubbard, at about 11:30 at night. We were supposed to fly out to the Philippines early in the morning. So I called Admiral Prueher at home at about midnight and said we would have to decide whether we wanted to go. Hubbard felt we should still come. But he wanted Prueher to be aware of this problem before we got there.

We agreed to let the trip go forward although we conferred about it in the lounge before we boarded the aircraft. Meanwhile our Judge Advocate had been talking to the lawyers back in Washington. We decided essentially that we would have to suspend any sort of large scale exercises and all ship visits to the Philippines until this problem was worked out.

As of this writing, October 1998, it is still not totally worked out. The new President of the Philippines, Estrada, had posed renewal of the bases agreement while a senator and has said he favors an arrangement. Legislation that this time would be called a Visiting Forces Act not a Status of Forces Agreement. That would exempt people on official duty from criminal jurisdiction in the Philippines.

Q: Indonesia? Did that raise any problems?

TEARE: That became a big issue mainly in the first half of 1998 after the financial crisis set in and after the killing of the four students from the university in Djakarta. The killings were attributed either to the marines or the Special Forces that had been under the command of General Prabowo, Suharto's son in law. Prabowo had been Admiral Prueher's host for part of a visit in 1997.

And then there was the whole question of what to do about American citizens. As you may recall, back in May we withdrew all of our dependents and a substantial part of our staff and made available charter flights for other Americans who wanted to leave. Again we did this in collaboration with the Australians and others.

So, yes, what to do about Indonesia has been a big question for Pacific Command all this year. Back in 1997 we were involved also in helping to combat the forest fires that were causing real problems with smoke and haze throughout insular Southeast Asia.

Q: What did we do?

TEARE: What we were able to do was not massive but we did send a couple of C 130s from the Wyoming Air National Guard, experienced in fighting forest fires, out to Indonesia. We based them at Halim Air Base in Djakarta for the most part and they went around dropping water and eventually chemical retardant on some of the numerous forest fires burning on Java itself and southeastern Sumatra.

But it was a modest contribution. The Australians were doing the same and more. Some of these fires, those that are peat burning underground, nothing can put out except sustained heavy rainfall which I guess they are now getting this rainy season. They did not get it in '97, again El Nino.

Q: El Nino being?

TEARE: The unnaturally warm currents in the Pacific that have the effect of creating too much rain on the west coast of South America and drought in Indonesia, Micronesia and Melanesia.

Q: Was Thailand a problem?

TEARE: Not particularly. Except that Thailand is where the financial and then economic crisis of Asia began in 1997. So by this year, 1998, Thailand has had to cut back on exchanges with us and its own large annual operation in which we participate called Cobra Gold was scaled back this year. Thailand was generally not able to exercise with us as much as it had in the past.

Q: During the '96 to '98 period were we beginning to or had we developed ties with our military to that in Vietnam?

TEARE: It was moving along at a modest rate. I think both Admiral Larson and Admiral Mackey, Prueher's two predecessors, had visited Vietnam. They had gone as guests of the Foreign Ministry. Prueher went in March of '97 as a guest of the Ministry of Defense which was seen as a slight advance. We have a Defense Attachï¿½ in Hanoi, an Army Colonel. Up through '97 at least he did not have any permanent staff with him. He had a series of rotating operational coordinators and senior NCOs would come in for four month stretches.

We did have, however, and still do have a detachment of the Joint Task Force for Accounting working on the MIA problem, or really its 'bodies not recovered'. They've now operated 40 or 50 different times around Vietnam with some continuing success.

So the fact that Prueher went this time as the guest of the Ministry of Defense was seen as something of an advance. Our contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued and we had a call on the Foreign Minister, Mr. Win Man Cam, which was a very cordial meeting also. However, a couple of our highest level meetings were scrubbed and this seemed to have to do with maneuverings within the Politburo, not particularly with animosity toward the United States per se, but nobody wanted to seem too close to us. The Deputy Premier on whom we did call is now the President of the country but he is sort of a compromise choice for that position.

Q: What was the feeling toward Vietnam during the time that you were there? Did it represent a military threat to anybody?

TEARE: No, I don't think so. Vietnam had left Cambodia some time before, at the end of the '80s, which made possible other things in Cambodia. I think Vietnam is more threatened than threatening in the Spratly Islands. Again, it had fought its border war with China years before.

No, I don't think that Vietnam represents much of a military threat and again it is shrinking its forces for economic reasons.

Q: Was India part of CINCPAC?

TEARE: It is. India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh are within the CINCPAC area but Pakistan and Afghanistan are in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

Q: I would think that the Indian navy would represent sort of the most likely military problem if there were one. Or did we see it that way?

TEARE: Not yet a problem but it is certainly the case that India is looking farther beyond its own horizons than at any previous time in its national history. The common tendency I think is to pair India and Pakistan. Indeed, after the nuclear tests of earlier in '98, there is perhaps more reason than not to think of them again that way. But, in fact, India believes that it has left Pakistan far behind and that it is now definitely a regional actor. We have noticed the Indian navy going further and further afield all the way to the Black Sea and throughout Southeast Asia. But I don't think it threatens anyone directly. I don't think it has the capability to sustain any sort of action very far from its own territory.

Q: How were our military to military relations with India?

TEARE: Not good. We found the Indians very prickly and very difficult, particularly from CINCPAC. Partly I think it has to do with traditions. The Indians operate on the principle of clearly demarcated services, Army, Navy and Air, with no real concept of jointness. So they don't understand a unified command such as we have a CINCPAC. They prefer to channel everything through Washington.

So when I did visit India with Admiral Prueher in 1997, January, it was shortly after the New Year, we were not very well received. We didn't have a good range of appointments. It was generally with deputies. I think part of the problem was that Ambassador Wisner and the DCM had both been on leave and the Defense Attachï¿½ Office tended to take the Indians at their word that they were preparing a good program when it turned out not to be very good. We weren't all that happy although it got a little better once we were on the ground.

One of the Indian officers, I think it was the Navy Deputy, said if we had gone through their Military Attachï¿½ in Washington we would have had a much better program. We were used, of course, to making arrangements through our Attaches in whatever capital it was and not going back to the Attachï¿½ in Washington of the country we planned to visit.

So the Indians didn't understand the concept of jointness. They didn't, even after all these years, they really didn't know who Prueher was or where he fit into the picture. On the other hand their civilian Secretary of Defense, the senior public servant in the Ministry at that time, had done a fair bit toward cooperation and the U.S. Army Pacific Commander, a three star, had been to India a couple of times and went again right after we were there. He seemed to be getting better cooperation than we were at the Joint level.

Q: Did we have any problems with the French in the Pacific?

TEARE: Not in my time. The French had created problems for themselves by their resumption of nuclear testing in '95 but that seemed to be on the way to repairing itself by the time I got to CINCPAC. The French aren't very thick on the ground in the Pacific. There are some in New Caledonia, some in Polynesia. But they are now closing down their test site at Mururoa as I understand it. Although they seriously upset Australia, New Zealand, and the island states in '95 that seems to be on its way to healing. And, of course, the French have done other things. Earlier on there was the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbor back in 1985.

Q: This was the Greenpeace vessel that was trying to stop earlier testing? They got caught with their pants down by having some people...they killed somebody too?

TEARE: Yes, one person died on the Rainbow Warrior. Several of the perpetrators escaped but two were caught, a man and a woman, both military officers. There is a long history flowing from that. But the French by '96 were not a problem, not much of a factor.

Q: Were there any other issues in the Pacific?

TEARE: I think we have covered the big ones. Japan, particularly Okinawa on land use and so forth, China, and Vietnam where, I must say, we were very well received. I had never been to Hanoi despite all my time in the South in earlier years so I found it quite fascinating. I got the sense in Vietnam that a lot of people were worried about China's possible aggressive designs. Although the Chinese of course deny any and say they are not taking anyone else's territory. I got a bit of the same sense in Mongolia. It seems to me that if you live on China's borders you have reason to look over your shoulder.

Q: I was in Kyrgyzstan. They have four million people and they were nervous mainly because of migration. They just wanted to keep the Chinese out. I mean this is a big neighbor.

TEARE: And at the same time the Chinese in the last couple of years have been having problems with their own Muslim minorities in the Far West. It is something they don't talk about very much but we are aware of.

Q: Before we leave this interview. I'm not sure if you mentioned before, why don't we do it this time. Could you just tell about the Governor, or former Governor and Presidential candidate George Romney and his visit to Vietnam?

TEARE: Yes indeed. This was 1965, a couple of months after my arrival. I would say it was around November. Lyndon Johnson had just authorized the sending of substantial numbers of U.S. troops into Vietnam. I think we built up rather quickly from 20,000 to 128,000 including the Marines and ICOR, so forth. What Johnson wanted to do was to build popular support for this undertaking. So the National Governors Conference was meeting at about that time and Johnson asked a party of governors to hop on a military plane and go on out to Vietnam and take a look at the troops.

The group included, and I can't remember all of them now, Harold Hughes of Iowa, but most notably George Romney of Michigan, who was considered at the time to be a rather strong contender for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1968.

So the embassy had to gear up for this and Tom Corcoran, now deceased, who was the number two in the Political Section, was the overall coordinator for the Governor's visit. Others of us, junior officers in the Political Section, were assigned a couple of governors each. I can't even remember now who the other one was I had besides Romney. It was clear from the moment that they hit the ground that Romney was following his own agenda.

Romney was a Mormon and had received an invitation from a group of American Mormons, most of them in the Mission or in the military, to join them for a cookout on the roof of one of our apartment buildings on the Friday evening. At the same hour, or approximately the same hour, the Deputy Ambassador, Bill Porter, was hosting a dinner and, in effect, a briefing for the country team, escort officers and the governors themselves. So Romney went first to the Mormon cookout so it meant getting a different car for him and so forth. I guess he did get to Porter's dinner but late. So I was worrying about him plus some other governor all the time.

Then for Saturday morning the first event of the day after breakfast was to be a briefing conducted by Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge at the Chancery or some other conference room; I've forgotten. But anyway it was downtown Saigon. Well, Romney along the way Friday evening let me know that he wanted to do something else first. He wanted to go out at breakfast time and see some troops at Tan Son Nhut, the airport. I guess there were MAC V officers around only too glad to arrange that. I've forgotten all the details now but what I do remember is riding out to Tan Son Nhut at about six in the morning with the Governor. We got out there and a lot of U.S. airmen were filing into the mess hall for breakfast. Well the idea of shaking hands with their Governor was just one more nuisance before the start of another long working day.

But the Governor did shake a few hands. I don't think we ate anything. Then we went out to the flight line where there was a bunch of F 4s lined up. So they showed the Governor an F 4 and he climbed up the ladder and he was looking into the cockpit and then one of the officers invited Governor Romney to ride along in the backseat on an air strike somewhere in the Saigon vicinity. At that point I had to lower the boom on the Governor. I said, " Governor, first of all if you were to go along on this you would miss Ambassador Lodge's briefing, in fact we are already running a bit late for that. But, second, you would be putting yourself at risk and I have no authority to let you go off on a dangerous mission like this." The Governor, with seeming reluctance at least, said all right and climbed down the ladder. He never did get into a flight suit. We got into the car and headed back into Saigon. By this time it was, I don't know, 7:30 in the morning, traffic was building up so it was slow. By the time we got to the briefing site the briefing was already in progress. We came in causing some disruption with heads turning and so forth and we caught the latter part of the briefing. But throughout this time Governor Romney was distracted. He was talking to the other governors under his breath. He was paying very little attention to what was being said by Ambassador Lodge and others. That was the extent of it. After that they dispersed and went out to the field, went back out to Tan Son Nhut and took choppers off to different parts of the country.

So in other words there was really no opportunity for Romney to have his brain washed.

Q: Would you explain why we are talking about this?

TEARE: I will. A couple of years later, I think it was January 1968, at a press conference Romney was asked about his position on Vietnam. By that time he had come around to moderate opposition to the war effort. He was asked to explain all this and he said that when he went to Vietnam in '65 he was 'brain washed' by Ambassador Lodge and the U.S. embassy into supporting the war. By implication, against his better judgment. Well that single remark hurt Romney very badly and within a couple of months he was no longer a serious candidate for the Republican nomination. The idea that he could have been brain washed, as I say, it simply didn't happen. He wasn't there long enough and he wasn't paying attention. So he set himself up in a way. Thus is history made and of course Nixon came back and took the nomination and won the election.

Q: Okay, Dick, why don't we stop at this point?

TEARE: Okay, fine.

End of interview