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

AMBASSADOR THERESA A. TULL

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: November 9, 2004

Copyright 2006 ADST

Q: Today is the 9th of November, 2004. This is an interview with Theresa, T-H-E-R-E-S-A A. Tull, T-U-L-L. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy and Terry and I are old friends going back to the Vietnam days. Terry, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

TULL: I was born October 2nd, 1936 in Runnemede, New Jersey. I was born literally in the same house from which I left 26 years later to join the Foreign Service. My mother had all of her babies at home. I was the youngest of seven children.

Q: Good for her. All right, well let's start on your father's side. Where did the Tulls come from?

TULL: My father was John James Tull. He was born in 1892. On my father's side of the family we've done a little bit of tracing and the first Tulls came to the United States to the Eastern Shore of Virginia then moved into the Eastern Shore of Maryland we believe in 1663.

Q: I take it from England?

TULL: Yes. Two brothers, Richard and Thomas (or possible cousinthis is unclear) I believe were the two who came over from England, I believe they came in some kind of indentured status. They began the Tull family in that area. My father was born in Crisfield, Maryland. His father and his grandfather were Chesapeake Bay watermen.

Q: I was going to say, Crisfield is the crab capital and everything else you can think of.

TULL: That's right.

Q: Do you know anything about his grandparents and parents? Did you ever have any?

TULL: Well, on my father's side, yes. My father's ethnic background was English and Scots-Irish. His grandfather's name was Washington Tull and he was a waterman, but one of my great nieces has done a little research in the National Archives and she discovered that he deserted from the Union army in the Civil War. He might have been pressed into it because Maryland was not exactly a hotbed of Union sentiment. He apparently deserted twice, but he wasn't punished for it and he went back to his unit and at least he survived. He was a private or a corporal, but I'd like to dig more into that if I could. So, then his son Ira, was my father's father and he was also a waterman, a very respected waterman in Crisfield. He had a crabhouse and he went out for crabs and oysters. He died in 1943, when I was seven years old. My father was the second oldest of the 15 children of Ira Tull and Minnie McDorman.

Q: Fifteen children.

TULL: Yes, most of whom survived to adulthood. There were the usual illnesses and things, but probably 10 of them made it to adulthood. Beyond that there's a gap going back beyond my great grandfather. I did a little research and discovered that some of the records for Somerset County, Maryland which is where they lived, had been destroyed when the British burned down many public buildings when they came to Washington in the War of 1812, so there are gaps. Whether we descended from Thomas or Richard I'm not sure. There is a tiny little spot, a little crossroads near Crisfield called Tull's Crossing, but there is no trace of a settlement there. My grandmother died in 1954. I just have one contact now with a relative on that side of the family. Minnie McDorman and my grandmother's family had been on the Eastern Shore for a long time. My grandmother used to tell me when I was a child (whether this was just to play games with me I don't know), but she said that she had an Indian grandmother and that's why we have this nose that we have. I don't know whether that's true or not, but you know it's quite possible. The Indians in Maryland in that time were pretty well absorbed and assimilated, so it's quite possible there might be a native American in my background somewhere.

Q: Well now, what do you know about the upbringing of your father?

TULL: He spent his childhood in Crisfield. He worked with his father in the crabhouse in the crab and oyster business. My grandfather could not read or write, but he ran a business very successfully. He could figure. He could do the math beautifully. My grandmother went to second grade. She could read. They both were very intelligent and articulate. My father decided he wanted to go to college and this was not easy in those days. When he finished the equivalent of high school in Crisfield, he was accepted at Maryland Agricultural College which became the University of Maryland. It was a land grant school and the students were military cadets. The family story is that his father told him, that's very fine, but could you give me one more year? So, I think he stayed and worked in the business for another year and then went off to Maryland Agricultural College from which he graduated in around 1913 or 1914. He was quite an athlete in college. He was a letterman in lacrosse and I believe in football. He managed the basketball team and was in track. I think he was a three-letter man. His major was chemistry. Then when he finished college, he went into the service when the first world war began. He was a lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. He did not see service overseas, but he was assigned at the Franklin Arsenal in Philadelphia where they were doing experiments to come up with a better quality gas mask to protect against the gases that were being used in the First World War. On one occasion they were experimenting on a new mask and the gentleman who was trying it out was overcome by the gas in the tank that they were using. My father and another man went in and rescued him and they were severely gassed. My mother always said that was the reason my dad did not work in chemistry when he left the military. He was severely gassed. He died at age 55, in 1947. He was not a healthy man. He accomplished a lot in his life, but he was never a particularly strong man.

Q: What sort of work did he go into then?

TULL: Bookkeeping. Well, anything. He was a character, my mother said. They got married in 1919. He met my mother in Philadelphia. Mother, who was Anna Cecelia Paull, was born and raised in Philadelphia. My father met her when he was assigned to the Franklin Arsenal. They got married, he had left the service and work was hard to come by. He saw an advertisement that a contractor I believe in Milwaukee was hiring contractors, carpenters, so he and my mother got on a train and went out to Milwaukee. He'd never held a hammer hardly. He persuaded the gentleman who was doing the hiring that yes, he was a carpenter and it didn't take long to discover that he wasn't, but his other talents, the management and abilities came forward so they kept him on there and I think he helped to sort of handle personnel or something like that. Nothing stopped him. He had to earn a living; he just went out and tried it. My mother was game. She was game to go with him. Later he was a bookkeeper.

Q: How did they end up in New Jersey where you were born?

TULL: I don't know how they ended up back there. I know they lived in Milwaukee and they lived in Flint, Michigan. A lot of my mother's family lived in the Philadelphia area. She was also from a large family. She was the youngest of 14. I don't know whether being close to Mom's family was an incentive to return to the east coast or whether he found a job back there first. For several years he was a bookkeeper for a seafood company on Dock Street in Philadelphia during the Depression. They lived for several years in Fairview, at the time a pleasant neighborhood of Camden, NJ. Fairview had been developed for affordable decent housing for workers at the New York shipyard in Camden.

My father got very ill right at the end of the Depression. My mother was always very bitter that the day my father got sick and went to the hospital, was the last day he got a penny of salary from the company he had worked for, for 10 or 15 years. In the meantime he had gotten very involved and active in local politics in the town of Runnemede, NJ to which the family have moved in the early 1930s. My father was elected councilman in the town and then mayor. Then in 1940, really, amazingly, about the time he was put in the hospital with a very serious illness he was encouraged to run for freeholder of the County of Camden.

Q: What does that title mean?

TULL: Well, it's like a county commissioner. They run the county. The county institution, roads, it's a full-time job. A full-time job. So, he did that. Now, how he did that, how he campaigned from a hospital bed is beyond me, as he was in the hospital for several months. The election was in November and I guess by then he had been discharged. I know my mother told me when I was an adult that at the time that he left the hospital the doctors there discouraged him from doing it and had told mother that he had less than a year to live. But he wanted to go home and be active and he did and that was when he was elected freeholder. He was extremely active in that job and active during World War II. He lived for seven more years, which made it a lot better for my mother. I'm the youngest of seven children. It gave me an opportunity to know him a little more. He died when I was not quite 11 years old. He was a wonderful example for me. We discussed the Second World War and domestic political developments regularly around the dinner table.

Q: On your mother's side, what do you know about your mother's side?

TULL: Unfortunately, not as much. Mother was born in Philadelphia in 1897. My mother was very clearly Irish on her mother's side; her mother was Elizabeth McDonald. Her father, Charles Paull, was of German descent. Mother told me that her grandparents who would be my great grandparents, on both sides of her family were born in the United States which would have them coming to the United States maybe in the 1840s pr 1850s. She told me that her Irish grandmother had been a maid when she came over to the States as a young teenager. We have a family bible from the German side of the family that goes back to about 1865 showing births in the U.S., but earlier than that we don't know. We don't know what part of Germany or Ireland either one of our maternal ancestors came from. We suspect that the Germans may have fled revolutionary turmoil in the 1848 period, and that the Irish potato famine likely contributed to the immigration of the Irish. My mother's father, my grandfather, was a mason and initially a bricklayer. Then he got a better job at the Philadelphia Mint, the U.S. Mint, and they had a reasonable life on that salary. They had 14 children. Mother was the youngest. We have family portraits of everybody and they looked so proper and nice.

My grandfather died when my mother was in her first year of high school. Her mother took her out of high school and put her in Peirce Business College for one year. While she was in the business college she got a job offer. She had to go out and work to help her family. There she met my father. Her mother met my father and thought him a very nice man, but she was concerned about the religious differences. Dad was a non-practicing Methodist, and Mom's family were all devout Catholics. Unfortunately, my grandmother died in the flu epidemic of 1918. My mother's parents were both dead before she married so I never knew my grandparents on that side of the family.

Q: Well, then your mother was working when she met your father?

TULL: Yes, she was a secretary. She worked briefly for General Electric Company and she told me a story which showed she had a lot of spunk. She was working for GE and she was considered for a promotion and somehow her boss found out she was Catholic and told her, oh dear, and I so wanted to give you that promotion, but I couldn't in good conscious promote Catholics. She quit on the spot. Quit on the spot.

Q: Anybody reading these histories, now we both grew up in an era where it was ending, but it was still there and that is the real prejudice that was against Catholics and also Catholics against others and everybody was, the Jews were separate. It wasn't pogroms or anything like that, but people were divvied up. I remember as a kid I really was told it's not a good idea to date Catholic girls because you can't marry them because if you do they'll take the kids away from you and it was very much there and then it just disappeared.

TULL: Sure. We've come a fair distance, we have. That was pretty gutsy of my mother because they needed the money and she quit on the spot and her mother supported her decision. She found another job pretty quickly.

Religion was an issue with the respective families when my folks got married. My dad was nominally Methodist, but organized religion was not important to him. But it was very important to his Eastern Shore family. Initially they were prejudiced against Catholics. My mother's family was also concerned about Dad's religion, fearing that over time it could dilute Mom's religious practices. The couple was undeterred, however. My father pledged to my mother's priest, as was required at the time for a "mixed marriage." That any children of the union would be baptized and raised Catholic. He kept these pledges to the fullest.

Over time, my father's family came to love and respect my mother. Two of his sisters later married Catholicin fact, they converted to Catholicism. At the end of his life, during his final illness, my father also converted to Catholicism.

Q: How was it growing up as the youngest of how many children?

TULL: Seven.

Q: How did that work out? In the first place, what was the household like as you recall it as a small kid? Was it a really family unit or did they sort of disappear or disorganized, organized, how did things work?

TULL: We had a very close family, very closely knit. There was an age difference, so I do not remember all seven of the children living at home. My oldest sister is 17 years older than I and in fact she was my godmother when I was baptized and my oldest brother who was 15 at the time was my godfather. One of my early memories is sitting terrified in the chair in our dining room being frightened to death of my aunt at my sister's wedding reception; I was three years old. I don't have any memories of home earlier than that. My aunt had lost her husband, and she was an older woman, and she was dressed in black and I was three years old and told to say hello to Aunt Margaret. That was one of my memories.

I was well taken care of. I had four older brothers and two older sisters. They were great to me. They really were great. I got teased a lot, particularly by the boys, you know, but they looked out for me. I was five years younger than my nearest sibling, and was regardestill aas the baby of the family.

Q: You didn't get stuck as older sisters did with taking care of the younger kids?

TULL: Never had to do that and I wasn't even the keenest babysitter when they started having their own children. I would do it occasionally, but I was never comfortable with it. I did some babysitting in the neighborhood, but preferred toddlers to infants.

Q: Where did you family fall politicalwise?

TULL: Oh, the Democrats. My dad was a Democrat and my mother, too and most of her brothers and sisters.

Q: How about religion? Where in this sort of mixed group, how were you raised?

TULL: Very devout Catholic. My mother was a very devout and very sincere Catholic. A very loving woman and my dad supported her. He didn't go to church with us, but on rainy Sundays he would frequently drive us to church. It was about an eight to ten block walk. My mother didn't drive. Other days we would walk to church, but if it were raining sometimes he'd say come on I'll give you a ride. I would think he's sitting in the car reading the newspaper and I'm in here in church. I remember when I made my first communion, a big event in any Catholic's life; I was seven years old. I didn't know my father was going to be there and I'm walking down the aisle and here's my dad beaming and waving, Theresa, which he shouldn't have done, but I was thrilled to death that there he was.

Religion was a key part of our life, but my mother never tried to proselytize my dad. He was such a wonderful human being and it just was, he used to say, it's faith, I don't have faith. You've got the faith, you don't even have to think about it, you were baptized into it. I wasn't and it's not there for me. Now, as it turned out about two months before he died he converted to Catholicism and some people said, well what a nice gift to your mother. Well, knowing my dad I don't think so. He was a pretty strong thinker on his own and he had an awful lot of children praying that he would get the faith, so I think he really got the faith. I don't think it was just I'll do this for my wife because I'm dying kind of thing, but anyway he did eventually die a Catholic. Never went to church. Had great times throughout the year with some of our parish priests. The priests used to come over on Friday nights for supper and they'd play poker, they'd get a couple of guys over and they'd play poker.

Q: You know the Catholic Church has all sorts of manifestations, but how about when you were in New Jersey, what was your impression of the church? Was it a heavy hand, thou shall not do that, go read that, see that or anything?

TULL: Well, when I grew up as a child it was before Vatican II and the Catholic Church was very heavily into God will punish you if you do wrong, but after Vatican II it's God is love, we really switched into God loves you all and I didn't have any problems as a child with the way it was in the church. I didn't feel oh intimated or threatened or anything. Maybe I was a little more uptight about sexual activities and other things because I had been raised Catholic. On other social issues even as a child I thought the Catholic Church was pretty liberal compared to the Protestant Churches my friends attended. Catholics could smoke, drink, dance, play cards for examplthings forbidden to some Protestants.

Q: Well, I think almost everybody, was a little sexually uptight then.

TULL: I mean we're talking '40s and '50s here.

Q: Yes, we're talking '40s and '50s when everybody was, you can grow up in a pretty liberal family and there's still things you didn't talk about, things you didn't do.

TULL: Right.

Q: What about schooling? Did you go to Catholic schools?

TULL: It was interesting. We didn't have a Catholic grade school in our town, but at a certain point a Catholic school in a town a few miles away apparently opened their enrollment to non-residents. It was just the time I was going into first grade. There was no kindergarten and my two brothers I think were going into fourth and fifth grade, maybe it was fifth and sixth so we all went over to the Catholic school. I despised it. I was a wimp anyway in those days, but we had to get a bus early in the morning, walk about three or four blocks, get the bus and when we got over to the school on the early bus I had to wait alone on the girls' playground. My brothers, who were 14 months apart, and best buddies would go over and to the boys playground and have a wonderful time shooting baskets. I would stand there lonely in the girls' yard wondering what was what and being just miserable until other girls arrived. Quite frankly, the first grade teacher, a nun, was thoroughly mean. All of the teachers were nuns. My brothers loved the school and liked their nuns. They thought I was crazy for not liking it. They just thought it was wonderful. One brother still goes back at age 75 for reunions of his 8th grade class. I hated it. This first grade nun traumatized me. There was one black child in the class and he sat behind me. If anything went wrong in the class, the nun would come back and blame him and smack him and I would throw up.

Q: Oh boy.

TULL: I mean it just got me so disturbed. Then they'd call my brothers, the older brother to come down, your sister is sick. Then they'd call my parents and they would come over and get me. My parents tried everything to help me settle in and get accustomed to it, the adjustment process. I remember, I didn't want to eat breakfast because I thought I would throw it up. Well, you have to have breakfast, so then I thought maybe grape juice would be good. Well, that really looked good on the floor of that classroom. I kept telling my parents that this is what was happening. This one day, after I had been in school about two months, my father took off from work early and said to my Mom, let's go pick Theresa up. We'll take her out and get her some ice cream or something. They drove over to the school and my nun was walking the children from the school door to the street corner where they would be taken across the street. She's whacking the kids and screaming. My father looked at my mother and said, she's not making this up, let's get her out of there. They took me out. There was a public school, free, right around the corner and I went there, settled in immediately, and thrived, didn't have any problem. I skipped the fourth grade, as a matter of fact, but then there was no question but that I would go to Catholic high school, which I wanted to do, and I went to Camden Catholic High School in Camden, where all sic of my siblings had gone. I liked it very much. But that first grade nun gave a very bad impression of a certain type of nun. Maybe the nun thought she was doing the right thing. As I said, my brothers loved the school. They loved the nuns. They had a wonderful time.

Q: Well, it's a mix in the personalities that some people shouldn't be in that line of work.

TULL: I was more sensitive.

Q: Nuns, because of the selection process at that time. I mean there wasn't a real personality selection process and that's why some nuns didn't perform well.

TULL: Some are wonderful and some aren't.

Q: Yes. To this day people from your generation and back have many stories about essentially maladjusted nuns that really shouldn't be around children.

Well, let's talk about the elementary school. What subjects interested you while you were in elementary school?

TULL: Well, always reading, English, writing essays in the grade school level definitely. Never mathematics. I'm not good at math, but all the reading skills, history, literature, social studies, geography, that sort of thing, I excelled at. I can't say political science in grade school, but learning about government. I guess they called it social studies. That interested me a lot.

Q: During the very early years World War II was going on. Were you aware of World War II?

TULL: Very. I had two brothers in it. My two oldest brothers were in the war and I was very much worried about them.

Q: One of the things of people growing up in this period, I know for so many of us, we've got a wonderful taste of geography because the war was happening in the Pacific and in Europe and all over the place and so we were, did you find that this interested you or was this kind of a guy's thing?

TULL: I can't say that no, I was, let's see I was five years old when the war started. I remember distinctly where I was when we got the word about Pearl Harbor being bombed. We were coming back from visiting the cemetery to visit my mother's parents' graves. It was on the radio and it was just horrifying. Then as soon as they got old enough my two brothers went off and they both enlisted. Jack went into the army air corps and tried to be a pilot, he was accepted for pilot training and didn't make it. I recently asked him what was the problem, the navigation? He said, no Theresa, I couldn't fly the plane. I could do the rest of it, but I didn't have that essential hand-eye coordination. So he ended up in the Eighth Air Force in England as a teletype operator. The next brother, Bob, was two years younger, so it took him a couple years to reach the right age. He joined the Navy and he was successful in becoming a carrier pilot. He made a career of the navy. I was very worried about them. I remember I would sit on my father's lap and look at the newspapers and it really kind of enhanced my reading skills to sit there. Reading was not something I consciously remember learning, but by the time I entered first grade I could read simple things easily. It was just kind of came along.

I remember my mother saying she didn't dare even mention my older brother Jack's name because I would start crying. She couldn't even indulge herself in saying oh, I miss Jack because it would get me started. He was just such a sweet brother. He was a doll, Jack was just wonderful. Bob was, too, but he had a different personality. Jack was the cozy cuddly big brother, protect you against the world. Bob was the one who would take you to the amusement park and say want to go on a roller coaster when your mother wasn't there? Yes, I want to go. I was frightened to death, but I would do it. They were both great.

Q: What about in school, we're still talking about the elementary school. How about reading, what kind of books were you reading?

TULL: Well, whatever they offered in school, plus we had a library, but in my home we had books all over the place. We had books from my father's younger years. Things like Penrod.

Q: Oh the Penrod and Sam stories.

TULL: Yes. We had Boothe Tarkington books, Zane Grey, whatever my older brothers had. There was a series of books about West Point and Annapolis, stuff aimed at boys, but I devoured them. Everybody knew I loved to read. So any birthday or Christmas I would get a load of books. I enjoyed the Bobbsey Twins books. In school I don't really remember much about the books we were offered. Wait, Dick, Jane and Spot, the basic readers and things, but I will say for this little school in a small town they were alert to the different skills of the students. There were only about 35 of us in the class compared to 60 or 70 in the Catholic school. They picked up on the fact that I should move forward and they persuaded my mother and father to let me skip a grade, which was the fourth grade, and that caused a few social adjustment problems because my parents, particularly my mother after my dad died, didn't want to let me do some of the social things that my peer group would do because of youth. I learned many years later that the school also wanted me to skip the seventh grade. Both of my parents refused. That would have put me too far behind socially. There was no money for college. There were no Pell grants or student loans there. New Jersey didn't have land grant colleges. So, how was I going to get to college?

Q: Wasn't Rutgers?

TULL: Very expensive, given our circumstances.

Q: Rutgers was a land grant school?

TULL: Rutgers was not a land grant university. It is one of the oldest universities in the country. In the mid-20th century it was designated the State University. Particularly after my dad died, there was no prospect of college for us. None of us went to college out of high school.

Q: In high school, where did you go to high school?

TULL: Camden Catholic High School in Camden, New Jersey. Our parish paid half the tuition and my mother paid the other half, but it was very low. It was $50 a semester and now it's probably $2,500 or something like that. For the year it is very high. We would take a public bus from Runnemede to Camden, about a half-hour bus ride. There was no school bus. It was a good school, a very fine school. It had a good football team, which was fun.

Q: In high school were there any subjects that particularly interested you?

TULL: English, journalism, world history. Yes, I got pretty active in high school activities. I was a little nervous when I first started, but I pushed it down. I was 12 when I started. That's a little young. I got involved in the school newspaper. There was a very good course in journalism there and we had a good paper, so I was involved in that from pretty early on. At one point when I was taking world history the teacher took me aside and asked if I would consider going into the debating society because she thought I had the skills for it and so I did it and I enjoyed that. I joined the Forensic Club. There was debating. There was original oratory and things like that, but then I got a job after school. We were really strapped for money so I had to stop the Forensic Club.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

TULL: Secretarial.

Q: How did you find that?

TULL: Well, the school had a good reputation, so businesses in Camden would call the school and say, I can use a part time steno or typist or something like that for a few hours a week. I started that in my junior year on occasion. In my senior year I began working after school at a law office and ended up working at that office when I graduated. I started working full time the day after I graduated from high school. I worked for two years at the law firm where I had been working part time.

Q: Had you learned at that time the secretarial skills, typing?

TULL: Yes. The school had an excellent commercial course. It used to be before I started, which was 1949 Camden Catholic insisted that every entering student take a classical course for the first year. So, you would have had Latin and Algebra your first year and the second year you would branch off into commercial, academic and I think there was something called general. The year I started you made your choice right then and there, well; there was no chance I was going to be able to afford to go to college, so I took the commercial course. Anytime I had a study hall I took a course that might in the longer term serve me like biology or an additional science course. I never took the study period. I was very confident as a typist and stenographer and bookkeeper from the basis of what we got taught in school. Plus we received a very solid grounding in history, English, social studies. Camden Catholic is still rated a good school, a very good school.

Q: Did you have in mind that someday I'm going to go to college?

TULL: Maybe tucked away in the back of my mind. See when my father died I was in seventh grade and it was a week before my 11th birthday and it was a real killer. I worshipped the ground he walked on. I was extremely fond likewise of my mother and I just thought it was so hard for her. I was not quite 11 and my brothers were 16 and 17, two brothers still in high school. There was no money. My dad had miscalculated. He thought that mother would qualify for a higher social security benefit than she actually did and it was bad. My mother went to work and she hadn't worked outside the home for 30 years and it was difficult for her. What I wanted to do and what I focused on, (violins will play in the background) was to get out of high school and work and not be a burden on my mother. Really, that's all I wanted. That was my focus. She to her credit said don't think that way. Maybe there's a scholarship out there that you could get from one of the bigger schools, but this was before all these other programs to facilitate college education came into play. We're talking about 1953 when I graduated from high school. I wanted to be out and off of her back quite frankly and helping to support. By the time I graduated from high school mother had stopped working. She had had some problems adjusting to the whole situation and my older brothers and sisters were concerned that it wasn't right. It wasn't fair. Let mom stay home. Am I right when I say that? She might have worked beyond my graduation, I'm not sure. At any rate I just wanted to be out. Did I think about college ultimately at that point? Not really. I wanted out and I wanted to be self-sufficient. For the first two years after graduating from high school, I was 16, for the first two years, I gave my entire salary to my mother and she gave me spending money and then when I was 18 she said, now this is a different situation, you keep the salary and just pay a certain amount of board. She says you're going to find out you were better off before and she was right, but it was time for the more independent approach to the whole situation.

After I had worked for a couple of years and hadn't met Mr. Wonderful and was bored as a secretary, one of my older brothers came back from the Korean War and started going to night school at Rutgers in Camden. I thought night school, gee, well, I'm doing all this reading of history. I was working right across the street at that time from the Camden County library and I would get all sorts of books on Lincoln and Napoleon and my brother said, you know, that's the kind of thing you'd be reading if you were in college. I started night school and loved it. I really did like it. It did cut into your social life, but from that point on I kind of had the goal, I'm not going to spend my life as a secretary. I respect the skills, I admire it. I've had wonderful secretaries, but I felt that I could do more and it was not fulfilling doing secretarial work so I went to night school and it was Jay who showed the way there.

Q: Back to high school and all, what was the social life like? You know, were boys and girls going steady or just plain dating or something like that?

TULL: We were an unusual Catholic high school because it was coed. We had a coed school and they even had noontime dances in the gym.

Q: Sock dances I imagine.

TULL: Well, it was not even that regular, not organized. It was just they would have some music in the gymnasium at every lunch hour.

Q: But you had to take your shoes off.

TULL: No.

Q: You didn't?

TULL: No.

Q: I always remember you had to take your shoes off.

TULL: That would have probably been considered too racy. There would always be a couple of nuns saying, "arm's distance". There was that and they had dances on Friday nights, but I couldn't go to those because we lived too far away and my mother didn't want me taking the bus home at 11:00 at night. We had a lot of fun at football games and pep rallies. I would go to football games. I didn't date much in high school. Occasionally, but I was so young compared to the others. I was in a unique situation. I was president of our Sodality at our church and it was decided we would have a dance and I was the president, organizing this dance and I said there's one problem, Father, my mother doesn't let me go to dances. He said, well, talk to her about this and so I did. Well, I think I was 14 or 15 at the time. My mother was great, but she was doing this alone, raising her last daughter in her late '50s. I attended the dance

Q: Well, during your work time as a secretary, did you feel there was almost a social divide between the people who were, for whom you were working and secretaries really were part of a team or?

TULL: Well, I guess I had a very strong sense of self-esteem. Not a great deal. I worked for lawyers and no, I didn't get that feeling. In this one job I worked for a real estate broker, but he owned a lot of property as well and I collected the rent and kept his rent books for him. He just couldn't have been nicer. I didn't feel a great gulf there. What I saw stretching out before me was a lifetime of boredom compared to what I thought might be available with an education.

Q: How long did you go to night school? Did you switch over or what?

TULL: No. I went to night school for my entire undergraduate degree.

Q: How long did that take you?

TULL: Well, an interesting tale. I started I guess after I'd been out of high school a good two years, maybe three years.

Q: You were about 18 or 19 years old?

TULL: Yes, I was probably about 19. I had a brief fling believe it or not teaching the fourth grade in a Catholic grammar school with no education whatsoever. I had heard that the diocese was desperate for teachers and a friend of mine who was on the same academic level as I was started doing it and I thought this will beat being a secretary and so I went and applied and got the job. I had also started night school and between the night school course and dealing with the 65 children I had in the fourth grade in a poor section of Camden, I had a difficult time.

Q: Oh my God.

TULL: I couldn't do it. The school thought I could. The school was satisfied, the kids cried when I said I was leaving, but I just got too tied up with it. I thought, no, I'll get an education first and then I'll think about teaching. I can't do both at once, so I was there about three weeks. It was an interesting experience. So, then I kept at it at night school.

Q: Where was this school?

TULL: Camden.

Q: In Camden. I mean was this a regular campus?

TULL: It was a regular campus of Rutgers. It was what had been the College of South Jersey and shortly before I got involved with taking courses it had been incorporated into Rutgers University which is based in New Brunswick, but it was a Camden branch of it. I enjoyed it. In the meantime after working at odd jobs, not odd jobs, but switching for improvements, I had to quit work when I went to work as a teacher so now I had no job. Fortunately, when I started looking for work again which was almost immediately, there was an advertisement for an architectural firm in Philadelphia, Vincent Kling. I had been dating for a couple of years an interior designer who was very fond of Kling's work so sometimes on a Sunday he'd drive out and he'd show me, look at that building, isn't that great, that's Kling's latest. So there was an ad for a secretary in Kling's office and I got that job. I worked there for seven years and loved it. Really loved it. If I hadn't made the Foreign Service I probably would have stayed there. I really enjoyed that as a secretary because you were involved in, you could see something lasting develop, from the visit of a potential client through the initial drafting stages up to taking the tour of a completed building. I really felt that we, even as secretaries, were participating in an exciting line of work. That was a good job and good pay, with a nice attitude towards all employees.

So, I worked there for seven years going to college at night the whole time. Yes, I had already started college majoring in history and political science. But then I learned about the Foreign Service through an article in Good Housekeeping magazine, of all things. I found out there was a Foreign Service with job opportunities for women as well as men. There was an interview with a brand new woman Foreign Service Officer named Ann Swift who had just come in and had her first tour and they had interviewed her. The State Department was reaching out to try to get women in the Service. I thought, my goodness. You mean I wouldn't have to be a secretary? That's it. That's what I want to do. I've always been interested in travel. You talk about books I read as a child. Anna and the King of Siam was a favorite, I had to go to Asia, had to go to Southeast Asia. I thought the Department was pretty smart to put an article in Good Housekeeping. I sent away for information right then and there but the information noted at that time, that you had to be admitted to the Foreign Service by age, I guess by your 30th birthday. If you weren't admitted by that date, after that date you'd have to qualify in a foreign language before admission. I decided that becoming a Foreign Service Officer was my goal, and that I had better get admitted before the pre-admission foreign language requirement kicked in. My world history professor at Rutgers knew me well, we dated a little bit, and he found out I was interested in the Foreign Service. Well, what are you waiting for? I said, well, I've got to get my degree first. He told me, you don't need a college degree; just pass the test, which I know you can do.

Q: Oddly enough to be an American diplomat I think is the only job that does not in the sort of the executive circles does not require a college degree.

TULL: I don't know whether they've changed it since then, but they didn't then.

Q: I don't know. It's been for a very long time. I mean it was you know.

TULL: Yes, admission was by competitive exam. My professor friend said, you could pass that test right now. I said, what do you mean, I don't have to have a degree? He said read the fine print. Look at that booklet from State. I did, and the booklet said the best preparation would be the college degree in this, this or this. Best preparation, but didn't say a degree was required. So, I thought well, what do I have to lose? I took the written test.

Q: This was what year?

TULL: I think this would have been '61, probably '61 because I took the written test and it was an all day affair in those days, an all day affair and I passed it and was ecstatic and signed up to take the oral exam. The closest place for me was the U.S. Mission to the UN in New York. Again my friend said, you'll be great. There will be no problem. You're articulate. You can speak. They're going to ask you thoughtful questions that you can develop ideas on. I went up for the exam and I was asked extremely detailed minute questions about specific Indian tribes in California and details of Northern African geography, things of this nature. There were very few broad scale, broader questions that my friend, who had taken and passed that exam, thought I would get. I didn't lose my cool because I didn't know, I said, well, I'm sorry I don't know that and I would expand on information that I did know. When I was finished the panel chairman told me that I had failed, but that they were very impressed that someone with no college degree could have gone as far as I did. I had about 60 credits, 68 credits I think. They said we really recommend that you try this again. Try it again? I'd have to start all over again with the written exam and go through the whole routine again. To make things even more awkward before you took the oral in those days they did the security check. So, my employer knew that I was trying to get out and get to another job. I was heartbroken. I had never failed anything in my life. It was devastating. Here's where my mother, God bless he came through for me yet again, I was absolutely devastated. I said, well, that's that. They made it quite clear that you have to have a college degree and I'll show them, I'll get the degree. I'll get the degree and I'll go back and she says why? Why wait? They told you to try it again. Sign up and take that test again next year. She pushed me to do it, even though my success would mean that she would be left alone because by this time I was the only one left living at home. Well, I told her I'll take the test just to prove them it wasn't a fluke the first time. I took the written test again and passed again. I said, okay, but I'm not going to even bother wasting my time taking the oral because they made it quite clear that non-college graduates need not apply. That's not what they said, Mom insisted. Didn't they tell you they were going to recommend that you should take it again? One day of vacation, that's all you have to lose for it. Vincent Kling already knows you're trying to get out, so what do you have to lose?

Anyway, with her strong encouragement I went up to New York again and took the oral exam. It was the broad-based type of question that I had been told to expect to get the first time and I went through it all and when it was over I just figured well, so much for that, I'm not going to sweat it. Then they told me I had passed and welcome to the Foreign Service. I said, are you trying to tell me I passed this? Well, yes, the previous panel had a very clear recommendation that you should try it again and you did try it again and you did very well and we're very happy to have you. At any rate that's how I got into the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions the second time around?

TULL: Yes. One of them was that I should select any world leader and I was going to have the opportunity to interview him or her and ask three questions. I chose Charles de Gaulle. Another one was if I was going to be isolated on a desert island and could take one phonograph record with a player, a painting and a book, what would I take. There were the type of broader things and then also a question about why should the United States give foreign assistance to any country? What was the motivation behind our foreign aid program? Things like that. I remember one question, I don't remember whether it was from the first or second and it just shows how brainwashed I guess I was, how we all were and how things have changed since, but I was asked why should we take a woman into the Foreign Service as an officer when you're probably going to get married you'll have to leave. In those days a woman FSO had to resign upon marriage. I thought it was a perfectly legitimate question. I answered it and I said, well, if that happens I might marry a Foreign Service Officer, then you're getting two for one. I thought there was nothing wrong with the question. That shows how unenlightened I was in 1962. I entered the Service in August of '63.

Q: '63. You know, before this had you been reading something like the New York Times or something, I mean in other words, how were you getting your international?

TULL: I always read a lot. The Philadelphia Inquirer wasn't a bad paper and occasionally I would read the Times. I read the Times avidly prior to both oral exams.

Q: I was wondering, but had you taken an interest in foreign affairs?

TULL: Oh, yes. Oh, from the time I was a child. Really on my father's knee, reading the war news. We would sit around the dinner table during war, discuss the war, discussed what was happening in Europe, what was happening nationally. I remember a discussion of labor unions and the pros and cons of labor unions. That was when John L. Lewis was viewed by many as disrupting the war effort, you know, with coal mine strikes. I was always interested in political affairs, influenced by my father. In those days families ate together. In our house it was a fun, educational experience.

Q: How about the 1960 Kennedy Nixon political process? Did you get involved in that?

TULL: That was the first political campaign that I got really personally involved in. I was what they call a Citizen for Kennedy and volunteered out of the Philadelphia office after work. I saw Kennedy come into Philadelphia at the airporshook his hand - and also saw Nixon go by our office downtown in Philadelphia. Some people said, nobody's going to look at him. I said, I'm going to look at him, he's the candidate, he might win. I went out and I didn't wave, I just stood there. It was right outside the Kennedy office, so he kind of laughed and waved at us anyway. No, I got very involved in that.

That was the first election I could vote in for president. Earlier, I was devastated when Adlai Stevenson lost to Eisenhower in 1952. I was young and couldn't believe that that could happen. I remember as a senior in high school in American History class we didn't have a nun for that class. We had a very nice, very intelligent layman teacher of history. We got into a lot of fervent discussions back and forth about the election. Sometimes we'd go into class and some of the students would say, Theresa, ask him a question. Ask him a question and get him off the track. We would really go at him and it was good. I mean he enjoyed it, too. I was respectful and so was he, but we would have real good political discussions during about the respective merits and position of Stevenson and Eisenhower.

Q: Yes. Well, then.

TULL: I should say, too my mother was active. She frequently worked at the polls anytime there was an election in town. She was a poll worker, and was very interested in and well-influenced abut political developments.

Q: Did any of your brothers or sisters go onto college?

TULL: No. Not at the time when they graduated from high school. My oldest sister wanted to be a nurse. She was the oldest in the family so she did go to nursing school. In those days if you got married you had to quit and she had met her husband to be when she was a junior in high school and after two years of nursing school, she'd quit and got married. She was 19 at the time. She was the one who could have managed it because in those days apparently if you worked as a nurse it wasn't a big tuition fee whatever the tuition was my parents were able to handle it, but, no, the rest of them couldn't do it. We did not have the college aid in those days.

When we children were grown, Betty worked as a bookkeeper at a title company, and became an officer in the company. Jack, the oldest boy, worked for RCA Victor after high school. During my Dad's extended grave illness, we had quite a period of very little income in 1939, 1940, with my Dad in the hospital. My brothers were selling popsicles to the people driving to the shore, when they were stopped at red lights. I never knew any of this hardship because, at age four, I was always shielded from it. Everybody pitched in to do what they could do.

When Dad was elected Freeholder, he earned a decent wage. Jack then went into the service during the war. When he came out he went to night school on the GI bill, but he married an English girl during the war and he brought her back and they had several children and he dropped out. He ended up being a successful real estate broker and developed his own real estate business without the college degree. Bob, then a naval officer, stayed in the Navy after the Second World War and made a decent career. He retired as a commander and he managed to get his college degree while in the Navy, ultimately from the University of Colorado in Boulder, because he had gotten a lot of classwork done while he was training to be a pilot at Chapel Hill at the University of North Carolina. Then he chose to finish his work at Colorado because he'd never lived in the west of the United States, only on the East Coast. He got his bachelor's degree in business. Then Jay the one who went to night school, my inspiration, he was in the Korean War. All four of my brothers were in the military. Jay was a paratrooper and then he went to Rutgers, got his degree at night and then later he worked for the welfare board for the County and he ended up being supervisor of the entire welfare board with 500 employees, a multimillion dollar budget of Camden County, one of the biggest and poorest in the state. He later went to the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, also at night, and got a masters degree in public administration.

Next came Charles. He joined the Air Force during the Korean War and became a weather observer out at Offutt Air Base in Omaha, Nebraska Strategic Air Command Headquarters. The air force had a program then to encourage the airmen to do constructive things. They would pay three fourths of your college courses if you took a college course. So, Charles lined up all of his fellow workers airmen to agree that he would take all of their night shifts so he could be free in the daytime and they thought that was wonderful. He then signed up for a full time course of study at Creighton University, a fine Jesuit school, and then went to get it approved. And of course the lieutenant says, are you crazy, its not supposed to cover a full course. He talked his way up to the next level. He hit a major who said, you know, I don't see anything in the regulations that says we can't do this. Let's give it a shot and so he did and he got his college degree in three years while being a full-time weather observer in the Air Force, earning sergeant's stripes along the way. Then the University of Notre Dame gave him a scholarship for his masters degree and then later a teaching fellowship for his Ph.D. and he became an American history professor. My sister, Hazel, married right after the Second World War, in early 1948. She did not go to college. After her husband died many years later she did take a couple of courses. Later she worked for many years at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, helping others take mandated tests for admission to various college programs.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service in 1963?

TULL: Right. August of '63.

Q: Did you have a college degree at this time? Did you ever get a college degree?

TULL: No. Yes. I went to night school every chance I had. Sometimes against Department rules. You know the Department would also pay part of your tuition, but there was a time when I was taking Vietnamese full-time and I was going to college four nights a week, too, and picking up the credits. I couldn't ask to be reimbursed for that because I wasn't supposed to be doing it. You were supposed to give full attention to hard language training, but I could do both. I was fortunate at having an ear for the language. I eventually finished the degree. I got my degree from the University of Maryland as it turned out. I patched things together. I took some courses when I was sent out on my first Foreign Service assignment to Chicago in the passport office. I took a couple of courses there at DePaul University in Chicago and then when I was back in Washington I signed up for whatever University of Maryland courses were given at the various military installations, the Pentagon, Bolling Air Force Base, Fort Meade, Andrews Air Base, pieced it together and eventually got the degree I think in January, 1972. I was selected for area studies, long term area studies an academic year, and that's what I wanted. I knew I would be getting my BA degree in January and I wouldn't be starting the University of Michigan, which I chose for the Southeast Asia studies program, in August. I got a worried call from personnel saying, we just have one thing about this assignment for graduate school; we see that you don't have a college degree and you're going for a masters. I said, well, I'll have the college degree in January. I said, it's definite, I'm finishing my last course, its solid, so that's how we did it. I then went out to Ann Arbor, Michigan and got a masters in Southeast Asia studies.

Q: Well, let's take when you entered in what the summer, when in '60?

TULL: August 12, 1963. A highlight of my initial Washington experience was witnessing, on the mall, the Civil Rights march led by Dr. Martin Luther King on August 28th, and hearing from distant loud speakers some of his "I have a dream" speech.

Q: August of '63. How did you, what was you're A-100 your basic officer course like, the composition of it?

TULL: Well, it was a two month course in those days. Two gentlemen whose names I don't remember, chaired it. We had what I thought for the time was an exceptional number of women in the class. I think there were about six and a fair sized sprinkling of USIA people as well as State. State dominated. I found it just fascinating. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I walked out of the secretary's job into something that was absolutely fascinating. It was really great.

Q: Did you feel at all out of place, I mean with people coming with college degrees having spent the traditional thing or being a woman, or was Theresa, Terry Tull, were you a striver in not letting this stuff get to you or not?

TULL: I didn't realize that what I was doing was that unusual. I really didn't. When I went to Washington there was a little glitch apparently the course was full so I was assigned first to the personnel section where for a week or two I separated personnel forms that had 14 copies in nice neat little stacks and I thought I was back at my first secretarial job. Then I was assigned to the Philippine desk. That was wonderful. They made a little desk for me in the office director's office. I was in a little corner of his office and he gave me real work to do and it was great. Oh, I got such a bird's eye view of what was going on and I thought, you have really made the right choice and I was interested in Southeast Asia anyway. That was my primary area of interest. I thought that was great.

Then I entered the next A-100 class. I guess it probably wasn't until October maybe it was even later than that because I was in class when President Kennedy was assassinatea terrible day. I went to the Capitol to view JFK's casket, and attended the funeral at Arlington Cemetery. A grim, historic experience. I didn't feel overwhelmed by the competition in class at all. As I gradually realized that I was there with lawyers and Ph.D.s and master's degrees from Yale and Harvard and Princeton, I thought hey, Rutgers night school is not so bad. That's kind of the way it hit me. I'll tell you the truth. It bothered some of my fellow classmates in a semi-humorous way. There was the consular course. I forget how long that lasted, but each week there was an exhaustive exam, at least two weeks maybe three weeks, it was heavily into consular work, citizenship and citizen services.

Q: Which course was this?

TULL: I don't remember the name, but it was this long thing with these huge books you had to deal with, the FAMs. I quite frequently got the highest grade or close to the highest. There was this one fellow who I dated a couple of times as it turned out and he had his master's from Yale and he would come over and say, what did you get, what was your grade? What did you get? It was okay. What did you get, come on Theresa, what did you get? I said, well a 96. How can I tell my father you got a 96? He spent all this money on me and I got a 90! You know, it was that kind of funny way. There was nothing vicious or anything about it.

Q: Did you get any feel for what you wanted to do in what area?

TULL: I had it before I went in, before I went in: political work in Southeast Asia. There was nothing I wanted to be except a political officer.

Q: Why that?

TULL: Politics just interested me from the time I was on my father's knee watching the mayor and freeholder and having a positive impact, it just interested me. I didn't want to be an elected official, but I definitely wanted to focus on that area. At that time most women were being funneled into personnel or consular work so I was very fortunate to ultimately get what I wanted to do and in Southeast Asia as my career developed. We were very involved in Vietnam at the time, and that particularly interested me. Africa interested me, too.

Q: It was a time when Africa was really opening up.

TULL: Yes. It was interesting.

Q: Well, then, you finished I guess when in November or December of '63?

TULL: Right, '63 and then the big day came. It would have been, it must have been late December. The big day came when you're going to get your overseas assignments and we were all sold into slavery in the passport office of Frances G. Knight of sainted memory. A few lucky ones got to be couriers - diplomatic couriers.

Q: Why did this happen? This is so unusual.

TULL: The State Department didn't have any money. That was the claim, that they were having a budget problem and Frances G. Knight wanted these bodies. Most of us were dispatched to various passport agencies throughout the United States and I got Chicago. I got Chicago and I had a brother living there at that time, Charles was teaching at DePaul University. I didn't want New Yorl'd been there often. I asked for San Francisco and then Chicago. So, I got Chicago. That was a disappointing development. I mean you really felt like you were shuttled off to the siding of the railroad yard rather than moving forward.

Q: At least your whole class was going.

TULL: Everybody was being stuck one way or another. Nobody got an overseas assignment except for the diplomatic couriers. Personally it worked out fine. I took a couple of courses at DePaul University and I lived about 10 blocks from my brother and his family and we were always extremely close so it was rewarding in that way. Chicago, I'd never lived in Chicago. It's a great city.

Q: What did you do?

TULL: Adjudicated citizenship claims. You sat there; we were at the counter. We took timed turns being at the counter. People would come up to apply for a passport and we would have to ensure they qualified. We would alternate adjudicating with mail applications. We would have to decide whether the citizenship was adequately proven. We did that by the hour. One of the incredible things we had to do which we felt terrible about, we're talking 1964, when a gray haired woman would come in we would kind of groan and think oh please don't come to my counter because there was a provision of law that had gone into effect in the early '20s, and was operative for a few years. I may have some of the specifics of this wrong, but you were a consular officer. You probably know what I'm talking about, whereby a woman acquired the citizenship of her husband in marriage and lost the American citizenship. So, these people would come in and had never set foot out of the U.S. They had maybe been elected to their school board or whatever. They would come in and they would have to give proof their husband's citizenship at the time of their marriage. If the husband wasn't a citizen at the time of the marriage, the wife lost her US citizenship. Oh, to tell some sweet lady that she had to go get naturalized, was awful and I had to do that several times. You're just making this up, they'd say, I'm going to get my lawyer and this, that and the other. It was terrible. Apparently the Department had tried to get the law changed and Congress' attitude was well, the people involved are going to be dying out before too long so let's not waste our time on it.

Q: How did the Foreign Service types fit into Francis Knight's civil service empire?

TULL: We were fine in Chicago. We had some good people. The director was Bruce Weaver and his deputy there Bill Wharton, whose father was one of our first black ambassadors. Bill later became Deputy Secretary of State in Consular Affairs.

Bill Wharton was the deputy and there was a neat lady there who had been there forever and I think there was initially an attitude of here come these Foreign Service Officers, they're just going to be so above it all. But we had a nice group of people. Hey, we're here we might as well be pleasant. We ended up having a very nice working, and social, situation. We really did.

Q: How long did you do that?

TULL: January to July, six or seven months.

Q: Then what happened?

TULL: While we were there we got our assignments and I was assigned to Brussels with French language training first. I went back and linked up with a colleague who had been in my initial class and we rented an apartment in Arlington Towers. She was studying German. She was going to go off to Switzerland and I was doing French. We did I guess it was 16 weeks or whatever we had.

Q: In the garage of Arlington Towers.

TULL: In the garage, the old garage. It was wonderful, ha. Then I went off in January to Brussels. In those days it was a rotational training program there that in theory a junior officer spent six months in each of the core major sections of the embassy. In reality you spent the bulk of your time in consular work.

Q: Had you done much language before you got into the Foreign Service?

TULL: No. No, I had two years of high school Spanish, but it was kind of a waste. I can still say the Hail Mary in Spanish, but that's about it.

Q: When you met a language, how did you do, when you did French?

TULL: Oh, the Foreign Service method, you know.

Q: I mean did you find that.

TULL: It was easy. I had a high language aptitude and I can vouch for that because I took the language aptitude test with an injured writing hand and still did well.

Q: It's called the MLAT. Modern Language Aptitude Test.

TULL: I had broken a finger on my right hand and injured my leg in a horseback riding accident right before I started the A-100 course. When the language aptitude test was passed out I couldn't write fast enough to do it and so I indicated I needed help half-way through. I still got a high grade. I'm not a wonderful French speaker, but I eventually tested at 3/3. I have finished the initial course with 2/2 but I worked and studied in Brussels and got it up to 3/3.

Q: You were in Brussels from '64 until when?

TULL: '65 and '66, '64 was spent in Chicago, and in language training.

Q: Oh, I see. So, '65 and '66. How was Brussels when you got there in '65?

TULL: It was a fun place to live. You were perfectly situated for enjoying Europe. Brussels even today its sort of a little hub. You can go out in many directions just for a few hours and go to interesting places. Paris was three hours by train. Amsterdam I think two or three hours. So, from that point of view it was very nice. I had visited Europe before. I had gone in 1961 for five weeks on my own and had a really good, a good experience with Europe so I wasn't cold to the idea of being over there, but it was great. At the embassy, the ambassador was Douglas MacArthur, II and I recall being very impressed that even though I was just a brand new junior officer when I called on him he spent about a half an hour outlining U.S. relations with Brussels, what the issues were that they were facing and I thought that was pretty decent. He was very tough. He was not very well liked at the embassy. He had a bad temper but overall was impressive. His wife...

Q: Wahwee.

TULL: Lord help us. Wasn't she the speaker of the house's daughter or something?

Q: Barkley's daughter.

TULL: Alben Barkley's daughter. She was a piece of work. I was, I guess I was one of only a few women officers at the embassy. I think they were a little unsure of what to do with me in terms of protocol. At that time every new spouse of all new officers had to pay a formal call on the wife of everybody who outranked them on the diplomatic list. In my case since I was at the bottom of the list and was an officer, not a spouse, I didn't know, should I do this or not? The word came back yes, you should make these calls. In the meantime start doing your work, running out and doing all these calls as your work permitted. I did that. It was in a way kind of useful because I did get to meet people I wouldn't have met, otherwise. The wives welcomed me into their homes. The bosses back in the embassy were not too happy that I would be walking out in the afternoon to pay calls, but, you had to do that. Again, what was the name of the ambassador's wife? Wahwee or something?

Q: I'm not sure, but she's known as Wahwee.

TULL: Once a month she had a coffee for the embassy wives and they decided to invite me. The residence was utterly gorgeous, an old chateau right next to the embassy. Coffee and tea were served, with lovely little cookies. Mrs. MacArthur, however, drank champagne which she did not offer to her guests. For me, that was not good breeding. In my home, my other taught us that you offered what you had to your guests and you didn't sit there and drink something or eat something if you couldn't offer it to your guests. I found it strange hostess behavior.

Q: Did you get caught in any of these things with Mrs. MacArthur calling on you at the last minute to come and almost wait on her? You hear these stories that have come out that she could be very difficult at times.

TULL: She was known to be very difficult and the word was that she was an alcoholic. I didn't see her drunk. I saw her drinking champagne when the rest of us were offered coffee, but, no, I wasn't called over for anything extra like that. Then later Ridgway Brewster Knight became the ambassador and he was different.

Q: Was there an interesting political situation in Belgium at the time you went there or not?

TULL: Yes, to an extent there was. Zaire, the former Belgian Congo, had not been free very long. We're talking '65 and '66 and I remember one day pretty early on in my stay where everybody got quite concerned because a demonstration was storming toward the embassy. It turned out it was a demonstration to thank us for sending an airlift to get some of those people out of some beleaguered spot in the Congo.

Q: I think this was Operation Dragon Rouge if I recall. I interviewed Ambassador MacArthur some years ago and talked about that where we used our air facilities to drop Belgian paratroopers.

TULL: We did something and I was thinking, what is this? It was the peak of Vietnam and I was expecting anti-Vietnam demonstrations, which we did get occasionally, and we had extra police guards at the embassy, but this was a thank you America. This was nice. That was good. I had an interesting experience though that I might mention.

Q: Yes?

TULL: Three weeks into my tour in Brussels I was living in a hotel, I hadn't found a place to live yet. I was in a hotel about six blocks from the embassy and I was made the duty officer which terrified me three weeks in, what do I do? Well, okay, they must know what they're doing. About 2:00 a.m. on Sunday morning I get a phone call from the embassy commo people and they said there's a Niact immediate. I knew enough to know that I had to go in immediately. I flipped through the pages of the duty book to confirm this, and yes, I have to go in. I went in by taxi. I didn't like as a woman hailing a cab at 2:00 a.m. but I did. At the embassy, I read the cable. For one thing it was sent to us as an information copy; we weren't action. It was from Lubumbashi to whatever the capital was.

Q: It was Leopoldville at the time.

TULL: Yes, Leopoldville. I'm reading this and I'm thinking, I don't see any action that we could take on this, but according to the duty book I was supposed to get in touch with the deputy chief of mission who at that time was a gentleman by the name of McSweeney. I'm looking at this and I'm thinking why should I wake him up? There's nothing he can do here. So, I kind of waited and I thought no, I'm not going to do it. I noted on the cable that I had seen it and went back to the hotel and set my alarm to go back to the embassy at 8:00 a.m. on the Sunday morning. I went in again and got the message and then I called the political counselor, Bob Beaudry and said, you might not recall but I'm Theresa Tull, the new junior officer. I'm the duty officer and I was awakened at 2:00 in the morning with a Niact immediate, but I didn't see any action that needed to be done here so rather than bother people in the middle of the night, I thought I would just wait and call this morning. He said worriedly, all right, well, fine, I'll be right down. Kind of like, my God, what has this junior officer done? I said, well, I'm here. Within a half an hour or 45 minutes he came in looking a little disturbed, didn't say anything, but just kind of where is it? I said here it is. He read the cable, and said, relieved, they should never have sent this Niact immediate. We're info. I said, well, that's why I didn't want to disturb anybody. What was your name again? Well, I had a buddy. He thought I had shown good judgment. He and his wife invited me to dinners at their home when they were entertaining Belgian politicians, and he encouraged me to think in terms of political work, which was what I wanted to do. I'd bump into him in the corridors. He'd say, when are you coming to the political section? I said, as soon as they spring me. I ended up having a year in consular work in little segments, and a few months each in admin. I had maybe three months actually with him, in the political, and econ section, and found it as interesting as I had hoped it would be.

Bob Beaudry was my first mentor. I think it is fair to say. I think he was impressed with my judgment and saw the makings of a political officer in me. He was very helpful to me with my onward assignment from Belgium. I was assigned initially to be a consular officer in Saigon. The one thing I knew in life I did not want to ever do was to be a consular officer. Bob's tour finished before mine did and when I was saying goodbye to him he wanted to know if I had an assignment. I said, yes, I've been assigned to Saigon as a consular officer. You should be a political officer. I said, well, that's what I want. He said, well, would you go to Saigon as a consular officer if you had to? I said, yes, I would. I'm interested in Saigon, but I want political work. If it's the only way and I have to take this assignment now I will. He said, okay. He said, well, I'll talk to them back in junior officers' assignments. He said he knew the director of junior officer assignments. My assignment was changed to be a political officer in Saigon. It would not have happened, I don't think, without Bob's recommendation. Later when I got my first ambassadorship, Bob had retired, but I tracked him down. He was living up in Maine I think and I invited him down on my swearing in date, but he couldn't come. I told him I just wanted to thank you because you really helped set me in the right direction. You helped me get a political assignment and you were very kind to me in Brussels.

Q: You were doing consular work for about a year then. What sort of work were you doing?

TULL: Visas. Mostly visitor visas, but some immigrant visas. Not much citizenship. Citizenship services, but it was mostly visas. We had in Brussels two officers, the consul and vice consul, usually a rotational junior officer. For three months we were sent to Antwerp, a constituent post and that was interesting, but we had to take the train every day. They didn't have housing accommodations there. We did a broader array of consular work there. They had shipping problems and things like that that we'd get involved in. It was visa work that made me decide. If I ended up being in consular work I would ask to transfer to be a secretary in the political section. I could not stand it.

Q: In Antwerp did you get involved in dealing with seamen and shipping?

TULL: Yes. Nothing too exciting, but they would come in. There were certain things they had to have done. I guess the captain had to have certain things certified and all.

Q: No mutinies?

TULL: No mutinies, no. Maybe a missing seaman or someone who needed help.

Q: Did you get involved with prison visits and things of that nature?

TULL: No.

Q: Just pretty routine stuff.

TULL: Never did that. In Brussels when I would have the consular duty I did go to the hospital a few times to visit to his great shock and delight I would have to say an American gentleman who was sick and alone. He'd been on a tour and had had a heart attack or something. We were notified and I went over to visit him. He was so grateful and was just astounded that anybody had come. I had one fascinating consular case in Brussels. I was vice consul.

Q: Let me just.

Q: This is tape two, side one with Terry Tull. Yes?

TULL: I was starting to talk about this particular consular case that was quite exciting. This gentleman came in looking very harried and sits down and says, "I want to talk to a man." I said, "Well, sir, I'm the vice consul." A lot of people just assumed I was a secretary. They'd see a woman and think "secretary". He said, "Well, I need to talk to a man." I said, "Well, sir, my boss is also a woman and she looks to me to handle these initial interviews and in fact, she's on leave just now. What is the problem? Maybe we can help you; just feel free and relax." He sat down with the wildest story you ever heard. He said he had discovered a sunken Spanish ship off the coast of Florida, and had retrieved some gold coins and perhaps jewelry. He had mortgaged his home to get money to go to Spain. He had gone to Spain and had tried to interest the Spanish government into coming up with money to salvage this vessel but they weren't interested. According to his story he had gone through all his money and he had sold some of the coins to finance the trip and he was now absolutely destitute in Brussels with a wife and I think six children ranging in age down to about three years old and they were there, desperate for funds to return to the U.S. in our waiting room.

It would have been the biggest repatriation case I've ever handled. But he didn't want to give up. He said, "My wife is Mormon, if you can get us to a Mormon group they'll help us." I said, "Well, I know there are Mormons in Brussels" I'm thinking to myself, but I don't know that they're going to want to take in eight people, but he insisted. I called, but first I told the gentleman his options. I said we can process you right now for repatriation to get you all back to the States and you will have to eventually pay it off as a loan. He said, "No, I'm sure the Mormons will help." I got in touch with the head of the Mormon group in Brussels. They said, "What?" I said, "Yes, there's this gentleman here and his wife who is a very devout Mormon. I'm offering to do a repatriation loan to get them back to the States, but they insist that you will help." He says, "Well, all right, send them over and we'll see what we can do." What the Mormon's apparently did was, they gave them enough money to go to Rotterdam. They told the man that he could probably get passage on a ship. I got a call from Rotterdam, I don't know whether we had a consulate there or not, from Holland somewhere, saying, "What did you people do, dumping your repatriation case on us?" I said, "What do you mean?" I didn't even know it happened. I said, "These people wanted the Mormons to help them. I offered to do the repatriation." He said, "Well, they're up here now." The distressed American thought that if the Mormons gave them enough money to get the family on a train to Rotterdam he could try to get his way back to the States on a ship, as the Mormons had suggested. Anyway, that was wild and woolly consular case. This man, I think he was serious. He might have actually found a treasure ship, I'll never know. But he had to talk to a man, none of this talking to a woman.

Q: Well, usually, when that is, its "I was caught in a whorehouse and they took all my money."

TULL: That's right. The truth is stranger than fiction.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop at this point and we'll put at the end of the tape where we are so we'll know where to pick it up again. We'll pick this up the next time in 1965 when you were off, I mean you were.

TULL: Vietnamese language training.

Q: Going to take Vietnamese language training.

TULL: Okay.

Q: Great.

TULL: We'll try to do that.

Q: Great.

Q: Okay, today is December 6, 2004. Terry you said there were a couple of things you wanted to talk about Brussels first, so go ahead.

TULL: Yes, if you don't mind. First, just as a pitch to the State Department in the future: As I indicated I was the beneficiary in Brussels of a rotational training assignment for junior officers where in theory we were to spend six months in each of the four major sections of the embassy. In reality it ended up being rather heavily loaded toward the consular function, but still you did actually as a junior officer get into each of the major functions, political, economic and administrative. I think that was so beneficial because in recent years, all new incoming junior officers I think have to go off I think for 18 months and do nothing but consular work and that was sort of the test to see whether they really had the stuff to work overseas, live overseas, but also because we needed staffing in our consular sections. I think that is a mistake frankly. If you could go back to a system where each new officer had an opportunity to do real work in each of those major sections I think it would be very beneficial. I found it a very good educational tool, and it wasn't just make-work. When I was sent to the economic section for example, the counselor was Chris Petrow and the officer immediately under him was Bill Harrop who later had a significant career. I was given a job of writing an article on an economic subject for a prestigious Belgian publication under the name of the ambassador. The ambassador had selected as his topic what was then being viewed as difficulties in the world food supply. I, a brand new rotational training officer, was told write this article for the ambassador. I was steered to various people from whom I could get information and did my research and I wrote the article. It was accepted with virtually no change. The ambassador was very pleased with it. Bill Harrop liked it, and Chris Petrow also. It was published in this journal under the name of Ambassador Ridgway Brewster Knight. So, I mean, that gives you a real boost as a young officer to do that.

Q: Absolutely.

TULL: In the administrative section, another junior officer and I were assigned to work together to produce a local wage survey. He was Bob Lamb, who also went on to a very successful career in the Foreign Service. He became assistant secretary for administration in the Department at one point. He and I were dispatched with a local employee to do the local wage survey. The results of that, if I'm correct, not only affected our embassy employees, but there was also the mission of USEC, since they were also employees of the U.S. government. It gave us an opportunity to go out and meet with several leading Belgian employers. You learn about the economy. You get the experience of doing that face to face, interviewing. Then Bob and I sat together for a week or so and totaled up all the figures and came up with a new wage plan for our local employees, again, aided by our senior local employee. So, that was again a very educational experience.

Then one of the memorable assignments I was given was to represent the ambassador at a Holocaust memorial ceremony held at the site of a Belgian concentration camp run by the Germans during the war. The organizers wanted the ambassador, who was invited to many ceremonies and frequently designated someone to attend in his place. I was assigned to spend my Sunday attending the ceremony. It was an extremely moving experience. I was seated up on the dignitaries' platform with the ambassadors from some other countries who had come, who hadn't sent a junior officer. It again was a very moving experience, not only good representational experience, but to see those survivors walking by in their old uniforms, and then to tour the actual facility, to see first-hand their reminder of that cruel history.

Q: Do you have any idea why the ambassador ducked this? I would have thought something like this would be the sort of thing that Ridgway Knight is an experienced officer, would not that this is politically sensitive.

TULL: I have no idea. It was discussed at his staff meetings, which he allowed all of the officers in the embassy to attend. It might have come in maybe to the USIS office or whatever, but it was definitely for him and it was kind of batted around a little bit and they said, well, we'll send someone and a little while later I was informed that I would do it. I think it was one of those inadvertent glitches because Knight as you say was a very experienced and very disciplined efficient ambassador. He would not have sluffed off something if he thought it were important. Maybe he had a conflict, I don't know; a conflicting date. Or perhaps this happened when MacArthur as still ambassador.

Another interesting activity in Brussels involved working with Congolese students. Ambassador Knight was interested in getting the embassy, particularly the younger officers, involved with some of the students who were coming up from the former Belgian Congo for education in Belgium. Belatedly the Belgian government decided they had to do something to make up for their laxity during the colonial period and they started bringing numbers of Congolese to Belgium for studies. The ambassador thought it would be useful for the four junior officers at the embassy to get involved with these students. Somehow I found myself and the other junior officers drafted into teaching the Congolese students how to square dance. Now, step one was I had to learn how to square dance myself. I had never done it. But we ended up having a very fun time. I guess that came under sort of the general USIS outreach program, but I remember thinking at the time, this was a rather strange thing. I'm from Runnemede, New Jersey, and we don't do a lot of square dancing there, but the Congolese did seem to enjoy it very much.

So, I just wanted to wrap up those ideas and I had one final point. I mentioned earlier about that the political counselor, Bob Beaudry had been very helpful to me. There were a couple of other episodes I might mention. When I was leaving the post, this is not in any particular chronological order, but when I was saying goodbye to folks, Chris Petrow, the economic counselor (who I thought would be a sure bet for an ambassadorship one or two tours down the line from there, patrician, capable, very nice person). He was saying goodbye to me. He said, "You know, Terry, you're going to be an ambassador. I can just see you're going to make it all the way to the top." I was stunned, and very appreciative. As you know I started my Foreign Service career without a college degree. Initially I had a slight feeling that I was kind of the kid with the nose pressed against the window looking in and I didn't really belong in that room, but anyway somehow I found myself in the room. To have a person who I thought was so capable to make that kind of statement about my potential; I thought it was a very encouraging thing.

Q: Well, it's not just a nice thing. It gives you a feeling of you're going somewhere. It helps set your mind I think.

TULL: Definitely that attitude there, that element to it and particularly coming from someone who I really respected greatly. There was another item that happened as part of this training assignment. Our DCM was John McSweeney. I think he later went on to become ambassador to possibly Romania, maybe it was Bulgaria, but he was very competent, and he looked like central casting had put him in the Foreign Service. He was really good. Our consul, who was in charge of the consular section while I was there was a very difficult woman to deal with. She was very capable in her way, but she had a very sharp tongue and not the best manner in dealing with the public at all times. She was very hard on her junior officer staff. She thought it was her job to kind of slap us into shape type thing. I learned a lot from her, and off duty she could be pleasant, inviting me to art exhibits or for a glass of wine. But she was unpredictable. I frequently felt on edge with her.

One day she blew up apparently at a significant important American businessman. This was not the first time when a civil request was made by an American visitor to the section and she had just gone into a rant about it. I was called in from whatever section I was working in and I was told that the DCM had decided that the Consul was going to take two weeks vacation immediately and the next day I would take over the consular section for the two weeks that she would be away. I did not appreciate this. I was yanked out of either the political or economic section where I didn't have a lot of time, but it was a vote of confidence that they would give me the whole section while she was gone. She was very forthright about it. She said, "Well, I really blew it. I just lost my cool. Like it or not I've got to take some time off now. Maybe he's right. I do blow my top too much." Anyway I had the whole section there for two weeks while she went off and cooled off. Again, it was good experience for a junior officer to run the section like that. That's about it for the Brussels assignment.

Q: Okay, let's move back to 1967. You took Vietnamese for, how did this come about?

TULL: I began Vietnamese language training in 1967. I took it from January of '67 for 44 weeks. It came about through the intercession and help of Bob Beaudry who was the political counselor who had taken an interest in my career and performance. I was assigned as I indicated earlier to be a consular officer in Saigon and I wanted to do political work and Bob said he would talk with a friend of his provided I was willing to go and be a consular officer in Saigon and I said yes, I definitely would do it. Anyway, the word came back and my orders, by the time they were finalized were to be a political officer in Saigon with 44 weeks of Vietnamese language training in Washington. I would not have gotten the language training, I don't think, with the consular assignment.

Q: How did you fit with Vietnamese as far as, how did you find learning Vietnamese? A difficult language.

TULL: I was fortunate. I found it, well, I can't say its easy, but it's a tonal language and I had no difficulty with the tones. I've played the piano, I like to sing. I could detect the differences in tone and there were small classes. You know how the Foreign Service Institute works, there were four or five of us in the class. I didn't have any difficulty. I earned a 3/3 at the end of the course.

Q: I can speak as one who does not play the piano and does not sing and I was exposed to a couple of weeks of Vietnamese and found it just, I never could hear the difference been the damn things, you know. It all sounds like one thing and maybe you raised your eyebrows or something like that. Anyway. You got to Vietnam, what were you picking up while you were taking Vietnamese, those 44 weeks of, what was going on in Vietnam at the time. We're talking about the Washington scene.

TULL: Yes, 1967. Well, of course the war was very controversial among our college students and a segment of our population, but I was a strong supporter of what we were trying to do there and I still remain convinced it was worth the effort. Unfortunate it didn't work out the way I would have liked to have seen it work out, but it was a time when there were difficulties, a lot of campus riots and takeovers of selective service offices and things like that, but I was not aware of any particular downturns in the military situation in Vietnam itself. I felt I was going into an operation that had a chance of success. It was a war. There was no question about it, but I was not frightened at the thought that I was going into the war. When I arrived in Saigon in January of 1968 it was two weeks before the Tet Offensive. I was billeted at a hotel in downtown Saigon, on Tudo Street and I got a rather rude awakening when the Tet Offensive hit in the middle of the night right outside my window.

Q: Before we get to that even though it was a short period, what were you getting, was there a sort of a sizable group that was going out in the training process when you were back in Washington getting ready? Was there a real program to get people to Vietnam?

TULL: Oh, very large numbers of students. The CORDS program, I forget what the acronym stands for, Civil Operations Rural Development or something like that. They were getting a lot of people military as well as Foreign Service, AID people, USIA to learn Vietnamese and they would go out and they would be staffing embassy offices in each of the provinces of South Vietnam. We'd have a CORDS office in each of those provinces and maybe it even had suboffices in the smaller administrative units within the province itself. There might have been other small offices. There were a lot of people taking Vietnamese language in 1967. Not all were taking 44 weeks. Some of them were taking shorter periods, but most of the Foreign Service people were taking it for 44 weeks.

Q: Was there a cadre within those going out there of junior officers like yourself and all who were dubious about this, or were they enthusiastic about this, were they opposed to the war? Did you get any feel, was there any sort of movement going on?

TULL: I got no feeling of that whatsoever. The people that I studied with and ended up working with over there for almost three years in Saigon, I think they were like me. They viewed Vietnam as the hot issue of our time for the U.S. government. It was exciting to be involved with it. I didn't detect any sense that we shouldn't have been involved. Most of the Foreign Service people I met were willing, maybe even volunteered, but were definitely willing to go. Probably that might not have been the uniform case of say older officers who were sent over, I don't know, but this group that I went with, most of whom either ended up in the embassy or at provincial offices were junior officers, or, were one or two promotions up from junior officer. There was not a lot of feeling of what a waste this is. What am I doing to my career? This is a total waste. No, let's get over there. This is the exciting issue of our day. I guess this is probably a similar sentiment that a lot of our Foreign Service people might feel today about volunteering to go to Iraq, God bless them.

Q: Yes. Well, when you got there, I mean this is before the Tet Offensive, how was the situation explained to you and all when you got there? What were you doing?

TULL: I was assigned to the internal affairs unit of the political section. We had a very large political section. There were close to 20 officers. I believe that might have included the political officers who were assigned to each of the four military corps areas. There might have been one in each Corps area who actually technically belonged to us in the political section, but I believe we had five or six in the internal affairs unit, which followed the internal Vietnamese developments, particularly political developments. There was the external affairs unit which dealt with Vietnam's relations with foreign countries and ultimately with the peace process with the negotiations in Paris; the political/military section; a labor office with a couple of officers. When I first went there and here I'm drawing on a memory to try to pull a name out, there was a very famous retired American general who had a little operation in our political section. He shared the space. He didn't report to anybody except the ambassador, but this is frustrating. He had been very active in the Philippines. I've got it: General Lansdale, I think it was Edward Lansdale.

Q: Oh, yes, he was the man who, he had been a colonel and very much close to Magsaysay.

TULL: He was very close to Magsaysay, in combating a communist insurgency in the Philippines. He was very well known at the time. He wrote a book and he was regarded as an expert in counter insurgency warfare. He was fascinating. We had the head of the political section who was on our floor and then there was a political counselor on the floor above me. It was a large operation. I believe I was the first woman officer ever assigned to the Saigon political section.

Q: Who was head of the political section, the political counselor?

TULL: The counselor when I first went was Arch Calhoun and he was later, when his tour was finished, Martin Herz. The head of the political section when I first went was Laurin Askew and he was replaced by Galen Stone. Both very nice people.

Q: Very competent.

TULL: Yes, they were.

Q: Again, prior to Tet, what were you getting, were they saying we're winning the war. The government really has extended its control or were they saying this is very problematic?

TULL: I don't recall. I definitely don't recall that there was any hyping of progress, certainly not in the political section. The sentiment was pretty strong and again whether it was before the Tet Offensive that I got this or after, the sentiment was strong that our military, the military components were under extreme pressure from McNamara to do body counts of dead enemies to show progress. In the political section this approach was ridiculed.

The first couple of weeks I got there, it was a question of finding your way around Saigon and being assigned certain duties. I as the junior-most person in the section got a lot of the grunt work. There was a daily publication put out by the Vietnamese government in Vietnamese, French and English and it was my job to scan that for items of information. You had to look at all three because the one that had the meatiest coverage and the thickest number of items was the Vietnamese, but you would also maybe see an item in English and then check it in the Vietnamese and find out there were four or five more sentences that gave you more information about who was doing what or what the Vietnamese government would be up to. That sort of thing. I was pushed into doing that. I was also made the biographic officer, one of the "fun" things that junior officers get to do. I also perused Vietnamese newspapers. Saigon had about 35 daily newspapers, most of them in Vietnamese, a couple in English. I skimmed those daily to find out who was attacking whom. The average American did not realize the variety of opinion that was allowed to be freely expressed in South Vietnam. So, you had different groups that had their own newspapers and they could attack government policies pretty strongly provided they did not support the communist policies. They could criticize bland issues, they could criticize this, that and the other, so there was a lot to look at there and they were vying for their audience. There was many a night, not in the first couple of weeks, that I would take home newspapers, home being the hotel and I would work to 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning writing cables summarizing some of the key editorial comments in these papers that reflected fledgling political party views. I had hardly gotten my feet wet when the Tet Offensive struck.

Q: How did it hit you personally?

TULL: I was in this hotel.

Q: Which hotel do you remember?

TULL: Let's see, the Astor on Tudo Street, but we would pronounce it Tudo, T-U-D-O, Tudo Street and it was about a block around the corner from the Vietnamese naval headquarters. It was around maybe 2:00 in the morning and I heard tremendous blasts of what I thought were firecrackers going off, but major sounds of firecrackers. Not being totally stupid I slithered to the window and cracked a Venetian blind of the hotel room and saw some people shooting at each other in the street, running around the corner. Were you there for the Tet Offensive?

Q: No.

TULL: No. There were strings of firecrackers hung from buildings and earlier in the evening people had been igniting them illegally because the government didn't want that, but you saw all the red strings of firecrackers hanging and in the street the paper red paper residue. So, when I heard suddenly at 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 whatever it was, this tremendous racket, I just assumed it was more of that, but it sounded stronger, so I didn't want to stick my head out the window obviously so I just cracked the blind. I could see some fighters, but they were scooting around the corner. Apparently they were part of the attack force on the Vietnamese naval headquarters. That was just as I say around the corner. I was pretty scared and decided I wasn't going to stand by the window. I remember being concerned naturally thinking well, now if these people take me over, they come into the hotel, they're right outside, if they come in the hotel, should I acknowledge that I speak Vietnamese? Would it be better if I didn't? You know, these thoughts are running through your head. At any rate they did not come into that hotel.

We got through the night and when daylight came I put the radio on. Armed Forces Radio was announcing that the embassy had been attacked and that there was a widescale offensive going on in sections of Saigon and it said that personnel, embassy and military personnel should remain in their quarters until further notice, but keep the radio on. It was in the middle of the Tet holiday and so I went on the roof of the hotel, it had a rooftop restaurant, because I wanted to see what was going on. You could see tanks going back and forth and bodies in the street. You could see helicopters and still hear fighting and shooting. This would have been maybe 7:00 a.m. or something like that. While I was there two army majors who were billeted in the hotel, they had not been there in Saigon very long, they came up and they were astounded to see me. What is this American woman doing here on the roof? Because the hotel staff, most of them, were off. They were not serving breakfast; the restaurant was closed and we knew that it would be closed.

Q: It was Tet, yes.

TULL: It was Tet. These two fellows, they were really antsy. They wanted to get to MACV and see what was what, but the radio was telling them to stay where you are unless you're called. We watched, the three of us watched the show, from the roof. At one point I looked across the street. We were on about the sixth or seventh floor of the hotel. There was an apartment house across the way and I looked out and here's a middle aged Vietnamese man coming out on his rooftop in his undershorts, which is what they'd wear all the time, no problem with that. He comes out and he starts feeding his chickens on his rooftop terrace, just oblivious to the noise and the military action.

After a while, these two majors got hungry and they thought we could take a chance. They were looking down the other side of the hotel roof and they saw a restaurant across the street that seemed to be open. This was on Tudo Street. They said, why don't we give it a shot? I said, well, we're supposed to listen to the radio. They said, yes, but you also have to get something to eat and that restaurant's open. You don't know how long its going to be open. I thought hey, with these two guys I'll go, and we went and got breakfast. No problem. Went back to my room, got the radio on and suddenly there's an announcement that says, all the employees of the American Embassy should report to the embassy immediately, but USIA personnel and AID personnel should stay in their billets. Well, I'm thinking, what am I going to do? I was brand new. How am I going to get to the embassy? It was feasible walking distance; I had walked daily up to this point. It was the equivalent of maybe 10 blocks, but am I going to be walking over bodies or dodging bullets? I thought it was kind of stupid myself, but needless to say I was also very curious and I'm brand new, the first woman in the section and I'm not going to be hiding behind my bed in the hotel. I did use a little commons sense because there was an apartment building around the corner about a block away where I knew two of the secretaries from the political section had apartments and I thought maybe if I go around there if the three of us decide to go to the embassy there will be safety in numbers and we'll see what's what. Anyway, I screwed my courage to the sticking point and went out on the street, went around to the apartment building. They were very happy to see me because they had heard the word, too, but they were concerned about just walking, getting out and walking up to the embassy. They wanted to obey the order, as did I. Well, also in that apartment building were a couple of USIA officers who had been there for a while and they had a Jeep between them and they were just champing at the bit because the instructions were State Department should go to the embassy, not USIA and other people. They said, we'll take you in our Jeep. That gave them the excuse, if they were challenged to say, oh we were just taking these embassy girls, these embassy women to the embassy. We agreed and they drove us to the embassy. The trip was a series of sights I'll never forget, with streets with a sprinkling of dead bodies in the gutter and shooting in the background. When we got to the embassy itself they had not yet removed the bodies of the Viet Cong who had been killed in the embassy front yard, caught I guess inside the compound, the front lawn you might say. These bodies, so young, were there and I remember the images are so vivid. I remember being so struck by how red the blood was and how it was so red on the white concrete surface of the embassy steps and, huge flower pots.

I went in. One thing I absolutely would not do under any circumstances was take pictures. I just felt that was beneath contempt. I didn't even take a camera although I know other people were there snapping. I didn't do it. I got to my office. First I reported to the section chief, Ted Heavner, he was the chief of the internal affairs unit. He was startled to see me. I said, "Well, the order came out over the radio that we were supposed to come and we had a couple of secretaries with us, too." He thought it was a mistake to call us all in.

In my office, there was some concrete debris on my typewriter and on my desk from rounds, I guess mortar rounds that had been launched against the embassy. It had a concrete screen outside, probably set back maybe a foot or so, but still some of that chipped off.

Q: An ornamental screen, but the idea was to detonate any rocket-propelled grenade.

TULL: Right. So, there was obviously some debris there on the typewriter and the desk. Can't say that I did much work because everybody was just trying to figure out what was going on. There was still fighting in the streets. The Viet Cong had taken over part of a building across from the embassy. It was a substantial distance across. It wasn't like from here to there, but it was probably with this other apartment building, half a football field or something and the Viet Cong were occasionally putting out sniper shots. I guess about the only thing I was able to do was to send a cable to my family telling them I was alive and well. We were all doing that. They said everybody can send one short cable to have the State Department call your family. Before too long I guess a few hours after that it was decided that most people should go home. There was not a whole lot we could do that particular day. I don't think I went in the next day. I think the day after that they sent a vehicle to pick us up.

Q: Did you get any feel for what's going on or well, this is a big surprise?

TULL: The element of surprise was clear. Yes, it was a great surprise, but very quickly within a day or so it was clear that it was a massive defeat for the Viet Cong. Absolutely massive defeat because they had risen up quite confidently all over the country and after the initial shock was over they were mowed down. They were really mowed down. It was a tremendous setback for the Viet Cong military. For the U.S. however, psychologically I think it was the turning point of the U.S. involvement because the idea that these Viet Cong had actually gotten into the embassy courtyard, they never got into the embassy building, they might have actually gotten in the door of the consular section which was next to the embassy, a separate building, but the idea that they had gotten there was just so shocking and was played up so much in the press that nobody ever believed, I don't think the average American ever believed that it ended up as a defeat for the Viet Cong. Adding to that the fact that, George Jacobsen. He had a position at the embassy.

Q: He was an administrator.

TULL: Some sort of a mission coordinator. I think he handled aircraft and whatever the ambassador wanted. He lived in a house on the embassy compound and he actually at point blank had to kill a Viet Cong who was coming up the stairs to get him. Somebody I think threw a gun up to him or whatever and so that got tremendous play on television and all. That really did steer things away from the fact that so many Viet Cong had been destroyed. It really set them back immensely, but the VC won the offensive psychologically.

Q: I would have thought that being in internal affairs this must have put quite a load on the whole internal affairs unit, what the hell does this mean within the Vietnamese society? I'd talk to people and find out how what the effects of this were.

TULL: Yes, we were so large that we, individual officers had individual political parties that they followed. Following the Viet Cong and their doings was not something we did in the internal affairs section. The external affairs people had someone who was pretty expert on Viet Cong operations, but was principally it was CIA that dealt with that. No, I was quite a shock that they had managed to come into the city and they held sections of it for a while. It was wild and woolly.

Q: In Cholon there were a couple of fights there.

TULL: Oh, major, yes, major. It was after a few days the hotel opened up again for food and all and there were rocket attacks and various things. It was surreal. You work all day literally through the lunch hour in that case and get back to the hotel where I lived for such a long time, go up to the roof because life has to go on. You have to feed yourself and you have to give yourself enough strength to go on the next day. You'd be sitting up there, a friend would come and join you, you'd have a drink and a meal. It's dark at 6:30 or so in that part of the world and you'd watch the pretty tracer bullets and the patterns flares would make. You would think I'm looking at lethal fire that could be killing people on the ground and I'm thinking isn't this making an interesting pattern against the night sky.

Q: Star shows going on. Yes, I used to go later to the Rex Theater, but you would still see some of this. Not the Rex.

TULL: The BOQ.

Q: The BOQ up at the top.

TULL: It was a different experience let me tell you.

Q: Did you have contacts within the various parties that you went to see and if you were what were you getting from them?

TULL: No, at this stage of my embassy career shall we say I was not having contacts to speak of with Vietnamese outside the embassy. The political parties were divided among other officers and I was the junior person and I think there was a feeling that well, let her prove herself and then maybe we'll let her have a political party or something like that. Eventually I did get the job of following a political party, but it took a long time, several months.

Q: Did you feel that being a woman was a problem? You know sometimes.

TULL: It might have been a problem with my male colleagues, or male superiors. I think they felt protective.

Q: Yes and also sometimes there's a feeling well, playing the game, well, its fine we accept her fully as an equal, but will the foreigners do this? This has often been the excuse.

TULL: I don't think that was an issue in my experience in Saigon. I think it was more, I'll be very kind and generous. I think I was more concern about my physical safety. For example, I didn't have, I was not put on the embassy duty roster. As I indicated in Brussels after three weeks I was on the embassy duty roster. I found out I was not on the embassy duty roster and when I inquired about it I was told it was because the duty officer had to sleep in the embassy every night. They had a little room with a bed and bath. You had to physically be there and they just felt it wouldn't really be appropriate for me to be there alone and then of course the officer who was there in the embassy on the night of the Tet Offensive he was a little bit under siege. He did a fine job. Allen Wendt was his name.

Q: I've interviewed Allen. He didn't have a weapon.

TULL: No, nothing.

Q: He was an economic officer, an expert on rice and the duty officer.

TULL: That's right. After that I did not push for the idea of getting on that duty roster. I did push to try to get out and do what I regarded was real political work. It took quite a long time. In addition to the work I was telling you about with the newspapers, anytime President Thieu gave a speech, there was a voracious appetite not only in the embassy but in Washington to get a verbatim account of what he had said. Usually two really superb Vietnamese language officers in the section recorded the speeches and did a highlights cable.

Q: Who were they?

TULL: Hal Colebaugh and Harry Dunlop. Particularly Hal. Hal spoke Vietnamese like a native. So, when there was a speech, they would listen to the speech on radio or television, but also record it and then go through it and do a highlights cable, put together a cable saying President Thieu expressed strong support for blah, blah and expressed concern about the lack of whatever. I remember this one occasion I had gone to dinner at a friend's house and the next thing I know there's a phone call and I was told that I would be picked up. We had a curfew at this time. I was going to spend the night at this friend's home. If you went to dinner you spent the night during this period of a curfew, a 7:00 p.m. curfew, whatever it was. I was prepared to spend the night, but I was told I had to go back to the embassy it was around maybe 8:00 when I got the word. We were gathered up, the three of us who spoke Vietnamese, and taken to the embassy because the word that we got was that the highlights cable of this particular speech had aroused such interest that President Johnson wanted the entire text word for word, an hour-ling speech. The three of us spent the night going over it, we each took a section of the tape, and did a word-for-word translation from Vietnamese into English. I will say that this was a little later on, maybe it related to preparations to go to Paris for the peace talks I'm not sure. I remember Galen Stone was there by that time. I think Galen came in the summer of '68. It was around then. Anyway, he very nicely, since he had called his officers in he came in to the embassy, too. He didn't know Vietnamese or anything, but he felt that he should. I remember that. Then he insisted we go home I guess around 9:00 or 10:00 when we got the cable off and have a couple of hours sleep before we came back in. We did that sort of thing. I wasn't given a political party to follow until later in the year.

Q: Did you get any feeling this early on, you know, there were several sort of American points of view. One there was a CIA point of view and two, there was the embassy point of view and three there was the field point of view. I mean, were these, did you see sort of the clash of interpretation?

TULL: I can't tell you much about the CIA point of view from the low level that I was working at, but definitely there was a lot of fresh air brought into the discussions at the political section meetings by our officers who were out in the field who were with the CORDS program or our regional provincial reporters. See I had wanted to be a provincial reporter. I neglected to mention that. I thought I would be assigned to be a provincial reporter since I had the language, but at the last minute the political counselor decided that, no way should a woman go out and do that job so I ended up in the embassy. The people in the provinces would come in and they would just tell it like it is at our staff meetings that it wasn't going well in the provinces. We're talking after the Tet Offensive of course you know. It wasn't going well. The body counts were ridiculous. There was a lot of corruption. They would talk about Vietnamese, and Korean, corruption and I know the political counselors weren't too thrilled to hear that, particularly Martin Herz. Of Arch Calhoun I don't have strong memories, I don't think he was there more than six or eight months when I was there, but I had great respect for him. He was the one who allowed me to come to Saigon, allowed, notice. The non-women's liberation point of view. He let me come. Wasn't that nice? These young officers were very bright and very capable. They would come in and they would give an account of what was going on in their particular province, and what was wrong with the province chief, or what was right. It wasn't totally negative. They were not there with a point of view to push, but they did want the facts to get in. I remember Martin Herz was concerned about what they had to say and they were concerned that their point of view was not getting through to the ambassador and it was not being reflected in embassy reporting which they thought was too upbeat about the overall situation. He arranged for periodic dinner meetings with this group of young officers with the ambassador, which the rest of us were a little bit jealous of because it did give them a wonderful opportunity to discuss in depth what their perceptions were. At least they knew that the ambassador was hearing their concerns and their point of view. It at was useful for the ambassador to have their input.

I don't know when you talk about a different point of view from the CIA. We're talking 1968 and what I recall most is that later when I did start to be following political parties and preparations for the Vietnamese elections that the CIA officers who were my counterparts in grade or maybe a little above me would come down and pick my brain about what was going on politically. Of course I cooperated. I figured we all worked for the U.S. government, but then you'd see one of their classified reports would go out and sometimes it would basically be what I had said or what the other officers had said. We were not, I don't think, at odds at that level. Now, at the senior level, you know what the station chief said to the ambassador or vice versa, I don't know. I didn't see a divergence at my level. The divergence was in the reluctance I think to report too negatively on the situation.

Q: Well, then how did things develop? You were there all of three years.

TULL: It was about two and a half years.

Q: A long tour there. As time went on, you were able to get out and around more?

TULL: Yes, eventually. I had an 18-month tour. That's what most of us had and then home leave and then I returned for a year. A very fortunate thing for my experience there occurred when the director of the Vietnam working group came over.

Q: Who was that?

TULL: John Burke. He ended up, poor man, being ambassador to Guyana when Jonestown took place. John was the director of the Vietnam working group. He had been in Saigon in the political section before and he had good contacts. There had been an election, again I'd have to refresh my memory on dates, but I did get involved in following the election of the Senate and House. I'd have to check the dates, but the president of the national assembly was Senator Huyen, H-U-Y-E-N, and he had known John, John had known him on a previous tour when he hadn't been a senator yet. John had called on him and Senator Huyen commented that he wished that he could have some English lessons. He wanted to improve his English. John mentioned this when we were at a luncheon maybe at Ted Heavener's or the political counselor's and I was there, too. He said, "How about having Terry give him English lessons?" Now, Harry Dunlop followed the senate at that point and Hal Colebaugh followed the lower house. I suddenly had this opportunity to become the English teacher to the president of the senate. I wouldn't be reporting on the daily activities of the senate, but at any rate I was delighted and because I guess it was mentioned so publicly that why don't we have Terry do this, it was approved. So I then started going over to the Senate. I began my day there. I would go to the Senate from my home, the hotel, whatever it was and I would meet with Senator Huyen and "teach him English." He had some English, but there were some formulations that he needed some help with, and vocabulary.

Gradually we developed a very close relationship. He was a dear, dear man. He started volunteering a lot of information that was of interest to the embassy, particularly later as the relationship developed. I didn't go in and say I'm Theresa Tull, we're going to have English lessons. What action are you going to take on the such and such bill? I didn't do any of that. It was just a slow gradual building up of confidence. For example, the U.S. government was very interested in having the South Vietnamese pass a land reform bill, figuring giving land to the tiller would help dampen enthusiasm in the countryside for Viet Cong promises that they were more caring of the peasants. This was quite a controversial bill. Not everybody wanted to take their mother's and father's land or their own land away. I was able to monitor the progress of that bill through the legislature from the word go with Senator Huyen as part of our English lessons. I actually had some workbooks and I got some information about teaching English as a second language and we would work through some phraseology and drills. But our conversations focused on current issues facing the government and the National Assembly.

From the lessons we developed a close friendship and it was very helpful for me, and I believe to him, as well. It gave him a regular means to communicate with the Embassy. When Harry Dunlop's tour was finished, I was given the job of following the Senate; reporting on the Senate. This was a very enjoyable and exciting experience, because Huyen was the third ranking person in the country. There was the president, the vice president, and then chairman of the senate, as I recall.

Q: Looking at the situation then, sort of the feeling has come out that somehow this was a dictatorship and all. How did you see the political process? I mean you were sort of inside it.

TULL: I think that Thieu got a very bad rap in the U.S. press because the Vietnamese people were not being offered a choice between Thieu and Thomas Jefferson. They were being given a choice between Thieu and a communistic dictatorship. I say looking at the situation there they had a national assembly that was freely elected, slates of candidates, competing slates of candidates. The municipal and provincial elections were also vigorously contented. In fact I wrote an article that ended up in a book about those elections. It was part of a compilation of studies on electoral developments in Vietnam. It was edited by Joseph Zazloff from the University of Pittsburgh. They had 35 newspapers in Saigon with competing points of view, but if the paper advocated a position that the government, the South Vietnamese government thought echoed the Viet Cong position you were thrown in jail. That was all there was to it. There was a wide area of freedoms and then beyond that you could not go, you could not advocate a communist takeover.

I had one episode for example of this with Martin Herz, the political counselor. There was a very controversial member of the "lower" house, how I got so involved in it I don't know, maybe Hal was away, whatever. He was left leaning, extremely left-leaning. He was accused by the Thieu government of advocating Viet Cong positions, I forget which specific position, but he made a speech, the speech that they eluded to was made on the floor of the House in which he should have had immunity, but the word got out that he was doing this. He had a newspaper, which he put his views into, but on this occasion he was on the floor of the House and security goons came and dragged him out and took him away to jail. Well, I don't know how I got the job of writing this up, but I did. I drafted the cable on this episode and I remember Martin Herz wouldn't approve it. You had several layers where you had to get approval for cables and if something was going to be negative it definitely had to go to a higher level. So this cable was rejected. I was very upset because this is what happened, it happened, Washington had a right to know. I didn't put a strong comment in the cable, but I said clearly this is what happened here. The man was taken from the assembly floor. He was bounced down the steps. I had witnesses who told me this and I think one of them was probably my principal contact, Senator Huyen. I thought it was important that this be told. The cable was rejected.

Well, it happened the very next day after I had finished this cable late in the day and was told it wasn't going, there was the big political section staff meeting, all 20 of us there, and Herz chaired it. He tried to explain to me why we couldn't send that cable because he felt that obviously it was exaggerated, we can't exaggerate these little difficulties they have from time to time. I just wouldn't budge. I just stood by what I had written. I said it's up to you to decide to send it, but that is what happened and I'm standing by what I wrote. They bounced him down the steps and his head hit the steps once or twice, according to what I was told. Well, we can't send it, he insisted. Well, everybody around the table is kind of looking like, good grief, because here is the counselor going back and forth with me. By this time the head of the Internal unit had changed and he was not a very forceful individual, but Galen Stone, the head of the section, spoke up quietly and said, well, I think Terry feels pretty strongly about what she wrote, Martin, and she's been a pretty reliable, no, she's a reliable observer, something like that. So, we simmered it down and I was really ticked off, but okay. You follow orders, you know, I'm not going to get on a plane and go to Washington.

To Herz's credit, later that day I got a phone call saying that Mr. Herz wanted to see me and Galen and so the two of us went up to his office. We went in to see Herz and he says, "I'm signing off this cable. I've given it more thought and you're right, it should go. I really appreciate your explaining it forcefully and standing up for your principles and your beliefs on this issue." I was impressed by his willingness to rethink the issue. I think the fact that I did stand up to him on what I thought was in important issue caused him to respect me. He was a man who appreciated that. He would roll you over with a bulldozer if you would be wimpish, but if you would stand up, and make a reasonable argument, he would listen. He was supportive of me after that.

Q: You were there when Nixon announced the Vietnamization and the gradual drawing down weren't you or not?

TULL: I was in Washington I think.

Q: Were you there, well a way we can figure this out was.

TULL: I was in Da Nang or getting ready to go. Maybe I was there, yes.

Q: I was wondering whether you, where were you when they went into Cambodia, we went into Cambodia?

TULL: I was in Saigon.

Q: Saigon.

TULL: I was in Saigon January '68 to September of '70.

Q: Yes.

TULL: I think it came out in '70 didn't it?

Q: Yes I do, I think so.

TULL: When was his election?

Q: Which election?

TULL: It would have been '72.

Q: '72.

TULL: So, I think he did it before that election.

Q: I'm quite sure he did.

TULL: Maybe '70 or '71.

Q: Yes.

TULL: I might have been there. I was there when we went into Cambodia. I'm pretty sure I was. I'd have to double-check the dates to be sure.

Q: Yes, well the Cambodia thing was the spring of '70.

TULL: Okay, well then I was in Saigon.

Q: How did that play in the political section?

TULL: I think we were supportive. I didn't hear a lot of negatives about it among my colleagues at the embassy. I guess we were pretty hawkish.

Q: I was, I thought its about time we did it. I was sitting there running the consular section and I thought yes, right on, you know?

TULL: Well, you know that the Communists were using Cambodia as an open backdoor into South Vietnam. There wasn't a lot of rebelliousness among the officers when I was there except that the provincial reporters were determined that their picture of what was happening in the provinces had to be told to the embassy and particularly the ambassador and they did get that the opportunity for meetings with the ambassador. Whether their input was incorporated into the ambassador's reporting or not is another thing.

Q: What about the media, I'm talking particularly about the American media? They were all over the place. Did they go after you?

TULL: We, the political section, had pretty good relationships with American media. I remember specifically Dan Sutherland who was with...

Q: Christian Science Monitor.

TULL: He might have started off with the Associated Press, but he ended up definitely with Christian Science Monitor. I got to know him socially as did some of the other officers. He didn't speak Vietnamese. Occasionally he would give me a call once we got to know each other and say there's a demonstration on such and such a street. I just thought you'd like to know. I'm going to go down and I'm going to pick up whatever I can, whatever information I can. He occasionally, this is not every day, but he would come back and maybe he would have leaflets that he had picked up that were in Vietnamese and I would look over the leaflets and tell him what the leaflets said and he would tell me what happened. It was a fruitful interaction. You could tell, there were certain people you would trust. Now there were others you wouldn't. Quite frankly, Ward Just was there. Just has made a very good reputation as a novelist, but I didn't have the same feeling of trust toward him. I felt that he had more of a "gotcha" approach. Talk about heady things for a young officer: Bob Shaplen, Robert Shaplen who wrote those wonderful books about Vietnam, occasionally visited Saigon. One night, Shaplen, Hal and Harry and I and maybe a couple of others, went out and had a wonderful meal, a Vietnamese meal under the stars and went back and forth trading ideas and views and experiences on Vietnam.

Another media experience, using your phrase loosely, involved the columnist Joseph Alsop. One Thanksgiving a lot of junior officers were planning to get together for dinner and I got a call from Ambassador Berger. He was the deputy ambassador.

Q: Yes, Sam Berger.

TULL: Sam Berger. He invited me for Thanksgiving dinner and I thought, gee, I already have an invitation, but I'm not going to turn down an ambassador. In those days you had certain training along those lines. I went and I was very glad I did because it was just about eight or ten people and one of the guests was Joe Alsop and it was fascinating because I'd read his columns for years. After dinner Berger excused himself and we were all set to leave, but Alsop wanted us to stay and talk so he, myself and probably Harry and Hal, sat around and exchanged views and impressions with Alsop on the war, disagreeing with him at times, and it was a very interesting occasion.

Q: By the time you were ready to leave there in the fall of 1970ish or so, what was your impression of how things were going whither in South Vietnam?

TULL: Okay, I'll back up just a second. I just thought of another item when Vietnam was preparing for elections, I forget whether they were the senate elections or what. I was thrown to the wolves. You recall the "5:00 Follies" which was the embassy's press conference at 5:00 p.m. and I was sent down to brief the happy reporters on the election situation and they were shall we say a little skeptical about the whole idea, but that was fun. At any rate if you wouldn't mind repeating the question. How did I feel at the end of the tour?

Q: Whither yourself in South Vietnam?

TULL: At that stage? Well, it wasn't doing badly at that point at all. It was 1970, a pretty good year. In '68 of course you had the Tet Offensive and you had the mini Tet Offensive and you had a very successful period of achievement and expansion of government control. I left feeling pretty good about it. They were gearing up for new elections, presidential elections as well as the senate and lower level elections, but definitely presidential elections were coming up. I was confident they'd be reasonably free elections. They had been before, they really had been. Granted the Vietnamese military had had a lot more resources and impact and everything else than the civilians candidates did, but other people had a voice and did their thing. I went back to Washington and was put right into the Vietnam Working Group, as the internal political affairs officer. That was a very interesting experience, too.

Q: Well, had there been any reflection on what you were doing and your fellow officers and all of the demonstrations in the United States mainly student demonstrations and all. How did these affect you all?

TULL: Well, I was concerned. I thought it was unfortunate. I don't think the war had been properly explained and I thought the emphasis on body counts was probably aggravating the situation, but I felt that we were there because we were invited to be there to help South Vietnam forestall the communist takeover from the North. I had idealistic views that eventually perhaps the North and South could work out some reasonable accommodation, maybe a federalist type arrangement where there'd be some freedoms in the South that didn't exist in the North and I also thought that perhaps the South which has I believe some oil deposits offshore might eventually be able to even finance their own continuing strife if that's what they had to do. Yes, it was distressing to know that what you were doing, was opposed by so many people. My own family was very supportive, but I had friends in the Foreign Service who weren't in Vietnam who opposed the whole business of the Vietnam War and who couldn't understand what I was doing there and why I would think it was worthwhile. It was something I thought was worthwhile.

Q: When you came back, I assume you were back, what the fall of '70?

TULL: Yes.

Q: And you did the Vietnam working group until when?

TULL: I did that for two years.

Q: '70 to '72.

TULL: Yes and then I went back to Da Nang. No, I did it for two years and then I went to the University of Michigan for a year of graduate studies thinking I would get out of the Vietnam game, but I didn't. I ended up going back to Da Nang.

Q: When you came back, did you find was there a different feel for Vietnam, you know, sort of the departmental feel for this group that was dealing with it that you had at the embassy or was it?

TULL: In the Department itself? I don't know. In the country I think attitudes had hardened, as a result of what I believe was the misinterpretation of the Tet Offensive. We knew that the Viet Cong had been devastated by that, yet that was not the perception. The perception was it was a major U.S. and South Vietnamese defeat and we ought to get out of there. I know in retrospect we were just trying to hold back a wave with a bucket, but you couldn't fight against that opinion, but things weren't looking bad in September of '70.

Q: When you got back to the U.S. during that time, what were you picking up during this two year period you were dealing with internal affairs?

TULL: At times I made speaking trips to college campuses and to media outlets, and that was quite interesting. I have to say I was a little concerned at first; the first time I was going to go to a college campus I thought we'll see about the questions. A lot of the questions were based on ignorance and when you could explain specifically what was going on or answer a question with specifics I didn't get as much hostility as I would have thought. These young people had been fed a lot of slogans and they didn't want to go and be drafted, and I don't blame them for being concerned. It was a wretched situation. My own personal view is that the conduct of the war from the way the U.S. government managed the draft was so unfair. It was absolutely absurd. Because you could afford to go to college you would be out of the draft or you could come up with some phony baloney like Cheney did, get four or five different deferments, or you could go to graduate school or you could say you're going to be a minister. It was just so wretchedly unfair. Only those who couldn't afford college got drafted.

Q: The National Guard.

TULL: Oh, yes, like the National Guard nonsense of our current beloved leader. It just was not right. I have a personal view that a lot of the antagonism toward the war by the young college people stemmed from guilt. They claimed they were opposing the war because it's an unjust war, etc. I think part of it was they had to oppose it on those grounds because otherwise they would be opposing it because they were afraid to go and fight in the war. They justified their resistance by saying this is an unjust war. They did not want to say I don't want to serve my country. They said this is an unjust war, therefore, I am virtuous and anybody who does go is not virtuous, therefore I am not guilty of shirking my duty. That attitude contributed probably to the poor treatment that some of our veterans received when they returned to the United States.

Q: Oh, yes. I agree with you absolutely. Just shown by the fact that as soon as the draft stopped the protests stopped. Nobody cared anymore.

TULL: It's a shame it wasn't corrected a lot sooner where you have a draft number and you knew right away you were going to go or you weren't going to go. Just changing the mechanisms of it so that you had your magic number. They had a draft lottery after that. That made much more sense. It did. It just defused the whole business. It was wretched and of course horrible mistakes were made here. I mean at Kent State, that was so stupid, and tragic. It's so sad that these young people were killed while protesting. It's crazy that people would have reacted that way, but meanwhile I'm trotting along and I'm going, making speeches on local television stations and going to college campuses.

Q: Do you remember any of the universities you went to?

TULL: The University of Cincinnati, Pittsburgh; (Joe Zazloff had me come there) and some other places. The media tour would go say to a certain section of the country. I went to Birmingham, Alabama and to Columbia, South Carolina, Palm Beach, Florida, go on local television stations be interviewed sort of their version of the Today Show in the morning or give a little speech at night, so I did a fair amount of that and that was okay.

I had a couple of interesting experiences leading up to the Vietnamese elections in the fall of 1971. Since I had been the internal affairs officer in Saigon and doing the same work, back in Washington, I had acquired an extensive knowledge of the Vietnamese constitution, which had been written maybe shortly before I got to Saigon. The South Vietnamese were getting ready for presidential elections. Bill Sullivan was a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asia bureau at that time. He asked Josiah Bennett and me to come to his office to brief him for a meeting he was having the next day with Secretary of State William Rogers on the Vietnamese elections. The two of us did so. Sullivan asked a lot of questions, and I provided a lot of information to hiboth orally and via documents. We went back to our offices and a half an hour later his secretary called me and said Ambassador Sullivan wants you to accompany him to his meeting with the Secretary, Terry. I was delighted. A little later, the Ambassador, knowing the protocol also invited Joe Bennett to attend the meeting. The next morning, Secretary Rogers was going to meet the next afternoon with President Nixon on the subject of the elections. They were really concerned about the alternatives, if any, in the constitution, if the election were not contested. A likely opponent to President Thieu, Duong Van Minh, was threatening not to run, and there was the prospect of an uncontested election.

Anyway, the next morning I was a very excited individual, going up to Secretary Rogers' office. The other folks there were like the head of INR and the head Policy Planning. It was a small group and the only person who brought anybody with them was Bill Sullivan. I'll never forget this. We walk into his office and a very courtly William Rogers is there and Ambassador Sullivan says, "Mr. Secretary, I'd like you to meet Theresa Tull." The Secretary says, "Oh, you've brought your secretary with you. How nice." or something like that. Sullivan said, "No, sir, no, Terry is our, she is our expert on the Vietnamese constitution and I thought it would be helpful to have her here for this discussion." "Oh certainly." Then the Secretary invited me to me sit next to him, and the discussion began. I didn't open my mouth unless spoken to. Before long Rogers asked Sullivan a question and he said, "Well, that's really something that Terry could handle better than I." So, I gave the answer. After that Rogers just spoke directly to me, He asked a range of very intelligent questions.

Q: He's a lawyer.

TULL: Yes, so it was exciting, let me tell you. I have great admiration for Bill Sullivan. His approach is one that I tried to follow in my own career later. He didn't have to pretend that he knew everything. He had to present the person who did. It was not up to Bill Sullivan to know what Article 7-A of the Vietnamese constitution said. That's what he had me for, and he had enough confidence in himself that he could share that opportunity. It was really very smart. It was quite an experience for a young officer.

Q: Well, also it shows another side to William Rogers, sort of his lawyerly side which often gets lost. People talk about how disinterested he was and all that.

TULL: He was very involved in this discussion, definitely.

Q: I'm sure he really engaged on something of substance and that is elections.

TULL: Absolutely. I had another fun experience. Remember Congresswoman Bella Abzug?

Q: Oh, God, yes, from Brooklyn was it?

TULL: I think Brooklyn and very much a woman's liberation advocate. And a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War.

Q: She also had a great polka dot outfit or something.

TULL: She always wore a big hat of some kind, right. Anyway, again the Vietnamese elections were coming up. She sent word that she wanted Bill Sullivan to come and brief her committee in the House on the Vietnamese elections. Sullivan said, well, he couldn't make it, but he would send the expert on the Vietnamese elections and constitution up to her committee and that would be Theresa Tull. The word came back that no, she wanted Bill Sullivan. She didn't want anybody junior to him. I think Sullivan maybe called her himself at this point and said, gee, you know, I'm really surprised that a person with your background and your reputation would want it known that you turned down an opportunity to have the woman who is the expert on the Vietnamese elections come and testify before your committee. Not wanting to turn down a woman, Abzug agreed and I did go up and testify at her hearing on the elections. She was a piece of work, but it was funny because that was Sullivan's angle, gee, you don't want a woman to come? At any rate it was wild. I didn't change any minds on that committee. I recall that Ms. Abzug told the press that I had been thoroughly unresponsive to their concerns.

Q: You did that for what?

TULL: A two year tour.

Q: A two year tour. That takes us up to when?

TULL: Let me see. Let me see here. You know I have another item that I meant to mention with regard to my Saigon experience.

Q: Yes, well, why don't we put it in now?

TULL: We'll back it up because one of the leaders of the coup against Ngo Dinh Diem was Duong Van Minh. He was believed to be a very popular South Vietnamese general - politician and he had been living in exile in Thailand when I arrived in Saigon in January 1968.

Q: Was he known as Big Minh?

TULL: Yes. He was Big Minh. The U.S. was trying to get the Thieu government to allow him back to Vietnam so that he could play a role politically, broaden the range of the political players. The word came that he was coming back to Vietnam apparently this had been worked out at a high level. The embassy wanted to have somebody at the airport to cover his arrival, but they didn't want to send anybody high-ranking because it would look like the embassy was paying entirely too much attention to Big Minh. So word came to me that Terry Tull was to go out to the airport and meet Big Minh. Off I went to the airport. It was quite interesting. All sorts of reporters were there. His fellow coup generals, including Tran Van Don who was a big shot in the senate at that point and several other senators were there. I was principally trying to get color, what's happening, who's there, and that kind of thing, but I felt I should at least let Big Minh know that the embassy was represented. I did manage to have a minute and say welcome back, General Minh. I'm Theresa Tull from the American Embassy. We're pleased that you've returned to Vietnam. He looked like, who is this?

Minh settled into his old home, not far from the embassy and it was arranged then that I would call on him. I frankly think that it was General Lansdale who arranged our meeting.

Q: The Philippine, kind of like the ugly American somehow.

TULL: Yes. I was sent to have a meeting with Big Minh, the first meeting he'd had with an American official in many years. We had a good discussion, which I wrote up as well as I could. I think I had two meetings with him in all. After a week or two, I went back to see him again and he was obliging and again told me what his thoughts were candidly. After that he apparently decided that he was entitled to a little more than a third secretary at the American Embassy as his contact and the word quietly got back to the embassy. In the meantime, apparently the Thieu government having had not gone into total conniptions at the thought of the embassy having contact with him, so a high ranking officer - probably even the political counselor - might have taken him on. It was exciting to be the first U.S. contact with an historical figure like that.

Q: Yes, well, of course this is the fun of going where the action is.

TULL: Yes. That was very interesting.

Q: Let me just stop here and flip the tape.

Q: This is tape three, side one with Terry Tull. Yes, go ahead.

TULL: I mentioned that I had come back in September of '70 as the internal affairs officer for the Vietnam working group. That was the job I was supposed to have, but at that point the director of the group was Jim Engle. He was a very nice man personally, but he was one of the few officers I've encountered in the Foreign Service who could not get past my gender and I found that I was being given assignments that I felt any secretary could do. He'd like me to rearrange the library shelves; they had a few books to rearrange. Maybe I could look at the files and see if I could reorganize them. This sort of thing. In the meantime he's talking with Steve Johnson, who was a very sharp, nice fellow who had been in Saigon with me. In Saigon Steve did the external Vietnamese affairs and then later Steve went on to the Paris Peace Talks. So Jim is talking to Steve and wants to bring him into the office. The next thing I know Steve was in and Steve was basically doing the work (although that wasn't the title for his job) that should have been my internal affairs responsibilities. I spoke to Jim about it and said this was not the job that I was brought back to do. Did he intend for me to do this job and if he did not, if he wished to have the other officer put in the position, that would be fine, too. I'd be happy to go to personnel and request a transfer. No hard feelings, but let's move on. Well, no, no, he didn't intend that. I guess he didn't want on his record that someone was complaining. I said, I'm not being utilized to the extent that I should be. No, no, he didn't want that. I should calm down and it would be okay. We would work it out. Well, one of the beautiful things about Foreign Service work is that you're never in any one place too long nor is your boss. So, you can ride out difficulties sometimes. Fortunately, Jim was asked to accompany a high ranking Department official who might have been, maybe somebody named Kennedy, who was an undersecretary, on an orientation tour.

Q: Well, there was a Richard Kennedy who was, yes, he had several things, at one point he was for political military or something.

TULL: No, no. This man was commercial in some way, economic, but he was very high ranking in the Department and he was a political appointee, newly brought in and he wanted to take an extensive Asian trip and the Department wanted to send someone with him. Jim was given the job to accompany him and they went off on this long trip. The man liked him so much, liked having his expertise (Jim was a very bright, nice person) that he asked that Jim be assigned to him and Jim was replaced by Josiah Bennett. With Joe there it was no question whatsoever that I was the internal political officer. I settled into the job and it worked out well. Joe was a good person.

Q: Well, then, you left there in what are we talking about, '75 or so?

TULL: No. August of '72. I was there for basically a two-year term, beginning in the fall September '70 to August of '72. The Department then sent me to the University of Michigan for a year of graduate studies, specializing in Southeast Asia. I can't say they precisely sent me to the University of Michigan. I was offered a year of graduate training in Southeast Asian studies and I could select where I wished to go. I selected Michigan because Michigan would still give a master's degree in Southeast Asian studies whereas Cornell, which I had checked out, had eliminated that. You could go there for a year, but they were only giving Ph.D.s (if you stayed longer). Since I already had the Vietnamese language, I thought I could go to Michigan for a year and earn a master's degree. When I was assigned to the program, I hadn't gotten my college degree yet. I had completed my course work by bopping around during my Washington tours to any military establishment that had the University of Maryland offering night school and I would take a course here and a course there. I knew all the military bases and how to get to them around Washington, including the Pentagon. The Pentagon was really convenient. So, I got a puzzled call from personnel saying Miss Tull, you know, you've been assigned to, we've worked it out, the University of Michigan for a year of graduate study. Yes. Well, just one question, we don't find anywhere in your record that you have a bachelor's degree. I said, well, yes, but by the time I go out to Michigan I will have one. My degree is being awarded in January of '72 by the University of Maryland. Oh, all right, could you confirm that after you get the degree, but we won't hold up the assignment. I said, no, believe me I've worked long and hard on this and I will confirm it for the record. It was important to me to complete the bachelor's and then get a master's if I possibly could so that's what I did at Michigan. That was a hot time to be on campus.

Q: I was going to ask you, sometimes, grad students were sometimes removed from the turmoil. How were things when you got there? This would have been '72 to '73?

TULL: Yes. September '72 to June of '73.

Q: Tell me about Michigan.

TULL: Oh, it's a great school. I felt I had died and gone to heaven. Every scrap of my undergraduate work I got at night while working full time in the daytime and paying my own way and scrimping along. Occasionally the Department would pay for a course, but when I was taking the Vietnamese language, for example, they had a flat rule, that all you could do is take the language. We will not reimburse for any college courses. You cannot take college courses while you're doing it. I took a full array. I went to night school four nights a week while I was taking Vietnamese, at my own expense, of course, and, fortunately, I could handle the Vietnamese and it worked out okay. But anyway, here I am, the Department's paying the tuition, they're paying my salary which by now was starting to creep up a little bit which was nice, and a per diem so that I could rent an apartment, which I didn't receive in Washington. And all I had to do was go to class. After the intense work in Vietnam, and very intense work in Washington as well it was a wonderful breather to just go to class, to do your work, enjoy.

Q: What would you say was the thrust of what you were learning about Southeast Asia at this particular time because this is when so much academic attention had been focused on there?

TULL: Well, this was a traditional program in Southeast Asian studies where we studied history, geography, anthropology, and then I could audit some courses as well. So, I audited a course in the music of the area and one on art. We had some good professors, Dave Steinberg, for one. Some of the professors had written the books that we were studying from. It concerned all of Southeast Asia. It wasn't just Vietnam; a lot of material dealt with Indonesia. My first love really was Indonesia. I wanted to go there. I wanted to work in Indonesia. I never got to do it. The year was wonderfully stimulating.

Q: Had we, was Vietnam particularly an issue or it just died almost?

TULL: No. Vietnam was still an issue on campus. We were in the midst of the peace talks in Paris in '72 leading into '73, the Paris peace agreement came in January of '73. I think the fact that there were talks and it looked like they were close to some kind of settlement dampened things a bit, but there were still a few anti-Vietnam rallies on campus. Some of the teachers, a couple of the professors were not too thrilled. One of them for example, I forget his name, but he was very good. He was a history professor and he went over to Hanoi and was there during the so-called Christmas bombing and he came back and to my surprise he said he was impressed with how carefully targeted the bombs were and that he thought there was some disinformation out there about all the hospitals and orphanages allegedly getting blown up. What he saw did not match that. They didn't show personal hostility toward me.

Q: You didn't find, you know, the professor saying we're making snide remarks.

TULL: Yes, we had intellectual discussions about it, but I was not subjected to anything snide. It was you know, it was just a discussion: what was my impression of this and the other. So, when the peace agreement was signed in January of '73, folks were happy that it looked like there was going to be an end to the slaughter and that sort of thing. I think that's probably why the campus wasn't as wild and woolly. It never was as wild as Cornell had gotten, but there were really some fine professors there. If you waned to get a master's degree you had to do a thesis, so I chose as my topic the Mekong committee and the proposed Pa Mong dam. There were proposals to build a huge dam. One in the Mekong River that would hopefully integrate the economies of the Indochinese countries.

Q: Yes. This is right much on our part of the peace proposal, wasn't it or at least inclusive that we've been talking for years about really doing something on the Mekong.

TULL: I honestly don't recall.

Q: I may be wrong, I wouldn't press to hard.

TULL: I know there was some sort of economic assistance, but I thought that it did make sense. The Mekong committee had been in existence for a long time and there were plans for big dams that would benefit Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia to help the economies of the countries. Anyway, that's what I did my thesis on and I got my master's degree.

Q: At last.

TULL: Yep. Not long after getting my bachelors.

Q: Yes. What about since this later became part of your focus, was there much attention paid to Laos and Cambodia and that area?

TULL: Yes, in the context of say looking at similarities between the countries in Southeast Asia. The hills versus the valleys. The hill people versus lowlands. The cultures of the Champa, the Kingdom of Champa which of course went from Cambodia over to all the way over to the ocean there in Vietnam. It was a very interesting course of study. Very interesting.

Q: You got your master's degree and left in '73 what was it?

TULL: Got the master's degree in June. '73 and I went then in August of '73 to Da Nang.

Q: I think this probably is a good place to stop Terry.

TULL: I think we're both getting kind of talked out.

Q: Well, we've been going now for about two hours, so we'll pick this up in August of '73 when you're off to Da Nang.

TULL: Off to Da Nang.

Q: Okay, today is the 31st of January, 2005. Terry, Da Nang, you were there '73, in the first place how long were you there?

TULL: From '73, August '73 to the collapse in '75.

Q: What were you doing in Da Nang?

TULL: I was the deputy principal officer at the consulate general there.

Q: Who was the principal officer?

TULL: Initially Paul Popple.

Q: When you got there in '73, what was the situation in Da Nang?

TULL: It didn't seem to be too hairy. Of course, the peace agreement had gone into effect. We had some people in country who were monitoring the peace accord that had been reached in January in Paris of that year, 1973. It was a little iffy. There was a not strong feeling that the accord was going to hold, it was well worth a try. Our military was gone, except that under the terms of the peace agreement the U.S. had been allocated 50 slots for military personnel for logistics work. They were under the DOD office in Saigon, but each of the consulates general had a little DOD office, too. We had a small group in Da Nang. It was headed by a sergeant; he might have been a retired sergeant. There were two or three people in his office. I don't remember initially that the military situation was particularly horrendous. Around the edges there were problems.

One of the things that made my tour extremely interesting is that Paul Popple was determined, because of the fact that we were into a new phase of our situation in Vietnam, to reduce the high profile American involvement in the activities of the region. Whereas in the past the consul general had attended the I Corps commander's daily military briefing at I Corps headquarters every day. Popple decided that I would do this Sunday through Friday. On Saturday he would attend the briefing and would have a meeting afterwards with the I Corps commander.

Q: Now the I Corps commander at this point was a Vietnamese?

TULL: Oh, yes, definitely. He was a three star Vietnamese general, a superb officer named Ngo Quang Truong. I was introduced to him and he agreed that I would attend his military briefing every day. Every morning I would begin my work day at 8:00 at I Corps headquarters and go in and listen, sit right next to the three star general while he received his briefing from the staff, the military activities that had occurred during the night. I was really quite impressed by his acceptance of this change, to have this relatively young American woman sitting there as the senior American presence at his briefing. I wasn't quite sure how to play it initially. I thought I am not going to pretend to be something I'm not. I'm not going to try to put up a masculine front and wear khakis and slacks and all that routine. I wasn't sure what the correct approach was, so I just decided I would dress as I would for the office and I would wear dresses suitable to the Southeast Asia situation, frequently a light colored flower dress. I thought that's the way I am, guys. I'm not a military officer and I'm not going to try to be the Sally of the Jungle or anything, I would just go as myself. That seemed to work nicely. It took a little while for the other officers to figure out who was I, what was I doing, but the fact that General Truong had me sit at his right hand and the fact that I deferred to him, I always made certain that I got there before he did and when the officers rose upon his entrance I also rose, and I gradually developed a very good relationship with him and with the officers at I Corps headquarters. I would go back to the consulate general and report on what had happened in the region overnight. If there were particular serious military developments I would certainly pass those on. I would maybe seek additional information. I would consult, maybe, or pass additional information on or check with our CIA personnel there who also were following a military situation. A key element of my work in Da Nang was attending that briefing every day. I gradually developed as I say some pretty good working relationships with the Vietnamese officers at I Corps Headquarters.

Q: To get the timing, there had been a major North Vietnamese offensive against Quang Tri. Had that happened before your time?

TULL: April '72.

Q: So, this was before your time?

TULL: Before my spell there yes.

Q: How had the effects of this impacted on all of you? I mean I think they had, they had taken Quang Tri and eventually pulled out again?

TULL: They were pushed back out of Quang Tri, but not all the way. General Truong and his people took back, definitely took back, the capital of Quang Tri and pushed the North Vietnamese back. It's been so long, but I think there was a river and I think the North Vietnamese had been pushed north of this river. They had not ceded all the land that they took, but the provincial capital, the northernmost provincial capital of Quang Tri had been retaken in some miserable difficult fighting principally led by General Truong. Now, I don't know whether at that time he was I Corps commander or the commander of the First Infantry Division. I believe he was I Corps commander and supervised all of that. That was a year before I had arrived. The peace talks were going on and it was in January of '73 that this so-called peace agreement was concluded in Paris. Eventually, as you know, Henry Kissinger and his North Vietnamese counterpart shared a Noble Peace Prize.

Q: For non-peace.

TULL: For that non-peace. Right. There was continual sniping around the edges of I Corps, which I could see, every day in terms of North Vietnamese incursions. The fighting continued around the edges, it definitely did. It was a difficult situation.

Q: Were you worried about Viet Cong I mean in other words, insurgent forces within or was the problem one of organized North Vietnamese troops in the South?

TULL: From my perspective, it was North Vietnamese organized units. The map in I Corps showed their locations with the name of their divisions and units and things like that on it. They slipped back and forth into Laos, using Laos for safe haven. They were definitely still a presence and it was rather iffy, more than rather iffy, that this peace, the cease-fire arrangement would hold. The effort was definitely being made I think on the part of the South Vietnamese, but the North Vietnamese only viewed it as a temporary stepping stone towards the ultimate effort to take over the South.

Q: How, when you first got there, what were you all seeing as far as the rule of Saigon up in I Corps and in Da Nang?

TULL: Well, I Corps was very fortunate. You are going to find me a very prejudiced observer in favor of General Ngo Quang Truong, who was the finest corps commander the Vietnamese had and one of the finest if not the very finest general that they had. He was not a corrupt person. He was a fine military tactician and he just did an extremely good job there. He was well liked by the people of I Corps. How could I find this out? Well, by talking with opinion makers, some of the politicians. I remember having a conversation with the archbishop at one point, the Catholic Archbishop who was just praising General Truong to the skies as a fine moral man; he said it was too bad he's not the president. Truong was apolitical. He never had a political bone in his body. He was very loyal to the government in Saigon. Saigon was represented in I Corps by him and he was not a political general. He gave good service. I remember he cared not only of course about the military situation, but he was responsible for the economy and dealing with natural disasters and things of this nature.

I remember feeling that I had been fully accepted by him when I had been there a few months and at the I Corps briefing, we were briefed on a really serious flood that had occurred in Quang Ngai Province. General Truong decided he would go down and check it out and as I was leaving the briefing he stopped me and said, "Do you want to go down to Quang Ngai and check out the flood?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Okay, be back in half an hour." I scooted on back to the office and told the consul general that I had been invited to go and he thought it was a great opportunity. Now, I didn't have time to go home and change. That's a time when I would have slipped on some slacks or something, but I'm there in this light blue flowered dress. I remember that. I beat it on back to I Corps and we flew down. The general was piloting the helicopter. When we got to Quang Ngai we flew over the areas that were heavily flooded and then stopped in one of the villages. The military brought up a tank - it wasn't an APC, an APC might have been too low - for us to ride on. The general helped me up on the tank and I was with him side by side standing on this tank and bracing myself as we went down the rutted, water logged road. The villagers and the farmers were just astounded. They recognized the general right away and they were waving and smiling and looking kind of astonished. Who was this white woman in a blue dress with him? It definitely showed his concern and care for the people there in that situation.

Q: Well, did you get down to the embassy much or not?

TULL: Not too often. I don't know, yes, I don't know whether we had a pouch run. I don't recall whether we had to carry a pouch down or what was what. I got down occasionally, yes, I got down a few times, but not that much.

Q: A different atmosphere down there?

TULL: Very different. One thing that I remember distinctly and was astounded by at the consulate general was the total control of Graham Martin, who was ambassador.

Q: You mean at the embassy.

TULL: No, the consulate general. At the embassy, the ambassador exercised total control over constituent posts. We could not send any cables directly to Washington. They all had to go to Saigon and then be sent on or not sent on as the embassy decided. Airgrams, everything had to be sent down there and cleared, too. You couldn't just do a normal cable and send it out, as in most posts. Everything had to go and get cleared by the embassy. Paul Popple was the consul general and he believed in I think in being as straight a shooter as he could with regard to the situation. I think he had worked with Graham Martin before. I don't want to say he was a dissenter, but I think Martin was interested in having him there as kind of a fresh set of eyes, but then they gave us a hard time about getting our reporting out. It was a little frustrating as well. At that time most of what we did was cleared and processed through Al Francis who was the political/military counselor in Saigon and he had been very close to Graham Martin. I would occasionally get a phone call from Al asking a question about a cable or whatever. The feeling was that he was the sort of a temple dog for Martin that if it got past Al, fine, but if not, that was the end of it.

I remember one key piece. Popple was there. I got there in August of '73. Around Tet of '74 Paul wanted to have us prepare a really big comprehensive overview of the situation in I Corps with a view to determining whether the cease-fire was working? Was there viability for the whole process? How was the situation going economically, commercially, in agriculture, militarily, morale, regarding local dissidents, things of that nature? I should probably amplify this to say that during the bulk of our time in Vietnam we had large CORDS offices, provincial offices staffed largely by AID personnel. With the cease-fire, the peace agreement, those offices were trimmed down considerably, but we still had an office in each of our province capitals. It was a difficult transition for some of the AID people to switch over from what had been their traditional AID and military monitoring roles into an observer role. Paul Popple wanted them to start viewing themselves as ConGen officers looking at the overall situation. We weren't giving out new aid and we weren't running the show, we were not the hand-in-hand advisors to the Vietnamese provincial officials any more. We were more of an observer and reporting force you might say. That had changed and this didn't sit too well with some of the AID personnel. It was a transition that was difficult for these folks to make particularly since Paul said I was the deputy principal officer and they would report through me. Well, this was a little difficult for some of the folks who were older than I, higher in their personal rank, than I. Anyway, we gradually worked it out. His plan was that I would supervise putting together this really comprehensive look at what the situation was in I Corps. I would draw on reports from all of our provincial offices which were in Quang Ngai, Quang Nam, and Hue. I called our provincial officers in and we had a brainstorming session, to determine what should we look for, what were the indicators that would most suggest how things were going in various fields, and we developed an outline. I drew very heavily on their input because these folks had been working in the provinces for quite a while. We put together this outline and then I asked them with Popple's authority, of course, to put together a draft report for me about what was happening in their area, following this outline. I met with them once or twice more. All of their drafts came into me.

I remember it was shortly before Tet of '74. I then used the Tet holiday, we had three days, the ConGen was closed plus the weekend and I worked and worked on these reports trying to put them together coherently and come up with conclusions and summaries and where did we stand and actually came up with I thought it was pretty thoughtful airgram. I was not a, let's say, a bomb thrower, but I was a political officer and proud of it and you assess the situation and if something isn't going well, you say it isn't going well or something is not going too badly, you say that. I put together this report, but on balance the conclusion of the report was that this was really not going to be viable situation in the longer run. This was a very iffy, difficult situation and it did not look good. Paul approved this and as he's approving it he says, something along these lines, "It's a fine job, Terry, really a very good job. It will never get out of Saigon, but I'll sign it off and send it down" which he did.

He was right. It didn't get out of Saigon. He was told about it on his next trip to Saigon that no way could something like that be sent onto Washington. It was too negative, etc. Now, Popple wasn't the type to send it backchannel, so that was the end of that, all that work. Nor would I bootleg it to friends in the Department. We had put together what I thought was a pretty sensible piece. But it went nowhere.

Now, that was '74. By the time the airgram was finished it was probably mid-February in '74. Vietnam fell the following year. In January or so of '75 I remember the director of the Vietnam working group Jim Bullington came to Da Nang. He was checking out our files and he came across my airgram and he said, "Why didn't this go in?" I said, "You'll have to ask Saigon about that." He said, "This is exactly what we should have had." I said, "Well, we did it here. We all have bosses."

Q: You know in a way its remarkable that it didn't go in because usually somebody somewhere who will take something like this and mail it personally.

TULL: Yes, but I wouldn't do it. Maybe I should have. I just wasn't the type. I thought, well, I've done what I'm supposed to do here. Jim thought it would have been very helpful to have had it. It didn't happen.

Q: What were you getting from the political leaders of your area during the time before all hell broke loose?

TULL: This was so heavily a military environment that I don't have a strong recollection of say political party people. We had a very good Vietnamese local national employee at the ConGen who did have contact with some political party people and with the Buddhists. The Buddhists were very politically active as you know in Vietnam as a whole. I guess that type of opinion was also folded into this message that I did.

Q: At that time where was the feeling? Was it just that we didn't have the military force to hold them back or that the will wasn't there or what?

TULL: The feeling that permeated, I think, was that the U.S. had quit. The U.S., by pulling out all our military despite our pledges that we would continue aid, was the handwriting on the wall. I think that the Vietnamese felt that the North Vietnamese would not be deterred except by a U.S. presence. Since the U.S. presence was gone it was just a matter of time before the North Vietnamese despite their commitments under the Paris agreement, launched a major invasion to finish their takeover. I think it was the fact that the U.S. had pulled out. Basically pulled out, pulled the rug out, that convinced the North to continue their attack. Also the U.S. reneged on our aid commitments to the South Vietnamese military.

Q: How long, did Popple stay the whole time you were there?

TULL: No. I'm trying to remember when he left. I got there in August and he hadn't been there very long himself at that time of August of '73. I don't think he was there more than a year.

Q: What was his background?

TULL: A Europeanist I think. He had an Italian wife. He had served in Italy.

Q: It's probably where he ran across Martin.

TULL: I think so, maybe in Rome. He was a very intelligent man. I ended up with a mixed opinion of him. The man is dead now. He was very bright. Initially I was quite impressed.

Q: Vietnamese, the Vietnamese context is not the Italian context. Did he seem to understand sort of the culture and what worked and what didn't work?

TULL: I think he was a pretty smooth diplomat in that sense. He was a small man and I think that helped, although I was a tall woman and I had no difficulty. He had a good relationship with General Truong, treated him with respect and liked him, generally liked him. I don't know that he had a great deal of contact outside of the military establishment.

Q: Yes. Well, when Popple left, who replaced him?

TULL: Well, interestingly enough it was Al Francis who came up from Saigon. He had been political/military counselor and was very close to Graham Martin. I thought, we're going to see how we get along. He was dispatched I think because I suspect Martin didn't like the tone of the reporting that was coming down from I Corps and he wanted someone who was gung ho with the policy there. But, I don't know. I always took the attitude that I had to get along with the person who was sent to be the boss and also that I had to give them the benefit of my very sincere honest opinions on things. I definitely made an effort to get along with Al and yet I told him what I thought about things. Al had served in I Corps on a previous tour in Vietnam. He knew the commander of the third infantry division, General Hinh, and he told me that he wanted to pay a call on General Hinh. I told him that he should call on General Lam, the deputy commander at I Corps who outranked Hinh, first. (He had already called on General Truong, the commander.) Al insisted that he and General Hinh were friends. I said, "Yes, but there's protocol here. You really should see General Lam first." He insisted that he would see Hinh first. I said something like, "You can see whomever you wish, but I'm telling you you're making a mistake. You really need to call on the two star deputy commander first." But he didn't, he went to see General Hinh first, and, of course, the two star was upset. To Al's credit after a few weeks he came back to me and said something like, "Well, you know, General Lam has been really cool towards me. You were actually right to recommend that I call on him first. I'll have to make an effort to make it up with him."

We got along and in fact he hadn't been there too long when (we can put this on the tape and then we can decide later whether it can stay or not) Al decided he was going to go to Hue for the weekend. It was a Saturday. I was to be in charge for the weekend. Saturday morning we got a frantic phone call from one of our airbases in Thailand that one of our reconnaissance planes, I used to think it was a U2, but I really think it was an SR71.

Q: The blackbird.

TULL: It was a blackbird. It was having engine trouble and had to make an emergency landing in Da Nang. This was, of course, against the peace agreement, it was definitely a no-no that we would have this happen, but by the same token, we weren't going to let the plane crash.

Q: Let me just stop here.

TULL: So, Al and I went out to the airport. We first notified some Vietnamese. The head of the Vietnamese Air Force called Truong and told him what was happening and then we raced out to the airport and saw this plane coming down. It was noontime, the time when the flights to Saigon were loading up. This plane comes in and it definitely needed some help, needed some work done. What I appreciated about Al was that he met the pilot and introduced him to me and said, "Now, I have to go to Hue and I want you to understand that Terry is in charge here and whatever she says goes." In the meantime the pilot had gotten in touch with our base in Thailand, and they sent over another plane, again against the cease-fire, a plane with a repair crew and replacement parts. Al proceeded to go to Hue, which I thought was a note of confidence in me. I had quite an interesting 24 hours babysitting that airplane.

Q: Those things are odd looking, you know, we've all seen the things and it's a most impressive plane and it certainly isn't the run of the mill. It's not tiny.

TULL: Well, fortunately here's where your longstanding relationships work out. I had become a good friend of General Khanh who was the head of the Vietnamese air force in I Corps. I knew him quite well from briefings and social events. He was quite upset. I said we have to get a hanger quickly. He came to the airport right away and we got the plane into a hanger. They emptied the Vietnamese aircraft out of the hanger and got it into a hanger. Of course he was anxious, and I don't blame him. He said, "We've got to get it out of here." I said, "We will, there's a plane coming over with a crew. Yes, they're bringing the parts. They'll be here. I won't let them off the base. Don't you worry. They're going to be here in that hanger working on this plane."

At this time they were having a shortage of automobile fuel in town and I said, "There's one problem now. I've got to have gas for my car for the ConGen vehicle. Do you know any place I can get gas?" He said, "I'll take care of it." He ended up getting some gas for my car.

We had a couple of political officers, good young fellows, David Harr and Gerald Scott. The three of us were there and in comes the other airplane with the crew and their attitude was hey, isn't this exciting? We're in Vietnam now. Isn't this nifty? I hustled them all together and I said, "You do not leave this hanger, I don't want any uniforms seen out on that tarmac. You must stay in this hanger working on that airplane. This is a serious violation of the cease-fire. It's necessary. I'm glad to do it. We'll do whatever we can to facilitate your stay, but you must stay in here."

They were not too happy about that. I ended up having one of the fellows go out and get them supper. We got sandwiches and sodas for them. I said, "Look, we'll even get you some souvenirs. Would you be interested in maybe having some carvings from Marble Mountain?" "Could we?" I sent another one of the men down, to the market and he came back with miscellaneous souvenirs, which the airmen paid for. They worked all night on the plane.

Meanwhile, I've got the two pilots, one who had brought the plane in and the other fresh one from Thailand. They're in these bright orange jumpsuits and they were estimating to me that it looked like the way the work was going that they would be ready for a dawn takeoff, but in the meantime they had to have some sleep. I decided to take them t my home for a meal and a night's sleep. I left the two political officers with the airplane. I asked the pilots to lie down on the floor in the back because I didn't want these two orange-suited American pilots to be seen riding in the consulate general vehicle. They understood completely. When I got to my residence I got them inside and I woke my cook up and she fixed them a nice dinner and then they went to bed and got some sleep. About 5:30 a.m. I guess we got back in the car, same procedure, and went out to the airport again. By that time the plane was repaired and they thought they would be able to take off safely, which they did. I've never seen anything like it, to see that airplane take off. It practically goes straight up in the air. It was incredible.

Q: It must have woken up everybody in Da Nang up.

TULL: It had a nice little kick to it. I knew the planes existed, but I'd never seen one, these huge black wings, but then when it started up, as you know it looked like it went a few feet and then went almost straight up into the air. It was incredible. A few days later, a funny note to this, I went out for supper with a friend to a restaurant along the river in Da Nang and they had, I guess you would call him a deaf mute, who helped direct parking at this place. He knew who I was. He sees me and oh, oh.

Q: You're motioning with your hand going straight up.

TULL: The deaf mute was mimicking the take off of the airplane. What was interesting, I knew at the time that members of the International Control Commission, which at that time was Polish, Iranian, I think Canadian, were at the airport Saturday noontime getting ready to go down to Saigon. That was when the plane first came in so they must have seen the plane arrive. But nothing ever came of it. Never saw a word about it. I told my ConGen staff, my staff, don't ever say a word about this. I don't know whether this is still classified or not. Thirty years ago. That's how I babysat the Blackbird.

Q: How did sort of the collapse come about from your perspective? This would be in '75, really it happened and it started in the highlands, but very quickly hit Da Nang.

TULL: Well, the very first indication and again I'd have to go back and read the history books, but the first indication I got that it was really going to be over was there was a provincial capital in IV Corps in the Delta that was captured by the North Vietnamese and no effort was made to take it back. When I saw that I thought, oh boy, you know, here we go. Of course I knew about all the North Vietnamese divisions that were in I Corps. I'd known that from the first briefing I went to.

Q: You're talking about the North Vietnamese.

TULL: The North Vietnamese divisions were in the western region of I Corps. Then as you mentioned in the mountainous areas of II Corps, collapse was beginning around the edges there. I was due to leave Da Nang the end of February 1975. Shortly before my departure Al Francis, who was the consul general, got gravely ill and he was hesitant to go to the States or whatever was required and I said, "Al, I'll stay as long as I have to, you go. You have to go take care of yourself. If necessary I'll delay my departure until you are able to come back." That's what worked out. He was medically evacuated to the States and I was in charge of the post. In the meantime the arrangements were continuing for my departure. I was home packing out and it was early in the morning and it was the day that the movers were there to pack up my personal things and I got a phone call from the chief of staff at I Corps headquarters asking if General Truong could borrow our airplane to go to Saigon. He had to see President Thieu. I said as far as I knew it would work, but let me just double check because the myth was it was our airplane, but it was really CIA's so I checked with the station chief and I said, "Truong wants to go to Saigon. Any other uses for the plane?" He says, "No. Let him have it. No problem." I called back and said yes we'd be happy to have him use the plane. It was a very nice little Lear jet or some little executive jet.

The station chief asked to see me when I went into the ConGen. I went in and the station chief came to my office. He had a draft report they were just about to send out, reporting that President Thieu (President Nguyen Van Thieu) had gotten in touch with General Truong and had ordered him to send some of the forces in I Corps to Saigon. Thieu wanted to pull the Marine Division to Saigon, and perhaps, I think, the Airborne as well, and pull back elements of the First ARVN division, pull them back closer into Da Nang.

Q: These were the top units.

TULL: Absolutely. Just about the top in the whole military establishment in Vietnam. The Marines had been north; they had been in Quang Tri. The Airborne was based outside Da Nang, in the Da Nang area. The First Division and the Marines were north of the Hai Van Pass, near Hue and Quang Tri. Basically, as I read this message, what Thieu was planning was to develop enclaves near Saigon and protect these enclaves, and he wanted to have these military units from I Corps to do it. But to me, as I read that, Thieu was basically writing off I Corps. So that's why General Truong wanted to go down to Saigon and argue face to face with Thieu to see if he could get him to change his mind or at least to change part of his plan and leave some of the units in I Corps. That's why he went down.

Okay, so, I figured that's it, I'm sitting there in Da Nang and I figured its over. There's no way I Corps can hold if this plan goes into effect. I Corps is going to fall even if you do leave some elements in place. The Third Division which was not very good, that was going to be left in place and maybe one element of the Airborne, maybe one of the First Division. So, basically the Thieu plan was saying everything north of the Hai Van Pass is written off. I thought if that happens it's chaos, there is no way it is going to hold.

I learned either that night or the next morning from our CIA team that Thieu had refused Truong's request for reconsideration of the withdrawal. I decided that we had to develop a plan to evacuate our staff and their families from Da Nang. Step one, I pulled out the mission's emergency evacuation plan which was, as I read it, totally worthless. It had no provision for a phased collapse of the country. It had no provision for doing anything for our Vietnamese employees. It was all geared, as I recall to a one fell swoop evacuation of the country of Americans only, and I thought we cannot do that to these people who worked for us. I got all our heads of section together, consular, the AID leader, our political officers, a representative from the CIA to discuss our approach. Going into the meeting to be quite frank I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do, but I thought let's talk it through here and let this come up from everybody. What emerged was a consensus that we had to put the existing plan aside and forget about it. We had as a matter of conscience to do something for our Vietnamese employees. Given the huge size of Vietnamese extended families we decided that what we could do would be to take our employees, their spouses and their children and try to get them at least to Saigon, and then, from there, see what would happen. We couldn't take brothers and sisters or parents. I mean it was going to be harsh and awful, but as it was it was going to be massive. Everybody agreed with this approach, which was what I went into this meeting thinking was all we could reasonably do.

Then, with this general agreement I drafted - I'll never forget this. I'm sitting in the consul general's office, which was a nice office. It was a beautiful day and the sun was dappling on the river outside, the city was peaceful - and I drafted a telegram which I basically said that if the plan President Thieu has adopted pulling out these units from I Corps is accepted and followed through on there's no way that I Corps can hold, it's going to collapse, and therefore, I want authorization to begin a phased evacuation from the region. I said I want to gradually pull in my Americans from their offices at night in the provinces, bring them in at night to Da Nang and let them go back in the morning again, to avoid panicking the Vietnamese as long as possible. I needed aircraft to move our families and our Vietnamese employees and their families down to Saigon. I got it all drafted, showed it to section chiefs, and took it over to the Station Chief who was a good guy, we got along very well. His people had been in the meetings. I showed him the cable and I said, "What do you think of this? Do you think this makes sense?" He read it and he says, "Yes, and if you want you can put a sentence in there saying the Station Chief concurs." I said, "Thank you, I will do that just so there will be no doubt in anybody's mind." I sent the message to Saigon

Well, the break that we had was that Graham Martin, the ambassador, was in Washington getting dental work and I imagine he also was trying to shore up some support for help for the aid that we had promised the Vietnamese but that congress had decided we weren't going to give. He wasn't in country so the charge d'affaires was Wolf Lehman. I sent this cable off and what was really strange, I had just drafted it and my secretary had typed it up and I signed it and I said, "Okay, here we go. Either they give me what I'm asking for or there's going to be a demand that I leave post immediately and I'll be back to Washington with my career in shambles." There's a knock on the door and who comes by but Al Francis' darling wife. She was so sweet, Mary Francis, and she had planned to have a coffee that afternoon for the women of the post. Al was gone. Al was in Washington and of course I couldn't go and neither could my secretary as it developed. So, very sweetly she came by and said, "You two need a break. I've brought you some fortune cookies. You just relax and have these and I won't hang around" and she left. I sat down and my secretary brought us both coffee and we both sat there. I opened up the fortune cookie and the fortune said "You've come a long way baby." We both laughed at the appropriateness of those words.

In this cable I had also said, I figured if I'm going to get thrown out I might as well go out for the whole hog, I said I recommend that we start repositioning units from the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific to the waters near Vietnam because there will be a massive evacuation from the country and at least we could get our people out of Saigon. I got a phone call just a couple of hours later from Wolf Lehman saying you'll get what you need. We'll send the first plane out tomorrow. He approved with no questions, nothing. We started ferrying our people out. The first thing I did was go over and meet with General Truong and tell him what I was doing because we thought there was a possibility at the time that if the Vietnamese citizens saw that we were cutting and running, there could at a certain point be a backlash against us. I also had been asked by our provincial office people if I could get General Truong's approval that the Vietnamese military personnel who worked with our provincial people as translators could also be evacuated with their families or would he expect them to go back to their Vietnamese army units? They were viewed as very close to the Americans. I explained to General Truong what I was doing regarding a phased evacuation. He thought it was a very wise move, which confirmed me into thinking that a) he had failed to get what he wanted from Thieu, and b) that I was right in thinking the whole thing was collapsing. I explained our thinking with regard to the Vietnamese military who worked with us in the provinces. He agreed that he would not be an obstacle, he would authorize them to be evacuated with our consulate general office staff, and so that's what was done.

Q: How about the civilians involved in this because anyone who is watching this from the States eventually was seeing what I think was the head of the airline or something who is loading people on and all. I mean American civilians, not directly connected to the consulate general. Were you telling them to get out, too?

TULL: As I recall, there were very few American citizens in I Corps who were not affiliated with the ConGen or the U.S. government. The scene you recall came much later in the process, and involved Vietnamese not Americans. We got the Americans out on the aircraft provided by the Embassy and via Air America.

Let's move on a little more. I remember before we get to that point I was concerned about the members of the International Control Commission who had offices in Hue as well as Da Nang. I don't think they were in other places, but I remember talking with Wolf Lehman about that and asking what should we do about the ICC? Should we get them down to Saigon, too? He said, no don't worry about them. That's not our concern. It wasn't nasty or anything, he just meant we didn't have to devote our resources to them. There will be other ways for them to deal with that.

That was quite a time. Not all elements of the U.S. mission in Saigon grasped what was going on. There was a lot going on elsewhere, but I Corps was going to go down fast once the troop transfer occurred. Wolf Lehman understood this. I developed tremendous respect for him. He understood completely and he didn't second-guess me. He supported me. Other elements in the embassy just didn't get the picture. I remember at a time when we were using our helicopters to bring our staff and the Vietnamese staff and families from our office in Hue to Da Nang to get them on an aircraft and send them down to Saigon, I got a phone call from the head of USIS in Saigon. I forget what his name was, but I had no respect for his comprehension. He calls and says, "Terry, I've just been talking with the Director of the Imperial Palace Museum in Hue and he wants to get the imperial treasures, the porcelains and things of that nature, and jades down to Saigon. I told him you would take care of that. Just get them on a helicopter and get them out." I said, "No, I'm using my air assets for people. They are not going to be used for museum pieces. I can't do it, it's more important to get the people out." He was outraged. "Well, I don't know about that" etc. His personal rank was far senior to me, but I was the senior American in I Corps at that point. I said, "No, the decision is, it's more important to save the people. I don't have the assets. If I had an abundance of air assets, yes, but I said, no it's more important to get the people." Well, he was huffing and puffing, "I will see about that. I'll talk to Wolf Lehman." That was an indication he didn't quite understand what was going on. Of course, I was not overruled on this.

Shortly thereafter, I got through the military a request from a colonel, who was visiting from Washington who wanted to come up to I Corps. His trip had been in the works a month or two and he had made it to Saigon and he wanted to come to Da Nang and check out the scene. I told the folks in Saigon, "I don't have any air assets for him. There's no reason for him to come. He can read our cable traffic and find out what's going on, but gradually the whole region is imploding so there's no reason for him to come." Well, apparently he had some clout in the Pentagon or something so I get another phone call, "Terry, couldn't he please just come up to Da Nang? Won't you authorize him to at least come to Da Nang? He knows he can't get out of the city. That you don't have any air assets for him or anything of that nature, but if you can get him to Da Nang and see the city?" I said, "All right, but make sure he understands he doesn't get out of Da Nang. I don't have a car for him. I don't have an aircraft, I don't have helicopters." I had been provided with aircraft, but it was for the purpose of getting people to Saigon.

Okay, the next day I get a frantic call from one of my staff who is at the airport, one of the former USAID guys, a good guy and he's saying, "Terry, there's this colonel here and he's insisting that we have to give him our helicopter because he wants to fly to Quang Ngai and he wants to fly here and there and I told him that we can't do it and he's just being really obnoxious." He gave me the name and I said, "You're doing exactly the right thing. He cannot have that chopper. You just hold that line. You use it for what we're using it for which is to evacuate our staff." He said, "Well, this guy, he's just so obnoxious. I told him that Miss Tull said we can't do it and he said, 'Who is this Miss Tull?' We made sure because I just wanted to be sure because he's really throwing his weight around." I said, "No, you're right, you cannot give him anything." And we didn't. There was another indication you see that we're supposed to stop evacuating our personnel so this guy can tell his children, oh I went down to Quang Ngai a couple days before it collapsed. I don't understand that. So, anyway, he didn't come in to see me, I'll say that. Apparently he cooled his heels and took a plane, one of the Air America flights, back to Saigon. I never heard another word about it. I was very pleased that the staff didn't allow themselves to be intimidated.

Q: This is, well, what was happening up in Quang Tri and all? Was there heavy fighting going on?

TULL: Yes, the fighting had started. The fighting had started. As soon as the Vietnamese units were pulled out and sent south then an element of chaos set in. General Truong whom I dearly loved made what some military people think was a mistake in that he told the soldiers of the First Division up there that they could get together with their families and could move south with the families and apparently that broke down unit discipline. He recognized that no more fighting could take place. It couldn't happen. That's all there was to it. So, that was north of the Hai Van Pass. So, that kind of confusion was starting to seep down, but I am very proud of the work of our Consulate General. We got the support we needed out of Saigon, thanks to the fact that the ambassador wasn't there and our good staff really rallied together: The young officers who worked with me at the Consulate General and the former AID people who had worked in the provinces. They were frisky from time to time before the crisis, but they were just as supportive and capable as can be regarding the evacuation, really good. So we got our Vietnamese employees, their spouses and their children down to Saigon and I believe most if not all of them eventually got evacuated to the States.

Now, a couple of days before the final collapse Al Francis who was still very sick came back to Da Nang. It was killing him to be in the States and be sick and see what was happening. He came back, and now I fought Al a little bit. I mean it was very brave of him to come back, but he came back and he wanted to undo some of the things that I had started. For example, I was bringing our people in from the provincial offices. I was having them come in and stay and sleep in Da Nang at night and go out by chopper to their offices in the morning because I was afraid of what was going to happen. He came back and the first night he's there he tells them they can stay overnight. Well, apparently there was some pretty nasty fighting near one of the offices and he only did that the one night. He realized that he couldn't be there. Then he wanted me to leave which was okay. I knew it was getting very close to the end and technically my replacement had arrived.

Q: Who was that?

TULL: Another protï¿½gï¿½ of Graham Martin. Oh, in later years he became ambassador to Haiti, tall, thin fellow whose first name starts with a Brunson McKinley. Anyway, he had been cooling his heels in Saigon and then I told the embassy, if you want to send him on up you can. He can help us out in Da Nang. Al's view then was well, he's here and you might as well go. I left Da Nang. To my knowledge I was on the last regularly scheduled Air America flight from Da Nang to Saigon. When I got to Saigon II Corps I think had collapsed. We were in the midst of the collapse in I Corps. I ended up spending a couple of nights sleeping in the ambassador's office because George Jacobsen who was Mission Coordinator at the time, was scrambling to try to get air assets to Da Nang and to the other posts and I ended up kind of being the go-between between him and Al Frances. Al got extremely exhausted and I was the one who would talk to him on the phone and say all right, we're trying to get that for you. We'll see what we can do, but then they would ask me in Saigon where can we land this particular aircraft? Where's the helicopter pad, things of that nature. I was there as I said literally sleeping on the ambassador's sofa and I think this was Easter weekend, I'm not sure. It was the last weekend in March; it might have been Easter. It was wild, but Al was so tired that it was useful I think for him to be talking to someone who knew him and he was very brave, I'm not knocking that. He eventually left Da Nang on a boat. In the meantime, we were trying to discourage independent non-governmental types from getting involved, such as sending in the aircraft you just mentioned. I believe it was from World Airways I thought Ross Perot was involved, but I may be mistaken. Anyway they wanted to send a plane up and we told him not to do it. We said it's too late. There's no control. Its over as far as taking a large airplane into Da Nang. But of course they did it anyway against our instructions and that's where you saw the picture of people clinging to the struts of the airplane and yes, it was just a nasty sight, probably several people were killed in the process of that aircraft taking off. No, that was terrible, but we knew it was finished by then. We could not safely put an airplane in. I saw something recently on television I think a television reporter was on that plane and it might have been someone who just recently died, but they reshowed the film which I had never seen. Apparently the plan was to be a flight to take women and children, but when the plane landed the soldiers just apparently knocked the women and children down and forced their way on the plane. We had told them not to go at all because we knew it wasn't safe. This was another example really of how out of touch or how unwilling to accept reality some elements of the embassy and public were.

After Ambassador Graham Martin came back from the States, I found out that he had been saying in Washington, that I had obviously overreacted and when he got back he would square it away. Really weird. So, who do I meet outside Martin's office one day shortly after Martin's return but the official White House photographer whose name escapes me and he blithely tells me, "Oh, its good to see you. I'm going up to Da Nang. I want to take some pictures." I remember telling him, "Da Nang doesn't exist as a U.S. post anymore. It's finished." "Oh, no, well I want to go up there and see it and the ambassador is going to make a plane available." I said, "You can't land a plane at that airport. The North Vietnamese have taken it over, okay? You cannot go, its over." He looked at me like I was crazy and he ended up flying over to Cambodia which I think gave him a couple days of taking pictures before it collapsed." That was another problem we had, getting the assets we needed in terms of aircraft and in terms of shipping to pick up the refugees because Cambodia was collapsing around the same time. It was really bad.

Q: Yes. Well, what was even before, let's say you're still in Da Nang, but things are beginning to happen, what was the impression that you had and maybe others in our establishment up there had of Graham Martin because you get the feeling that he was trying to either, either he was trying to keep some wishful thinking or he just felt well, if he did something it would pull the plug and everything would happen.

TULL: I never had a particularly high opinion of Graham Martin. I think he was unrealistic in his expectations for what was going to happen in Vietnam. I felt that the fact that we were so muzzled in the Consulate General that we couldn't send a cable to Washington without having it cleared first through Saigon showed an excess of control or concern that, good grief, what do those people know and I will control the information flow. That concerned me. I also wondered if the fact that his own son had been killed in Vietnam had perhaps made him determined that this was not going to be a failure, that we were going to stick it out and that somehow it would work out because he wouldn't have wanted his son to die in a vain enterprise. I don't know. I think he wasn't liked by the American staff. But he was in Never Never land.

Q: Towards the end I mean from your perspective of almost dismissal of this man, you know, of his judgments? He had power, but he was considered a bit off the wall.

TULL: To me the fact that he allegedly went to Washington for dental work at a time that was critical was bizarre so I suspect he was doing more than that. At this point our pledges of aid were unraveling and maybe he was actually trying to talk to Congress to have them give the aid that we had promised at the time we made the commitments there in January of '73 in the peace negotiations. Toward the end the feeling was he wasn't getting it and I know when I went, when I got to Saigon the political counselor was Josiah Bennett who was a good guy and was with the program and the whole thing, but of course this is a month before Saigon fell. I went to see Joe and I was practically afraid to say what I believe, you know, but I say, "Joe, it's over. This place can't last. Vietnam cannot, South Vietnam can't, hold with I Corps gone. The imperial city is Hue. If you take I Corps out it's gone. Then you see it's crumbling around the edges. I don't give it 30 days." I thought here we go. He looks at me and says, "I'm afraid you're right." But whether anybody was saying that to Graham Martin I don't know.

I got to see Martin because when the end was approaching in Da Nang, I was due to leave, my tour was coming to an end anyway, so there were certain farewell events, farewell parties given by officials for me, and one of them was a dinner offered by General Truong. This was at a time when it looked very bad in Hue and I remember I had my radio with me and I was occasionally having to talk on the radio to our people in Hue, I wanted to be sure that they got out for the night. It was very bad. At any rate General Truong's wife asked me in Vietnamese, not in front of her husband, "If the country falls to the Communists, will you take our children?" I said, "Yes, I would." Later at the dinner table our station chief was sitting on one side of the general and I was sitting next to the general. I said in Vietnamese which was deliberate because our station chief didn't speak Vietnamese, "You know, your wife has asked me if the Communists take the country will I take your children to the United States." He looked at me. I said, "I have told her that I will." He said slowly, "Thank you very much." This was all the confirmation I needed that everything I had been saying about this country is falling and I Corps can't hold was absolutely right. When everything collapsed and Truong made it down eventually to Saigon on a boat I wanted to see him to work out the details to get his children out of the country. The word from Martin was that nobody could see any Vietnamese officers from their previous posts without checking with him first. So, I asked to see Graham Martin to get that permission. He said, "Well, you know, this is a problem, Terry. There's rumors that General Truong, that people want General Truong to replace General Thieu to be president of South Vietnam. There are rumors of a coup that would put him in Thieu's place." I said, "Unfortunately, Ambassador Martin, he's not the type." That was the phrase I used: Unfortunately, he's not the type. He looked at me. I said, "I am taking his children out of the country and I would like your permission to go see him in the hospital." "Yes, all right. You can go see him." I went to see General Truong and eventually got three of his children out of the country. They became my kids for a few years. We are still very close.

I'll back up a little bit. Toward the very end there in Da Nang, this was something I think worth mentioning. As I say at the time of the peace agreements in January of '73 the U.S. I learned made substantial promises of aid that, although we would withdraw our military, we would continue substantial military and economic assistance. But as time went on Congress decided they weren't going to appropriate that money. Within the last two weeks of I Corps existence, and Al Francis was in the States, we had three congressional delegations come to I Corps. Two with congressmen and one with staffers, but they were all kind of high-powered folks. I remember this one day I was at the I Corps briefing and there was all sorts of fighting going on around the edges and even closer in to the city than it had been and they reported one of the South Vietnamese helicopters had been shot down in a certain spot and the VC were still in the area. General Truong was going to take me and the congressmen that I put up in the Consul General's residence out because they wanted to see what was happening in the region. General Truong pilots this helicopter and I'm with him and the congressmen were there and I know where we're flying. We're flying right over to the area where they were fighting four or five hours before. At a certain point I looked out, and we were right over that helicopter that had been shot down. I've got a helicopter full of congressmen and I called up to General Truong. I said, "General, I know where we are." He started laughing. Then we flew over other areas and I remember this one congressman who had been a marine in I Corps several years before and he was astounded by what he saw, how peaceful certain areas looked because when he was there, there were no rice paddies in certain areas. There was much more land under cultivation. It just looked so good. He couldn't believe all the improvements that had taken place since he had been there before and I said, "Is that an indication then that maybe we're entitled to the aid that we promised?" He said, "It's too late. The American people won't stand for it." He was quite impressed with what he'd seen. (Note: This Congressman was Mr. Murtha of Pennsylvania. End note)

Q: Terry, how did you get out and how did you get the kids out?

TULL: Well, as I say I got to Saigon on the last regularly scheduled Air America flight and the children were down there. They had already gone down with their mother. They had a home in Saigon as well as in Da Nang. I had met these children at the general's home. I can't say I had actually met them. I had gone there for dinner once and at a certain point after dinner, the little girl, the tiniest little thing, cutest little thing, came out and played some Beethoven to knock your socks off on the piano which was wonderful, and then the older girl played something nicely, too. I had seen them, let's put it this way. I should also add that it was not uncommon at that time to take children out of the collapsing country. In this case I agreed to take these children because I never in my wildest dreams thought that General Truong would get out of the country. I thought that he would go down with the ship. When I agreed to take these children it was forever. I mean it was adoption, ultimately. Other people came to me and all of a sudden asked could you take my child, just get them out of the country and I had to say I couldn't, that I was already committed. I didn't say for whom. I was already committed.

At any rate I'm in Saigon and at a certain point Ambassador Martin decided we had to thin out the ranks and get people out because I think even he was maybe starting to see the handwriting, although I doubt it because the word that came to me was that he was finding it a negative impact on staff morale to have the shell shocked officers and staff from Da Nang and II Corps wandering the corridors looking for something to do to help out. At any rate, I left, but in the meantime it had been arranged then that I was to have the three children who were 9, 11, and 15, two girls and a boy. When I went to see General Truong at the hospital, he said he had met with President Thieu. I guess Thieu had come to see him in the hospital and wanted to know if there was anything he could do for him and Truong said yes, give me passports for my children. I mean I knew in the background from what I'd heard from Graham Martin that Thieu was fearful of a coup and some people wanted Truong to replace him. He got passports for his children without jumping through multiple hoops. I took those passports in to see the Consul General in Saigon, a nice guy. I went in to see him and I had these passports and I said I have these three children whom I'm going to take to the States and they're going to live with me. If the situation here stabilizes, they'll come back. If it doesn't, they'll stay with me. I said I will support them. There will be no problem with that. I need visas. He looks at me and looks at the passports and says, "Yes, sounds like a B2 to me."

Q: I had that job, you know, when you say, oh well, what the hell.

TULL: Right. Sounds like a B2, you know. Anyway I got the visas for the kids and then I went to see the kids at their home and that's when I actually met them and shook their hand and learned their names and all that. I made arrangements because at this time the ambassador is saying get out of country and I had already, I had long made plans for a long vacation trip with a friend who had been with AID and retired and came back to Saigon and we were going to travel for about two months. When this happened I was going to get the kids I figured well, I'll just cancel that, but I had to leave the country before the kids did. I sent a cable to my brother on the West Coast. He lives in Washington State and he and his wife were just super people. He's a retired naval officer and they had a large family. They had a huge house and just a couple of kids were left at home. One of the things they had done because they were that type is that they had taken in a Colombian girl under the Rotary Club live abroad type thing, whatever it was. I knew it would be no problem, so I just sent them a cable saying I have to leave Saigon. I have acquired three Vietnamese children ages 9, 11 and 15, may I send them to you? I got an answer back right away, yes of course, by all means send them to us so that's what I did. I typed basically a statement for General Truong and his wife to say, I, so and so hereby give control or whatever of my children so and so to Theresa Tull and blah, blah. Then I gave them a letter saying this is the person they're going to go with, my brother in Washington State near Seattle, and then I had to leave the country. My brother by the way insisted I take the vacation because by this time we had gotten through on the phone and he called me in Saigon and I said, I'm going to cancel my trip. He says, no, your life is changing; you don't know how much your life is changing. You take that vacation; you'll need every minute of it, particularly to recover from what you're going through. You get the children to us. We'll take care of them. It will be no problem. Anyway, that's what I did. It did work out. I left nervous as a cat, when were the kids getting out? I went to Bangkok and on down to Pattaya and I just chilled for a few days. I kept calling home to find out what was what. The children did get safely to my brother. I had them for two years. They're just the greatest kids. They're my family. They're wonderful.

Q: Terry, this is a good place to stop and we'll pick this up, I mean your adoptive three children have arrived in Washington State with your brother. You have left. This was in?

TULL: Its April of '75.

Q: April of '75 and we'll pick it up at that point.

TULL: Okay.

Q: Today is March 31st, 2005. This is one day after the was it the 30th anniversary of the fall of Da Nang.

TULL: I think it was.

Q: Not a date we want to particularly over remember.

TULL: Yes, that's right.

Q: Anyway, so you went to Bangkok. Then what happens? I mean we're talking about April of 1975.

TULL: I was pretty shaken up as you can imagine and I had made plans, long-standing plans with a friend that at the conclusion of my tour in Da Nang I was going to take a really long leave. I had leave built up for a long time and we were going to in effect take a trip around the world. Of course all of this happened before I acquired the three children. I told my brother who had agreed to receive them that I would cancel that trip and come home and he said no. You do the trip, your life is changing because when I took the children the idea was they'd be mine forever if that's the way it was going to work out. One didn't know. Everything was uncertain, but they were given to me forever, if necessary. He insisted no, take the trip. I went down to Pattaya and just mourned for a few days just tried to get over things. I'm not over it even now. Then my friend joined me in Bangkok and we then proceeded to have a most interesting trip. At each stop we made I would communicate with the Department to try to find out what was happening with my children and found out that they had gotten out and I got in touch with my brother and yes, he had received them. Then I remember being in Nairobi and I submitted an offer to sponsor the children's father and mother so that they could get out. I did that at various stops along the way, checking to see what was what. Anyway, I got myself back to the States. It was a fascinating trip. We spent a week on a houseboat in Kashmir. When I think of all the troubles in Kashmir in recent years! This was like being taken from hell and placed in heaven, in a Shangri-La type situation. We did a photo safari in Africa, in Kenya and Tanzania, so we had quite a trip. By coming back that way and through Europe it concluded the trip around the world for me because I had gone out via the Pacific route when I went to Vietnam. So, I got back in the States and then discovered that thank God against all the odds really in my view the children's father and mother had gotten out of the country. Apparently Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky had gone to the Vietnamese military headquarters where General Truong had become by default by the departure of other senior officers the senior official in the military. He was acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was going to go down with the ship, I knew this, this is why I got the kids out. On the very last day, however, Vice President Ky went out to the headquarters and told General Truong he had a spot on his helicopter for him. He told him the U.S. Ambassador had left, and he in effect ordered General Truong to leave with him and gave him a spot on his helicopter. They flew out to the Blue Ridge; a U.S. ship called the Blue Ridge.

Q: The Blue Ridge was a command ship, yes.

TULL: Yes. They flew out there. They ended up in Guam initially.

Q: How about his wife?

TULL: She had gotten out a few days before. She didn't want to go. I learned that they had five children. I took the three middle children. I didn't even know there was an older boy who was a teenager, I guess he was maybe 17 and he was in school in Saigon and they didn't tell me about him or I would have taken him. Apparently later his father said, no, he felt that the boy should stay and fight like he intended to do. He didn't get out right away. Then there was a three-year-old whom I had offered to take, but the mother could not bear to be parted with the three-year-old. I think they were being practical, too, figuring I was going to work and these three kids would be in school. If I had a three-year-old it would be a little difficult.

As the situation deteriorated they did take me up on my offer and they sent that little boy to my brother, but they sent him with a non-American employee of the embassy. It might have been someone who worked with the CIA, I don't know. But the way it developed from my point of view, and I may be being totally unfair, I had the feeling that that person viewed that little boy as his ticket out and his ticket into a better situation because he was able to persuade the authorities not to release that boy to my brother. That little boy ended up having a very traumatic experience in a refugee camp instead of being taken immediately up to where he had a sponsor and to join his brother and sisters. He spent several weeks in a refugee camp with this older man who thought hey, I've got the general's kid, I'm going to get out of this camp. That's me being a little cynical, maybe that happened, maybe it didn't, but I know that child did not join my brother.

Then a few days before the final collapse, the general agreed with others who were saying, look get your wife and boy out of here, the older boy. The defense attachï¿½'s office in Saigon was running some flights and Mrs. Truong and the teenaged boy, they were flown to Guam. They got out, so the only one out left in country was the children's father.

My brother and his wife told me that about 2:00 a.m. in the morning one day they got a phone call, and it was the children's mother calling from Guam and they said it was Christmas and Halloween and Easter and Tet. Those kids were so excited that their mother had gotten out of country.

At any rate, there we were. I got back to the States and discovered that other U.S. officials including some high ranking military officers had also been lining up offering to sponsor General Truong, as I had. So the person who actually did succeed in getting him out of the refugee camp was Lieutenant General Cushman, John Cushman. At that point Cushman was the commandant of the Commanding General Staff College at Leavenworth, Kansas. I was told this so I got in touch with him. My thought was, okay, he wants to sponsor the whole family and I have three of them sitting out in Washington State. Obviously this man's a three star general, I'm not even a mid-ranking officer - let's say mid-ranking to put a bright light on it - but I mean financially and everything else he had much more to offer. I called him, a very nice man.

Q: I knew him in Korea.

TULL: Yes. A good man. We were talking and I said, "Well, I guess you want to make arrangements to take the children. I have three of them. They're with my brother in Washington State." He says, "Now, wait a minute. The general is very fond of you and just so impressed with the fact that you have his children. I have seven children. A couple of them, two or three in college and coming up the line. I want to help as much as I can, but" He, in effect basically said it would be really helpful if I would keep those three children, and the general wants it that way, too. By this time he had gotten the general and his wife out of the camps and the two boys, the oldest child and the youngest child. I said, "Well, you know, I'm just a low ranking State Department officer" but I didn't even know the kids. I had seen them, but I was all prepared to love them. I loved them instantly because I had taken them on, but I said, "I would be happy to do it, this is what I was going to do, but are you sure it is best for the children?" He said, "Well, I would think so. Why don't you come see us all and we can talk it over with the general, but I know he wants you to have those children because he was so impressed and so fond of you." He wasn't putting this on. You had to see it in the context of the times.

In the meantime, my brother, God bless him, he and his wife, they were so wonderful to these kids and, one of their daughters, Suzy, was getting married. Of course, I'm in the States and I got in touch with them. I said, "I'll come get the children and bring them back." They said, "Theresa, they're really looking forward to Suzy's wedding." They had really gotten integrated with the family; they'd been with them at this point for about two months. "They're really eager for the wedding. Why don't you take your time in getting yourself set up in Washington and then when you come out for the wedding we can talk about when you take them to DC." I agreed. I stopped and spent a couple of days in Leavenworth at General Cushman's residence on my way out to the West Coast for the wedding. The Truongs and I had a bittersweet reunion. It was quite clear to me that the general really wanted me to have those children.

Q: General Truong.

TULL: General Truong. That was fine with me. This was the commitment that I had made. He was every bit as honest as we always said he was. He got out with absolutely nothing and was just one wonderful person. His wife was going along with it, too because I think the way it worked out was General Cushman, I think he kept the oldest boy, Diep, kept him with him for a year or two and then another General Hal Cooksie, was back in Washington and both of these men were trying to get General Truong work. Well, what ultimately evolved was the Department of the Army established a historical project where they engaged some of these generals to write their impressions of the war - particular aspects of strategy and tactics and the like - and that gave them some employment and got them back to the Washington area. So, General Cooksie and his wife were very helpful, too. I think Cooksie, between them Cooksie and Cushman, they got Truong into this project and befriended them, and helped in various ways. In fact when they came back to Washington initially they stayed for a few days with Cooksie who at that time had a beautiful house on the National War College grounds. I went over and visited them there, visited the Truongs. Then he helped them find a little place. Well, they ended up renting a very modest little apartment in Falls Church and I rented a house for me and the children.

At that point I owned a one bedroom apartment, the one we're sitting in here now in Foggy Bottom, Washington, but I rented a big old house on Ellicott Street, N.W. This apartment was rented. I had a good renter at the time when I was overseas. He was with the International Monetary Fund, so I just kept it rented and I found this big house that I could afford and it was right off of Wisconsin Avenue so transportation was good. I got my things out of storage and moved it in and got ready for the kids.

I had been wiped out in Vietnam. Anything I had in Vietnam was gone. All my linens. Oh, it was a mess. Linens, cutlery, private pictures, the whole thing. So, I'm here, I've got three kids and I don't have a sheet or a towel to my name. I don't have a cup or saucer. I had to start from scratch and get the place squared away. Get it ready to receive the kids. I got the sequence wrong. I didn't do the renting of the house until after the wedding, after I had visited in Leavenworth and was convinced that this was what the general wanted. Then I went to Washington State. Then I came back and did all this so they could stay there and have a wonderful time with my brother. I mean he and his wife had a big house and they only had two of their nine children left at home and there was a horse and they just had a wonderful time. This wedding was something they really wanted to be a part of. I went out and that's when I got to know the children, when I went out there for this wedding. They were just the greatest kids. They were so good. It was quite an experience and, we had a good time with the wedding. I remember the boy who was 11 at the time, very serious looking. In a picture you never see him smile. He's always very serious. He came over. I could play the piano a little, not much. The two girls were wonderful. They could play beautifully. I could play a little, so I was playing my brother's piano and he came over with his book of music that his sister had and he turned to this page and pointed to this particular piece and I said I don't know if I can do that, so I tried that and he liked that and he said his uncle used to play that in Vietnam. I said okay. Then the next thing I know he's come downstairs and he has two shirts in his hand and he wants to know which shirt should he wear to the wedding. I thought well, I've made it with this boy. He's accepting my role, so the two of us talked about the shirt. It was great. The girls were much more outgoing and forthcoming and smiling.

I'll bore you with one little anecdote my brother told me when I was out there. It occurred when I was there, but the youngest girl was nine and she looked to be about six. She was very small. On the day before the wedding, most of my brother's kids had come from parts of the country. They're all zipping around having a good time. They've got to hop into a car and drive into town and check out something. They all hop into the car and there's no room for little Tram, and she was heartbroken and she stands there. This whole group of lively girls is going to go off to town and she starts crying. Well, my brother stops the car. He had been a pretty strict person. He says, "What's going on?" "Well, we don't have room." "Take another car and take Tram. This child has been with us for two months going through everything she's been through and she's never shed a tear. I'm not going to have her crying because you're going off to town without her." "Oh, okay." I thought that was sweet. They had a good time. Anyway, I came back to DC and that's when I rented the house and got everything squared away for them. One of the benefits of all of this which I had not realized at the time was a benefit was I had been assigned to the Southeast Asia unit in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research which I did not want. I did not want INR under any circumstances, but as it turned out it worked out well for me personally because it was a routine job. You know what I mean? The other jobs I'd had at State, I never knew when I was leaving. When I was on the Vietnam Working Group, 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., whatever, but this was a routine job in terms of hours and it proved to be much more interesting than I had expected. I enjoyed it. Enjoy is maybe the wrong word. I think I learned a lot from it by stepping back from the action oriented things, doing the longer think pieces. It was useful.

Q: Of course this also is one of the pointing out one of the problems that most Foreign Service Officers are were fairly action oriented were not academic, essentially it would come out of the same rice bowl that the academics come out, but for one reason or another, we opt for the Foreign Service and there isn't much time to contemplate. What's on my desk today? What's in the Washington Post or New York Times and all. Was Evelyn Colbert there when you were there?

TULL: Oh, bless her.

Q: I've had a long series of interviews with her.

TULL: Is she still alive?

Q: Well, she's out at a rest home, where is it, in Maryland near Andrews Air Force Base.

TULL: I would like to see her sometime. I believe when I first went there Evelyn, was a DAS. Was she ever a Deputy Assistant Secretary at INR?

Q: Yes.

TULL: She might have been a DAS, but she was very good friends with my immediate boss, who was Patricia Barnett. I got to know her maybe a little better than I would normally say a DAS given the position that I had because she was good friends with Pat and Pat and I became pretty close. Pat was the Director of the Southeast Asia division. I was in Regional East Asia, INR/REA and Pat had Southeast Asia and there was a Northeast Asia section. Under Pat, I was the analyst for the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and all the Pacific Islands and ended up doing some pretty interesting work.

Q: Well, we'll come to that in a second. You were there from when to when?

TULL: Basically let's say roughly August of '75 to '77, two year tour.

Q: How did you find INR fitted into this system as vis-ï¿½-vis the other bureaus and all that?

TULL: I was pleasantly surprised at the role that INR had. We had regular contact with senior officials in the East Asia Bureau. You're picking out and choosing what they should see from all this multitude of the intelligence product that comes in everyday, you're the one who says oh, I think they want to see this. Then you're doing little blurbs for the president's daily briefing items. You're having a little bit of an influence there. Then occasionally an assistant secretary would request a study on a particular issue. You had a feeling it was being read, and that it was taken reasonably seriously. That had not been what I expected, to tell you the truth. I did not want to go to INR because it didn't have a reputation for getting the best people. I thought I was being shoved into it, but of course they claimed we're trying to upgrade staff. We're looking for the best people we can get.

Q: Well, they also had the sort of Vietnam exodus, too.

TULL: True, there was that and of course, I'd always wanted to serve in Indonesia, I never got it, but as I say as it turned out, as circumstances developed it was okay. The job proved reasonably satisfying. It seemed to me that every day I would have to get there reasonably early, not ridiculously so and scan and select the material to be briefed. Then I would go down and brief a deputy assistant secretary, take the material to him because you couldn't leave it with him. Frequently they'd ask questions, sometimes they'd ask your opinion. Then on weekends, on Saturdays you'd frequently deal with the assistant secretary. You had some exposure beyond what I had expected. If there was a meeting on a sensitive issue INR would sometimes be included. From my very low spot on the totem pole I couldn't really speculate much beyond that. I didn't feel it was a waste of time, as it developed.

Q: During this period were the Pacific Islands at all of interest?

TULL: Moderately so, I'd have to say. I remember I got good reaction from a piece I did about the Soviet influence in the islands, because the Pacific Islands had always been "ours", the U.S. bailiwick. There was some concern that the Soviets were nosing around and maybe putting a little aid here or putting a ship there and generally their presence. I did a pretty comprehensive study of that and it was interesting. The Philippines of course were always interesting and I did that.

Q: But on the islands, one of our policies particularly as these islands began to get independence and all that was the term strategic denial, in other words keep the Soviets from establishing bases. We didn't want the bases, but we didn't want them to get in there.

TULL: Yes, which is one reason probably that this study was rather well received. They were starting to put some resources in down there and trying to woo the islanders a little bit.

Q: What was the situation in the Philippines when you were doing this?

TULL: Well, I'd have to say it was almost the same as it is today because one of the issues that I worked with and studied was the Muslim rebellion led by Nur Misuari. He is still leading a Muslim rebellion in the Southern Philippines with others. Of course at that time, '77 I think Marcos had already declared martial law and he was perpetuating himself in power and that was not well received as you can imagine in Washington. We were paying close attention to the Philippines, I remember doing analyses and studies of the insurgency as well as the political situation. Analyses in INR differed from the work normally done in a political section overseas. You're doing quick work, generally. You're dealing with today. You're trying to plan ahead for tomorrow and look into the future, too, but the idea of sitting back quietly as one does in INR and absorbing pulling in all the information from all the intelligence agencies as well as from the library, sitting back almost at your own pace thinking and reflecting and chewing it over and putting it all together coherently into a longer-term analytical study was useful. I was pleased to discover that I could do it, and also to know that you had some readers and that maybe your analyses had a minor impact. When I hear about the Muslim insurgencies in the Philippines I think my God, what is it, 30 years later and still going strong? Misuari was getting help from Libya then, too. Maybe he's not getting it from Libya any more, but he was then. Now the leader one hears most about is Abu Sayaff, clearly a terrorist. My recollection fro my time in Cebu and INR is that the Muslim insurgents principally targeted the Philippine military and government officials. I believe the Abu Sayaff leadership has included more broad-based terrorism.

Q: How about Australia? Were they going through, I mean they had committed troops to Vietnam and all that. Was that having an impact the fall of Vietnam?

TULL: I don't think so.

Q: Yes. I was wondering throughout the area although it wasn't quite your thing. I mean you were in INR in Asia. Was the fall of Vietnam seen as maybe the Americans aren't going to be around anymore and let's get ready to cut a deal?

TULL: I can't say I got that feeling at all. I do recall very early in my tour there, almost the first couple of weeks that I was in the bureau, I think it was Herb Horowitz, the head of INR/REA, came down to my office and told me there was going to be a meeting to talk about the future of our relations with Vietnam. He had never served in Vietnam. Since I h ad just left it, he asked me what he thought our policy should be. I said, "Recognize them as soon as possible and put the war behind us. We lost, it's over, we gave it our best shot, now move on." He asked me why I thought this. I gave him some historical reasons. We had relations with a lot of countries around the world that we didn't love, you know, Russia, China, and I said, "I don't think Vietnam wants to be in Russia or China's pocket and let's just move forward would be my recommendation." He went off to his meeting and a couple of days later he says, "Well, I used your pitch and it wasn't well received." It made sense to him and to me; it made great sense. I always regretted that we dragged it out for so darn long.

Q: Well, it's one of these things, its like the missing in action movement which has no basis in fact, but its something that keeps getting flogged by the conservative right wing or just people just wont' accept the fact that we lost the war.

TULL: That's just it, in my view. I mean I had lost so much. I lost personal property and watched all these people that I cared a lot about end up in reeducation camps. I thought it was going to be a lot worse because I was there during the Tet Offensive and the Communists slaughtered everybody associated with the South Vietnamese government or the Americans in Hue. I thought my God they're going to kill these people I know. They didn't do that much killing, fortunately. A lot of people died in the reeducation camps, you know. Move on. You have to move on. We didn't do it for a long time. We didn't do it.

Q: Well, during this two years how did the kids respond?

TULL: They were great. They really were great. I had no hesitation seeking the best I could find for them. The one thing I wanted was to get them into a decent school. I tried various approaches. There was a Catholic school close to where I lived, St. Ann's it was. When I got in touch with them, I don't know who I had on the phone, but she was very unresponsive because I was looking for a deal. I had three kids, no money. They said, "Well, we could probably take one of them, but the other classes are full." I said, "We're talking about Vietnamese refugees." "Well, yes, I'm sorry, but we have a certain limit." Okay, I thought well there are decent public schools in the area near where I lived, but still I didn't like that. I saw an article in the style section of the Washington Post and it was an interview, the name is coming back to me. Gaetana Enders, Tom Enders' wife.

Q: Oh, yes, the countess or contessa or something.

TULL: Yes, she had been a contessa and The Post was interviewing her about all the things she was involved in. Tom, was he ambassador or deputy something in Cambodia?

Q: He was DCM.

TULL: DCM in Cambodia.

Q: He had quite a blow up with his ambassador. I'm not sure. It was Yugoslavia, but anyway he was in Cambodia.

TULL: Yes, I think John Gunther Dean was ambassador in Cambodia when it went down. Dean was helpful on another issue. He helped one of the staff from Da Nang. I ended up having the same driver when I was the deputy in Da Nang. Dean had been the head of CORDS in Da Nang and so we had the same driver and we communicated after the war and he helped the driver and he helped various people. He got involved in helping people.

At any rate here's this article about Gaetana Enders outlining all the things she's doing to help settle refugees. The article mentioned that she was on the board of the International School in Washington. I called Mrs. Enders and introduced myself and explained the circumstances and said I had three children, 9, 11 and 15. Ideally I'd like them all to be in the same school because I'm working full time and the International School was K-12. She could not have been more helpful. She got on the phone and got back to me and she said, go over and see the head of the International School and we can work something out. I went to see the principal and talked about it. They couldn't have been kinder and what they ended up doing was giving me faculty rates for the three children so I think I paid something like $600 a year for each of the children and it would have been a few thousand for each otherwise, beyond my reach, and it was just a great experience for these kids. They could take a bus from the corner. I rented a house on Ellicott Street, just a couple of houses away from Wisconsin Avenue and they would take a bus down Wisconsin and then they'd have to walk to the school on Macomb Street. I think it wasn't far from the National Cathedral and they would walk five blocks or whatever, but they went and came back home together and it just eased my mind so much.

Then in the summer before the school year started I arranged with the International School (I paid for it of course, but modestly compared to what it would have been otherwise) for English lessons for the kids so they'd have a little tiny bit of a leg up by the time they started. In the meantime, I guess it was in late July or August then the kids were put on the plane in Seattle, tearfully, dragging themselves away from my brother and his wife, to come to see me and live with me. They're troopers. They were just brave troopers. They took to the house and took to the school very nicely. What I did with the children to help them learn English was to conduct drills in English similar to the type that we had learning Vietnamese every night after dinner. Things like "please pass the sugar" and then they would say "Please pass the salt," that kind of thing. The kids really seemed to enjoy it. They picked up some language that way. I remember one night I was tired and I thought, oh, these poor kids have been working hard. I said, we won't do the drill tonight. Oh, but we want to. It wasn't like I was imposing it on them. They picked up the language very quickly and made friends and we got a routine going. It worked out well.

My family was superb. They just took these children as my kids and just wrapped their arms around them and couldn't do enough for them. Oh, then, fortunately, after a few months their father and mother got relocated to the Washington area because he was working on this history project and so then they could see their parents and it gave me some freedom. I know at one point I guess the following year I was sent on a trip by INR out to my "parish" as we used to call it, to visit the Philippines, and Australia and Papua New Guinea. Their father came and stayed at the house so the kids wouldn't be alone. It worked out well. They were happy to have their parents near and it was a relief to me, too, to know that that they were close by if worse came to worse. There was no way the parents at that point could have cared for these children the way that I was able to do. I was able to give them this good start, you might say. The two years passed smoothly and pleasantly

I remember when we were moving into this all white neighborhood in Northwest Washington, here's three Vietnamese kids and a white woman moving into this house. There was a certain curiosity factor. This gentleman who lived with his wife a few houses away came up and introduced himself and he was curious about us, but in a nice way. I explained the circumstances, that the children had just come from Vietnam, and he offered if there is ever anything I can do to help just let me know. I'm retired now, my wife and I retired and we're only three houses away. I met the wife. We worked it out that if a problem arose before I got home from work, the children could go to their home.

Q: Were we at sort of the nuclear impasse with New Zealand at the time?

TULL: Yes.

Q: Did this mean we were sort of dismissing New Zealand in a way?

TULL: It's so long ago, I honestly can't remember. If you hadn't mentioned it it would have escaped me. Yes, I think we excluded them from things because we had no ship visits as I recall because they insisted that we would have to certify that there were no nuclear weapons on board and at that time we would neither confirm nor deny, I think was our policy, the presence of nuclear weapons. What was interesting at that time, and I would have to say where I put a lot of my focus was on ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. I got to be somewhat of an expert on that.

Q: How did we view ASEAN at that time?

TULL: Very positively. ASEAN, they were really the dominos of the "domino theory." You could make an argument looking at the Vietnam War that it was this huge failure. I think the ASEAN nations the nations that bordered Vietnam were looking at it differently, looking ahead and thinking, you know, we don't know how this is going to work out, whether the Americans are going to be successful in Vietnam. This is my speculation only. So, in 1965, I believe it was, they formed a tentative little group that became known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Now these were countries that had border disputes and had very little trade cooperation and were kind of antagonistic to each other, but I think the fear of Vietnam, the fear of an expanding Vietnam, an expansionist Vietnam pushed them together and we encouraged that. We strongly encouraged that. We were very supportive of ASEAN. At the same time, we didn't want it to look like it was a U.S. creation because it wasn't. It was like there was this little flame glowing and you'd maybe blow on it very gently and hope that the fire would get stronger. It really did, particularly with the end of the war and you had Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia all firmly in the communist camp and bordering Thailand and nearby Malaysia concerned but involved in a strengthening.

I did some work on ASEAN. I became convinced that the Vietnam War allowed the would-be "dominos" time to strengthen themselves in ASEAN and avoid __ combing to any expansionist aims of Vietnam. In this sense the war achieved a valuable aim. In later years it was very interesting and rewarding in later Foreign Service tours to see ASEAN get stronger and take on new members, including some of the members that it was fearful of initially such as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The ASEANs were tentatively moving toward each other. You might recall that for example the little country of Brunei, which was kind of pushed out of the nest by the British in 1975. The British had wanted Brunei to be standing on its own feet a little bit earlier. Elements in Indonesia had designs on Brunei and there were border skirmishes and attempts to foment revolution, in a very minor way. That all stopped when the countries got involved in ASEAN. So ASEAN became a significant group in the region. I think without the Vietnam War they would not have unified and worked together as constructively as they did so that was a benefit of the war.

Q: A lot of things the fact that Sukarno was unable to take Indonesia as a communist camp probably was a result, it was a very close thing.

TULL: Yes, it was close.

Q: Other things, one can't deny, I mean there was such a thing as the dominos.

TULL: Ask the dominos, they thought there was. The dominos joined together and this helped prevent their takeover. You will recall that there was a minor communist insurgency in Thailand and that there had been a major one in Malaya in the late 1950s.

Q: Well, then by '77 you're through with your two years in INR, what happened?

TULL: Yes. Well, then it was time to get another assignment and I at that point thought it would be useful career-wise to get either a political counselorship or maybe a DCMship at a small post. That did not happen, but after a lot of the usual fiddling around I was offered Cebu, to be consul in Cebu, principal officer at my own little post. There were one other American and about eight Filipinos as staff. By this time my children's family was in a better position financially. Their father had learned to be a computer operator and was working his way up in the computer field. Their mother had become a hairdresser. The children's parents worried about leaving me alone. I don't want to say they felt sorry for me, but I was not married. I was single and had no children and they didn't like to take all the children away so they asked if I wanted to keep one because as you know in Asia, if a family member is childless it's not uncommon at all to offer a child and it's not that you'd be pushing them out of the nest or cutting off all contact. I really appreciated the offer and I thought about it just very briefly, but I said, no, my own father had died when I was a child and these children were so lucky to have both their parents and I think it was best that they stay with them, but I said I'll still be part of their lives and I am to this day. My boy is getting married finally on Saturday so that's the main reason I'm here, to be here for his wedding. Took him forever, but he finally decided to get married.

Q: What about the two girls?

TULL: Oh, they did well, they did very well. Trinh is the oldest. She had an unsuccessful first marriage, but no children by it and then she married again several years later. She has three children; they're teenagers now. Trinh is a very active businesswoman. She didn't want college. I could have gotten her a college scholarship. My brother was a professor and he could have worked something out and she could have gone to St. Mary's out there in Indiana near Notre Dame, but the idea of college did not appeal to her. She wanted to be in business. She has done just great. She dabbled at various things and she has two dry cleaning establishments. Her husband is an electrical engineer. I kid her and say you could buy and sell me and I'm grateful. I'm really happy because she has worked so hard. She has worked hard. She has a big beautiful home now in Chantilly and is just as sweet and nice as can be. Then the youngest child, Tram, she was more academically interested and so she has gotten her bachelor's and is working on her Master's degree. She works for the government in personnel, particularly EEO issues. She had an unhappy first marriage to a Vietnamese boy and they had one child who is just as sweet as can be. She is a senior now out in California at a university, I want to say California Polytechnic Institute, but its not Cal Tech.

Q: I think there's a polytech.

TULL: Yes. Tram married a few years ago a very nice Caucasian man, and they have a little girl who is five years old. She's my little dear. She's so sweet. I'll be seeing them all again on Saturday at the wedding. Tri, the boy, became a computer operator, programmer analyst. In fact on 9/11 the firm he worked for was doing work at the Pentagon at the Secretary of Defense's office. Tri had worked in that office. He was driving to work on 9/11 and he was a little bit late and the airplane that hit the Pentagon went right in front of his car. He got on the phone and called the people in his office and told them what had happened. At that point they had just heard a crash and really didn't know what was going on, the plane hit the other side of the building. Tri's done okay. He has had a lot of nice girlfriends over the years. I thought he was never going to get married, he's just going to have fun. All of a sudden he's getting married so I'm happy as can be for him. He's sweet, so they've done well.

Q: You were in Cebu from '77 to when?

TULL: '79.

Q: Cebu is in the Visayas is it?

TULL: Yes, it's in the Central Visayas, the Visayan Islands.

Q: What was the situation there?

TULL: It was very interesting. Marcos of course was still in power and the country was under martial law. Cebu was the only post State had outside of Manila, although there was a USIS officer in Davao, in Vindanao. The consular district took in everything from the Central Visayas, where Cebu was the key island, south all the way down through Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. I had a fair amount of traveling to do. One of the major things happening then was this Muslim insurgency in Mindanao which was nasty. I had a consular officer who thank God did the consular work because I concluded when I was in Belgium, my first post, that if I ever ended up being assigned as a consular officer I would quit because I could not stand it. God bless you for doing it all these years. There's no way in the world I could. My personality didn't mesh with that. I would quit maybe before they threw me out! When my vice consul was away, because I would have to give him a break, too, he would go travel with one of our consular specialists through the islands checking on citizenship claims, social security claims, estate matters and other issues. About every five or six weeks he would go off for a week and travel around the consular districts looking up individuals and taking care of cases on the scene. Then I would have to do the consular work. I'll have to tell you why I know that my personality wouldn't be best for it. There was a category of visa that you're very familiar with, I guess treaty trader or something?

Q: Yes.

TULL: Treaty trader. I think if you had a major business, import/export, for example, you could go to the States and set up a business or something of this nature. This one Chinese woman that I had met at a big party, she came to the consular section with her son who was 21 years old and looked about 18. She said, "We're here for a treaty trader visa for my son." I looked at her and I laughed. I broke out laughing. I said, "You've got to be kidding." I thought, this is not very diplomatic. She got a little hurt. So, then I put on a sober expression on my face and said, "Well, here's the application. My secretary will take the application and we'll review it, but I think there might be one or two problems with it." My first reaction was "you're kidding." It was a total joke. At any rate I hated consular work. I never grew to tolerate it, but I had to do it. I behaved a little bit better after that. The interesting thing for me was always the political aspects of the work.

Q: Well, how did the say the writ of Marcos run? I mean how did you see the situation in your consular district?

TULL: The officialMayor, Governoin Cebu were Marcos people. He was not liked by the people at large, so far as I could judge. Cebu was the hotbed of opposition, non-communist, non-Muslim opposition to Marcos. It had a reputation for that. The Osmenas were a family that comes to mind to me as prominent in the opposition. In the past an Osmena had been vice president. One of the sons had some claim to U.S. citizenship and it proved to be a valid claim. I was involved in adjudicating it and getting Washington's concurrence. He got U.S. citizenship, and thought it might save his life. You know, that's not an overstatement. Enemies of Marcos sometimes died violent deaths. The young Osmena was not exactly popular with the powers that be in Manila. There was a lot of legitimate opposition to Marcos, politically. Particularly in Cebu and in the Visayas. The Cebuanos spoke a different language, Visayan.

Q: Tagalog?

TULL: Not Tagalog, no. Not Tagalog which was looked upon as kind of cultural imperialism, of domination from the north. The Cebuanos resisted speaking Tagalog which they viewed as the language of Luzon. They had a proud history. There are still some remnants of Spanish blood full-blooded Spanish people living there in Cebu in the Visayas.

I went to Cebu in August '77. The new ambassador was David Newsom who arrived shortly after I did. Early in the following year there was an election for some representative body. I remember this clearly because my sister had come to visit and I had gotten authorization for leave. My sister and I were going to go over to Hong Kong for a few days. We went to Manila. I always would touch base and brief the political counselor on what was going on in my district. The political counselor at that time was Bob Wenzel and he knew everything I was doing. I was always cautious in that sense. I was never a free wheeler. I would consult with him about plans on various things. I got into the embassy and I'm told that the ambassador wants to see me. Well, that's interesting.

I always liked Ambassador Newsom. I went to see him and here President Marcos had complained to Ambassador Newsom that Theresa Tull, the consul in Cebu, was harboring oppositionists and meeting with oppositionists and doing everything she could to undercut Marcos. Therefore he wanted me reined in, Marcos did. Newsom initially just reports this with a straight face. I did not know whether he was believing this or not. I said I have indeed met with the senior opposition leader after consulting with Bob Wenzel and he knew exactly what I was doing and in fact I think Bob might have even been there on a visit to Cebu and shared the meeting. I said I view it as my job to meet with the opposition just as I had dinner with the mayor and the governor and other government officials. I'm not favoring them over anybody, but I'm encouraging the idea of free elections. I said that Marcos was absolutely wrong if he thinks I'm trying to undermine the elections or doing anything improper. The Ambassador said, okay. I said, I've never done anything in Cebu on this sensitive issue without consulting first with Bob and if you check with him you'll see that he agrees. So I made the big time with Marcos, having him complain about me by name to the ambassador, with the implicit hint that I might be asked to leave the country.

Q: Oh, yes. Was this sort of a typical Marcos operation always you know so sensitive to any contact or anything like that?

TULL: Well, I guess so. I don't know. I mean I never hid any contacts I had with the opposition. That was my point. I took that approach throughout my entire career as I got more senior. I never went off in the middle of the night to see anybody. I would have them come to my home and I would go to their home with my car visible. This is a free, normal exercise of what a diplomat does to keep contacts with all segments of society. No, I would say Marcos was pretty extreme on this issue. I remember this event, that election was interesting because Hazel and I did go over, we got our three or four days in Hong Kong and when I came back I was going to do other things and I was told, asked, but told with this election coming the ambassador wants you to make another run through your district and can you postpone your leave? I said, well, my sister has come from Philadelphia for this, and I don't want to leave her, I'll take my sister with me. I'll make the tour. Go over to the islands and check it out, but I'll have to bring her. She's discreet. Oh, wonderful, Terry, that's great.

I ended up paying my sister's expenses, because I couldn't stick her with all this. She had a very interesting time. We went back to Cebu and then we went over to Bacolod, Negros and then over to Antique and I'll never forget it, its one of the memories of how does Marcos deal with the opposition. The governor of Antique at that time was a young fellow. I had met him in Cebu. Mutual friends had brought him over to meet me. His name was Javier. He was almost like the best of an American politician. He went around his district in a Jeep and he had a loudspeaker on the top and he would play a happy song on that and that would announce he was there and then people could come and give him their complaints and he would try to resolve them. They were crazy about him. We had a great day with him and then he put us up in his guest quarters, a nipa hut structure right by the water. I've never seen brighter stars or more of them. It was just one of those times when you think, Foreign Service life is great isn't it? We had this nice experience, and then the next day we were with him again. A few years later, he was slaughtered. They murdered him.

Q: Who was this?

TULL: Javier was murdered by supporters of Marcos. It occurred in the period leading up to the "People Power" Revolution in 1986. He was slaughtered. He was probably no more than 35. I have this memory of this very nice guy who was really trying to do the right thing, but he didn't want Marcos to be in forever. He was at that point one of the remnants of a freely elected situation. But of course what ultimately brought Marcos down was the murder of Aquino.

Q: Benigno Aquino, yes.

TULL: Yes. When they murdered him, they also had murdered Javier, too. That was terrible. That was terrible. Anyway it was fascinating to cover this very interesting political situation. There was a book that came out, too, a few years later called Waltzing with a Dictator and I appeared in that somewhat favorably to my surprise.

Q: Some of our people did not.

TULL: I did.

Q: Yes, well, some of our people in Manila, I can't think of his name offhand, but it is a well known name, our consul general who was almost coopted by the Marcoses I think.

TULL: I think so. I remember reading some of that. When I was nearing the end of my tour in Cebu I wrote a very extensive piece and that's what I think ended up getting a reference in this book, the kind of "Wither the Philippines under Marcos" and "Can this continue?" How long can this go on? I did quite a lengthy analytical piece in which I concluded that no, the people would rise up. It was going to happen. There were just too many fissures out there that were going to split further and it wasn't going to be good. Now, I don't know whether the embassy even mailed that in because I took it up to Manila and I don't know whether they submitted it or not. They must have, because somehow the person who wrote this book knew that I had done this analysis and I never talked, I never talked to writers or journalists about my reporting. I did predict that the end of Marcos was going to happen.

Q: Did you find that the politics of the area you were dealing with, I've heard that families are very, they're sort of, families of essentially wealthy families. It's almost tribal, but did you find this true?

TULL: Yes. They were referred to sometimes as the "oligarcs," wealthy families that had controlled the economy and dominated politics. I previously mentioned that in Cebu the Osmenas were one such powerful, prominent family.

I had some wild experiences during this tour. This one I have to tell you, this one story, and it will go in my own memoirs. I got to know an American Lutheran minister and his wife who were working in Marawi City in Northern Mindanao. Marawi City was on a big lake, probably Lake Marawi. I had met them in Cebu and I had befriended them and had them over for a decent meal and a few drinks because they were living in the Muslim region where alcohol was hard to come by. They said "Anytime you want to come down to Marawi City you stay with us. We can work it out." I said, "Well, I would like to. I'll have to work it out with the embassy." Because that area was a hotbed of the Muslim insurgency, I got the ambassador's approval to go, but the Philippine military commander in the region agreed, yes, I could certainly stay with the minister and all, but it was a dangerous area so he said he would send a troop escort to the airport to meet us when we went down. I arranged to go down to Marawi with the minister and his wife on their next trip from Cebu. Now, the minister and his wife were upset about having a military escort. They said that's just going to make us a target. If we're going along the highway and we're surrounded with Philippine army troops we're just going to get the Muslims to come after us with their troops. But they swallowed hard and agreed. We got to the airport in Marawi City and there's no troops. Nothing there. We wait and we wait a little bit longer and my hosts said, well, obviously there's been a change of plans so we've got our vehicle here, someone from their mission had come to meet us. So four or five of us pile into this little mini-bus type thing and head down the road. This road that is maybe 10-15 kilometers from the airport into Marawi City is narrow, winding and there are close-packed trees on both sides. That was dangerous. So, we're driving along and suddenly the road opens up a little and we hear shooting ahead. Everything grinds to a halt. Traffic is stopped. Shortly thereafter a soldier drives up and tells us we have to stay where we are, there's a battle ahead. So, we had to wait and we hear shooting and then it clears and then we went on to Marawi City.

I was supposed to go directly from the airport to a ceremony, some kind of memorial service or band concert, in an outdoor facility with the commanding general. I was late arriving. In the meantime we found out along the way that what had happened was some troops that were coming along the road towards the airport had been ambushed by Muslim guerrillas and one of the soldiers was killed. It's rolling around in my brain, there are troops coming along the road. Were they coming to protect me, I wonder? I was taken directly to sit with the general and I said the reason I was late was that there apparently had been an ambush on the road to the airport and that his troops had not gotten to me. He got on his radio right away, and learned it was the escort that he had sent to meet me that had been ambushed and a young boy about 19 years old had been killed. I just felt terrible about that. I had no control over it, but it really brought the whole insurgency into painful focus. It made it much more personal. It was really sad.

I made calls on various officials, and there wanted to go to the market with my friends. The general insisted that I go in an APC.

Q: Armored personnel carrier.

TULL: Yes. Put me in an armored personnel carrier, but I wanted to go to the market which if you're a political reporter you want to get out, to see a little something about local life, the every day economy. It was okay and we got out and wandered around the market and then once I got back to my friend's home that was it. I didn't get any more protection. I enjoyed some time with them in their nipa house. Another interesting aspect of this case on that particular visit is that there was an American Christian missionary whose name escapes me now, who had been working there for several years with the Muslims. They had a school for the Muslims and they did various other things. He seemed to be trusted by the Muslims. Mindanao is very heavily Muslim, almost exclusively Muslim except for some coastal cities, but, Marawi was thoroughly Muslim with mosques and those musseins calling for prayer from the towers five times a day.

This missionary had a reputation of knowing everything that was going on in that area, but he didn't like to talk to American officials. He wouldn't do it. He perhaps thought the Muslims would be concerned if he saw too much of American officials, concerned that they would not be as free with him. But he was very close friends with my hosts. So, they said we're going to try to get him to come over and meet with you. They explained that how we're doing that is, we brought some gin back from Cebu because you can't buy it here in Marawi City. She said we're going to offer him martinis or gin and tonic. I'll tell him that you're here. I don't want to surprise him, but the lure of a martini just might get him over here. We'll see.

That evening I was sitting inside their charming house and this man who I'd heard a lot about (he'd written books on the Mindanao Muslims) came in and he looked a little suspicious, you know, who is this woman sitting here. They introduced him and he says, "Tull, that's not a very common name." I said, "No, not too common." He says, "Do you know anybody named Bob Tull?" I said, "Well, I have a brother Bob." He says, "Was he ever in the navy?" "Yes, he was a career naval officer. He retired a few years ago." He says, "Good grief, I was his bunk mate on the Greenwich Bay several years ago."

Q: Yes, the Greenwich Bay ended up at COMIDEASTFOR off Bahrain that was in Dhahran in the '50s, yes.

TULL: Yes, that's right. He says, "I was his bunk mate. I was in the navy. Good grief, you're Bob Tull's sister. Wow. Were we buddies." It was great. Talk about a small world. You're there sitting in a nipa hut near the banks of this lake with the musseins calling for prayer and this man whom you've heard a lot about and doesn't like foreigners, Americans in particular, he doesn't like officials and he comes in and he was my brother's bunk mate. He was very nice then. I was able to engage him in discussion and learned a lot of useful information.

When I got back to Cebu, I felt so bad about this young soldier who had been killed on his way to protect me that I got in touch with the general down there and I sent $150 of my own money. I asked him to give it to the family. I had no means to get any reimbursement for it, but I thought this was just awful and it would be a little gesture, so he promised that he would indeed get it to the family. When I was up in Manila the next time, by this time our Ambassador was Dick Murphy. He had replaced David Newsom and so I was briefing him. He always wanted to know what was going on in Mindanao. It was very interesting to debrief him. He had a keen interest. I told him about this and I said I felt so bad that I had sent his family $150. He says, "Oh, we'll find a way to get you reimbursed" and he did. I got reimbursed. I don't know quite how he did it, but I ended up getting a check for $150 to replace my personal funds. But it just it was sad. It was so sad.

Q: Well, what was the Arab or the Muslim revolt about? How would you describe it?

TULL: Autonomy.

Q: Is this the same as the Moros?

TULL: The Moro National Liberation Front is the name of the player, when I was there. Miswari is still active, but in recent years a more terrorist-oriented group, Abu Sayyaf I think it is called, seems to have taken the lead..

Q: Yes, I was thinking. We fought them.

TULL: They never settled down since the Spanish American war.

Q: Yes, the Spanish American War. I mean we had.

TULL: Never got Mindanao completely conquered.

Q: Was there any possibility of a compromise or anything like that?

TULL: Efforts were made. Even Marcos tried to make some efforts to give them more say in their own affairs, but no way is there going to be autonomy. There's no question about that. They're not going to dismember the Philippines. Their basic goal was to dismember the Philippines and you can't have that.

Q: Once you start that, I mean it's unending.

TULL: Yes. I think in terms of coming up with more funding for schools and things of this nature there were gestures made through the years, but as you can see in recent years now they are more violent than they were in those days.

Q: Was there much outside Islamic influence at that time?

TULL: Yes. At that time we knew that Libya was actively funding them, definitely Libya was funding them. Arms shipments would apparently come in via the southern part of the Archipelago. Yes.

Q: In that whole area you were dealing with I would think that sort of the central rule would rest rather lightly on all these island folks and all that.

TULL: Well, except for the fact that the central government had a large military presence. The military is very obvious down there. They had a lot of troops. That presence was there and I don't know if that ever rested lightly.

Q: Obviously you had both experience and been burnt by the Vietnamese experience. You had an eye for troops and how they acted. What was your impression of the Philippine army at that time?

TULL: I'd have to say that all I knew personally were the generals and you didn't hear a lot of stories about atrocities or anything of that nature, no. They were not, I get the impression that they weren't very determined fighters, shall we say? The idea of fighting hard against the Muslims was not that strong because they wanted to protect their lives and yet here this group coming to defend me from the Muslims got shot up and one young boy was killed. Mindanao was wild. I mean part of it was unreal. I went down to Zamboanga a couple of times. Zamboanga was off limits to American officials, the ambassador would not allow just a casual visit for tourism. Anytime I went down, I guess that held for Mindanao, but definitely Zamboanga I would have to get authorization from the ambassador.

I remember there was this leading opposition figure thee. He had been to the States and had a green card at one point and I wanted to meet with him. I forget his name, I regret to say. So I went down and was met at the airport with full pomp and ceremony with the ruling general and the whole nine yards. I've got an armed guard everywhere I go and I was staying at this hotel right on the water and it was something out of Somerset Maugham or something. You're looking at these interesting sails of different colors and shapes off of Zamboanga. I would walk down the street. This is during the day and I have two guards around me with their rifles and everybody looking. When my official program was over and they deposited me back at the hotel at 5:00, they went home. Then I had some supper and then I took a taxi with no protection whatsoever to visit this opposition figure with whom I had already arranged it. That was a sight to see because this guy, white haired, and he's only wearing a sarong around his waist, and he's got a half a dozen people checking me out and I'm thinking well this guy he's got a lot of influence in the area. He'd been kicked out of office illegally by Marcos and some Marcos crony had replaced him. He maybe had been governor or mayor. So, I'm thinking this is going to be really interesting, when the first question out of his mouth is "How can I update my green card?" I said, "Well, you want to give me the details and I can look into it." We got that out of the way and then we had a discussion about the opposition situation. Well, later in the final years of Marcos' regime around the same time that he arranged the slaughter of Governor Javier and shortly before Aquino was murdered, this gentleman was assassinated, too. He was slaughtered; two people on motorcycles shot him. It was a very frightening situation.

Q: I think one of the things that people you know in America we focused on the assassination of Aquino, but that almost seems to stand as a unique act when actually there had been a rather substantial campaign of assassination.

TULL: Toward the end of the regime, yes, and I think that really shattered the foundations because particularly someone as popular as Javier to wipe him off the face of the earth, that was just terrible.

Q: As a young boy I grew up in Annapolis so I picked up a lot of navy stuff and I have to ask you did the monkeys have tails in Zamboanga? You know the song?

TULL: Yes.

Q: For anybody researching this, there's a famous, rather raunchy song.

TULL: It's terrible.

Q: Called The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga. It comes from the.

TULL: It's a very racist song.

Q: It comes from the Philippine war.

TULL: I know. But you know it's a racist song because they ridiculed the Filipinos as monkeys, horrible.

Q: I know, a horrible song. As I say, it was and I don't think anybody really realized how racist it was as a kid.

TULL: No, we don't. I used to sing it as a kid.

Q: In fact until you told me about this, I just now I hadn't realized what it really meant.

TULL: Really? No, oh my gosh, yes. No, that was a slurring way of referring to the Filipino natives down there. Terrible. Zamboanga, I'll tell you that was an interesting piece of work. Really wild: pirates, kidnappings for ransom, ambushes. I had another interesting experience with regard to my visits to Mindanao. Technically, of course, the Consul in Cebu is the senior ranking official in their area of assignment. The ambassador in Manila tried very hard to enforce this. The embassy had rules that anybody from the mission who was going down into my consular district was supposed to notify me first so I would know and I wouldn't be caught short going out to dinner and here's the AID director or some colonel from the defense attachï¿½'s office at the next table, or worse, be told by the governor or mayor, oh, that was a nice visit I had with so and so. The ambassador tried to enforce that and I tried to underscore the importance of this. Now, this did not always go over well at all, particularly with our military. There was this one colonel, I guess the head of the defense attachï¿½'s office at the embassy. He resented deeply that he would have to consult with some civilian woman anytime he wanted to fly down to Mindanao and visit his buddies (contacts) down there, but at any rate. On this one occasion I heard he was going to be making a trip to Mindanao and there was going to be someone from the CIA station and a political officer from the embassy going with him. Well, I heard about this so I got in touch with Bob Wenzel and I said, Bob, I heard about this trip. I said, "This is my stamping ground, its my area, I should be with them." He said, "Oh, yes, you should, Terry, I never thought of that. I'll see what I can do." Anyway he had to go to the ambassador and the ambassador had to shove it down the DAO's throat that he would pick up Consul Tull in Cebu and she'll be with you on this trip, and so they did. He had a small plane, the DAO plane, and it then took us down to Mindanao, to Zamboanga. The colonel met with some Filipino military and the DAO plane flew back to Manila. The four of uDAO, CIA man, Political Officer, and I remained. We had useful meetings there in Zamboanga. We were supposed to be flown from there to I believe it was Cotobatu City via the Philippine Air Force. We're big people, all four of us. We've got our baggage. We get to the airport and here's this little single engine plane that the Philippine military has allocated for us and we look at it. Not too long before that, maybe the previous year, a small plane had crashed in I think in Luzon and it had wiped out three or four people from the embassy, AID people, ECON, the whole thing, flying in questionable weather, and it was a single engine plane. I'm looking at this and I'm thinking I'm the woman, they didn't want me along in the first place, we're getting along great. It's working out fine. I don't want to be a wimp, but I'm not going to kill myself, either. We put our luggage in the plane; I kid you not the nose tips down. We're looking at each other.

We're all looking at this plane, the nose of which has dipped forward with the weight of our luggage alone and I'm thinking, how do I deal with this? I tried to be diplomatic. I said, "Fellows before we get on, I think maybe we ought to talk about this first." Nothing to talk about, I'm not getting on that plane, it's not safe. Great, I agree. Everybody chimes in, in relieved agreement. They're not saying a word first. They were waiting for me, I guess. The colonel said he'd take care of it. So, he went back and talked to the military and they were not too thrilled. We ended up spending the day at the hotel, swimming in the pool waiting for them to work out logistical arrangements and we spent the night and the next morning they had an old C47 and we felt a lot better in that.

Q: C47s have gone on forever.

TULL: They're workhorses.

Q: Yes.

TULL: The old workhorse.

Q: A great plane.

TULL: So, we had a very interesting fruitful series of meetings in the various towns that we visited and it resulted in some good reports on the status of the situation. I remember thinking, oh, my Lord, am I going to be the one to say I'm not getting on that plane? I think we ought to talk about it. It worked.

Q: Well, while you were there did there seem to be any possible resolution to the Islamic rebellion or not?

TULL: No. Thirty years later there still isn't. It's worse now than it was.

Q: Did you get any feeling, you mentioned who was the head of it?

TULL: Nur Misuari. He's still the head of it. As I noted above, the Abu Sayyaf group has dominated the situation in recent years. A real terrorist outfit now.

Q: This is the guy who goes around and cuts peoples' heads off.

TULL: Yes. Misuari wasn't quite that bad. Misuari is still perhaps more of the political head. I don't believe they're getting aid from Libya anymore.

Q: I assume they wouldn't.

TULL: Yes. Any more. Libya is trying to be better behaved.

Q: The Saudis may have gotten into this at some point supporting schools and all that?

TULL: I think you're right. I believe there is still outside funding perhaps recently via Al Qaeda groups.

Q: Saudi Arabia, it didn't hit your radar at all?

TULL: Not much that I recall. As you said, they probably were funding Muslim schools.

Q: As far as aid to Muslims?

TULL: Not much 30 years ago when I came into the picture there. Is it 30 years?

Q: Yes.

TULL: Close to it.

I do think really, as you indicated earlier, I think this is just a continuation of the fact that the Spanish never completely conquered Mindanao and we never completely conquered it. There is the northern part of the Philippines, heavily Catholic from the Spanish era, and the southern, the Mindanao area, is predominantly Muslim. Only the coastal areas of Mindanao, the fringe areas, were affected by the Spanish influence and Catholicism.

Q: I mean there's a story that the Colt 45 was developed to stop the berserk amuck I guess is the term.

TULL: Right, running amuck.

Q: Of Moros coming at them and knock them over.

TULL: Right.

Q: It became our standard sidearm, which is around a bit.

TULL: It is. It was developed for our fighting in Mindanao. I believe General Pershing led our efforts there.

Q: It has a big bullet to really knock the office over. Did you get any contact, was there any contact with the Muslim leaders? I mean were they through intermediaries talking to, able or not?

TULL: I'd have to say no. I don't think they were accessible. The best information I got was from this American missionary.

Q: Did he have contacts?

TULL: Yes, he did. When I was in Cebu, one of the reasons that the ambassador had restrictions on who could go down to Mindanao and why there was protection offered us, one of the ways that the Muslim insurgents made money was by kidnapping. They would kidnap people for ransom. I'm saying it was an insurgency tool, but I think it was a traditional thing, for people who weren't even associated with the insurgency to raise money. There was still active piracy in those days in that area. I think piracy is still taking place.

Q: Yes, they're still. It's not a good place to go. I was just wondering how about with the missionary? Did he give you any insight into this group?

TULL: Other than what I've said before, which is I don't see their demands being realizable because they really want autonomy and autonomy is not going to happen. There will not be an independent Muslim Mindanao. I suspect that the central government feels that even limited autonomy would be a danger because Muslims are not the only people living there, you know. On the coastal cities you've got Christian Filipinos who have come in from the north, particularly from Luzon. You just can't say, okay Muslims, this is going to be your little enclave and you can run it and you can have Sharia law and chop hands off and all that. I don't see how the central government could do it. I don't think the Muslims demands are answerable.

Q: Well, you left Cebu in 1979.

TULL: '77 to '79.

Q: Where did you go?

TULL: Again, I tried very hard to get the next jump up on my career which I thought would be a small DCMship or a political counsellorship, and got neither. I went to the National War College, which was very nice, and also I think ultimately it helped in the career situation. I came back to Washington and I went to the National War College.

Q: You were there from '79 to '80?

TULL: An academic year. As our modest military leaders of the class called it, "The Illustrious Class of 1980".

Q: Yes, its interesting that you were moving into you were having an awful lot of contact with military in your career. Another question I want to go back to when you were in INR.

TULL: Sure.

Q: Was there a group of Vietnam veterans I'm talking about Foreign Service ones that got together for therapeutic reasons or what have you? I mean did you find yourself part of a Vietnam Mafia at all or did you all get sort of dispersed.

TULL: No, not then, no.

Q: Because so many of them have, I mean Vietnam is still a theme that runs through the Richard Holbrookes, the Tony Blakes and others.

TULL: No, I guess I was not, no, I was so busy with my children outside of the work situation and no, I can't say there was that at all.

Q: During this time coming out of Vietnam were you sensing?

TULL: Later there were some linkages I'll get to later when we talk about my future career. But my greatest surprise was that the Department did not debrief me or my colleagues on the collapse and evacuations. I assume the ambassador was debriefed. But there was no after-action assessment. I thought this was very unprofessional. The Department just seemed to want to forget it, to sweep the loss away. No effort was made to learn lessons re future evacuations. This should have been done.

Q: Were you sensing a change in attitude or the role of women in the Foreign Service or not?

TULL: Well, I think earlier we discussed my dissatisfaction when I was brought back after my first tour in Vietnam and went into the Vietnam working group to be the internal political officer and how the director, then Jim Engle, he was an old school type, a decent human being. But he had no clue how to deal with a woman and he undercut me and brought another officer in to try to give him the job and I had to go to him and say you know, should I get another job or what because this is the job I was brought in to do. I was saved as I said earlier because he was transferred and I had a different boss, Josiah Bennett, and I got the decent job to which I had been assigned.

Recently I have been reviewing some of my letters from the period. I wrote a lot of letters to my family and when I was in Saigon at that time and got this assignment I was thrilled to death because it was really going to be a good job. It was replacing Jim Rosenthal who had the internal political slot. Jim was also deputy director. I was too junior to get the Deputy Director designation, but I remember the political counselor was thrilled for me. He said, "Oh, you'll do great. That's wonderful that they want you for this job. You'll just be perfect for it." Then I went back and found out I wasn't going to do it, I was going to rearrange the file cabinet for this man. I would say that was probably the worst experience I had vis-ï¿½-vis being a woman in the Foreign Service.

Did the attitudes change? I always felt my contemporaries, my colleagues, my contemporaries, never had any problem with my sex. With people my own age that I was working with I never got any sense that they were viewing the women that they were around as anything but normal colleagues. You would occasionally get the next level above, the older school who wouldn't quite understand or had difficulty separating you from being a secretary or a clerk or something. I always felt that I got the career that I ended up getting by extremely hard work and by the intercession of a couple of political appointees, this comes much later in my career, but along the way I worked, I really worked extremely hard and I advanced reasonably rapidly. I got the jobs because I worked. I really worked. I really don't think anybody could honestly say oh, well, Terry Tull, she got to be ambassador because she was a woman. I mean, I don't think so. It might have helped at a certain stage later, but along the way, no. Were the attitudes changing? I would guess maybe the attitudes were changing say in the '80s.

My sharpest memory about discrimination against women stems from two class action lawsuits brought against the Department by FSO Allison Palmer, who felt she had been unjustly deprived of promotions and other opportunities because of her sex. As I recall, a key element of the earlier suit claimed that women had been discriminated against in the hiring process. I opted out of that suit, because I had been admitted (passed the written exam twice, and succeeded in my second oral exam) without having earned a college degree, in the pre-women's lib era. I felt I could not join in a suit accusing the Department of discrimination in the hiring process. Also, my promotion had proceeded apace. I had no complaints there, either.

Some years passed. I was serving as ambassador to Guyana when I received a package from the Department concerning the second lawsuit. This one had two elements of interest to me: allegations of discrimination against women in appointments to DCM-ships, and in recognizing exceptional service via awards, such as Superior Honor awards. The suit contended that women were short-changed in the granting of such awards.

I faced a dilemma. I was serving in my second chief of mission position, although I had been denied many attempts to get s DCM-ship. How could I protest that now? The Department has more than made up that omission to me. I recognized however, that many women FSO's had shared my inability to attain a DCM-ship, and had not been as fortunate as I had been.

On the subject of awards, however, I shared the plaintiff's concern. As Acting Principal Officer in Da Nang at the time of the Communist invasion of I Corps, I had developed an evacuation plan for our staff and their families from scratch, and had implemented that evacuation plan as the situation deteriorated around me. For this I eventually was given a Meritorious Honor Award, which I though was totally inadequate for what I had done. I had, while serving on promotion panels, learned that Meritorious awards sometimes were given for relatively innocuous achievements, including sometimes improvements in office efficiency. It rankled that my work in Da Nang at the collapse was viewed as of such minor significance.

Reluctantly, I opted into the lawsuit, principally because of the awards issue! To be more precise I did not opt out of the suit, as I had on the earlier suit. If one did not specifically opt "out", you were "in". I believe that for such cases, the aggrieved should have to opt "in" make a position, informed decision to participate. But this was not the case with this suit, and I allowed my name to become part of the lawsuit.

Eventually, the plaintiffs prevailed. I was awarded a Superior Honor Award to replace the Meritorious one for my work in the Da Nang evacuation. The upgrade come with a small cash awarunder $300, perhaps under $200. But I felt vindicated.

Now at the National War College it was almost a little humorous. There were very few women at the college. I mean there were maybe five women in the class of about 130, of mostly military officers at the colonel level because they were being highlighted that they would make the next step up to flag rank. There were some of the military officers who were a little puzzled as to what we civilian women were doing there and why. (There was another State Department woman in the class; the other there were military officers.) In fact this one guy, an air force colonel in my individual seminar (there were maybe 10 of us per seminar that was sort of like your home room type thing). Inadvertently I think he acted a little chauvinistically a couple of times. I kind of joked with him about it. I said, "Should I bring you your coffee now, sire?" The others laughed and he said, "Okay, two creams and one sugar." And I did. I went and got it. It was that kind of thing; we kind of jollied it along. I think the barriers were falling. It was just occasionally the older people.

Q: It's a process. How did you find the War College?

TULL: I really enjoyed it, yes, it was a very stimulating, interesting experience. The only downside was that we all had to write an extensive thesis. By this stage of the game I wasn't too thrilled with writing theses. Anyway, I thought okay, I'll use this as an opportunity to learn something that I don't know anything about. I chose OPEC. I wanted to study OPEC. So, I did a report on OPEC, which proved personally informative. We also had interesting travel. We had an overseas trip and again I asked to go to the Middle East because I had no experience with it whatsoever. Instead I was assigned to Europe. I went to Belgium, which of course had been my first Foreign Service tour. We went to NATO and then we went to Strasbourg to visit the First French army and then Paris. It was at government expense. You could do worse. It was interesting, but it didn't really add a lot to me because I had already served in Europe. It was a very interesting year. I think it was helpful in later years because when you graduate from the War College you are given a little plaque, National War College class of so and so, listing all the names of graduates of that year. We were told by the military people that as civilians or even as military, that was one of the things you should hang on your office wall because this was quite a privilege and a prestigious thing to get to go to the National War College and if you're dealing in the future with military people and they spot that on the wall they're going to have a different impression of you, a little higher impression. My brother, who was a retired naval officer, was thrilled that his little sister, his baby sister, was going to the National War College. He was quite puffed up about that. It meant a lot to the military, really meant a lot to the military and I think it helped me in later years, too. To have had that broad experience and also to sit back and look at not only military theory, you read Clausewitz and things like that, but you also read deeply in political science and current events. I think it probably was even more of a broadening experience for the military officers who were there, which is the intent of it. We had excellent speakers at the assemblies. It was great, also for the civilians and military officers to get to know wash other well over an extended period, and break down pre-conceived stereotypes.

Q: This is a good place to stop I think and we'll pick this up in 1980. Where did you go after you left the War College?

TULL: Okay. To the Human Rights Bureau.

Q: Okay, today is the 19th of May, 2005. Terry, you're off to the Human Rights Bureau in 1980. You were there how long?

TULL: About three years.

Q: Who was in charge of it and what would you say was the state of our interest in human rights at the time? You were there at a transition.

TULL: Well, Pat Darien, Patricia Darien who had been Assistant Secretary for Human Rights under Jimmy Carter was winding down. This was 1980. I'd joined the bureau I think it was probably September of 1980. I might just have a little preliminary statement or two of how I got to the Human Rights Bureau.

Q: Yes.

TULL: It was my career thought at that time that I was a candidate for, a likely candidate having come out of the National War College and with good work experience, that I would make a good candidate for deputy chief of mission or political counselor at a medium sized post. I made the short list for a few fairly substantial DCMships, but was never chosen for that nor was I selected for a political counselor-ship. It was disappointing particularly for the DCMship. I think it would have been useful to have had that experience, In every instance the person who got the DCMship happened to be of the male persuasion, and you know the ambassadors who were making the choices were male also. This registered with me.

Q: There was no particular pressure at that time.

TULL: Not at that time, there really wasn't. It was well, we'll see and this sort of thing. At any rate a good friend of mine, Charlie Salmon, whose work I respected, was Office Director for Human Rights in the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and he said, "Terry, you really ought to come over and try for my job." Actually I believe that Charlie went from that job to a DCMship. He said, "It's a very meaty job." I was leery of it because of the reputation of Pat Darien for being a little on the extreme side, promoting human rights very publicly, and sometimes vitriolically with some U.S. allies. Charlie said she was really a nifty and intelligent person and that the job was very interesting. Looking around at other options I thought, oh, okay. I bid on it kind of half-heartedly and interviewed with Pat and she offered me the job. I decided, well, okay, its not what I would have preferred which would have been to get out to be DCM somewhere, but this was an office directorship and would be okay. I took the job.

It was the beginning of quite a wild ride because I probably joined HA in early September of 1980. The election came in November. In the meantime there were some horrendous things happening in South Korea. Kim Dae Jung, who had been a leading opposition figure was arrested and charged with instigating riots in the south, I believe it was in Kwangju which was a total farcical accusation. It was not true. He was more of a liberal who thought that maybe the way to get out of the bind in South Korea was to start talking to the north, which was absolutely verboten in terms of the military dictatorship there. He was brought to trial. This gave me an introduction into the role that the human rights bureau could play constructively in major cases. The Koreans weren't too interested in listening to us. I have to say quite honestly I did develop a respect and liking for Pat Darien, but she sort of tuned out of the work, frankly, for the last few months of summer and into the fall, took an extended vacation up in I believe Cape Cod. At any rate when the trial of Kim Dae Jung came up Steve Palmer who was her deputy assistant secretary and I who was Office Director for Human Rights got very much involved in trying to develop a State Department reaction to this trial which looked like it was going to result in a death sentence for Kim Dae Jung. I remember pretty early on Steve and I and some other folks from "L", the Legal division of State, had a meeting with Warren Christopher who I believe was deputy secretary.

Q: He was Deputy Secretary of State, yes.

TULL: But he also was sort of the honcho on human rights matters and we met with him to push for a very strong U.S. presence at the trial. We thought maybe we should have the legal advisor from State go over and attend the trial to make quite clear to the South Koreans that this man had to have a fair trial and that we had questions about that. It was a very interesting meeting with Christopher. He was very scholarly, very lawyerly, on balance he was not an emotional type at all. What resulted from that meeting was that, I don't know if we had the legal advisor, but I think we did have a pretty senior representative from L go to Korea and we had a representative from the embassy attend the trial every day. It didn't do too much good at this phase because they did find him guilty and they sentenced him to death. Now, in the meantime, the November election took place and Ronald Reagan was elected president, ousting Carter. I remember in this period, during the transition, maybe early January 1981, Pat Darien came to me and said that she had spoken to the then Secretary of State, who maybe was Muskie or Vance?

Q: Well, Vance had resigned by that time, so I think it was Edmund Muskie.

TULL: Yes, it was Muskie. She said that she had the following proposals for handling the transition period in the human rights bureau. She wanted Steve Palmer, who was a career Foreign Service Officer, a very nice, capable man, to be acting Assistant Secretary and she named me to be acting Deputy Assistant Secretary. Muskie had concurred. I was shocked and delighted. I told Pat it was very nice of her, and to serve as a DAS for a few weeks will be excellent to have on my record. She laughed. She said, "Oh, no, we're not talking a few weeks here. This is going to be a long haul before they get another assistant secretary." Okay. Off she went and in came the new administration. The Reagan administration, the early Reagan people, managed to save Kim Dae Jung's life. I believe Richard Allen was National Security Advisor.

Q: He was.

TULL: Early on, I don't know whether Steve Palmer met with him, or what, but we did briefing papers and highlighted Kim Dae Jung's case. My understanding is that Richard Allen sort of made a deal with whatever general was the president of Korea at that time. The deal was, you don't execute Kim Dae Jung and you will come to Washington very early in the administration for a meeting with President Reagan, a meeting which had been denied I think under Carter because of Korea's human rights abuses. So, you know, you give here, you get there. At any rate Kim Dae Jung's life was spared (her sentence was commuted to life in prison) and the president of South Korea came to Washington and got the full treatment from Reagan.

I think he was the first foreign leader to do so. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, figuring out who is going to take over and run the human rights bureau became a very difficult time. Alexander Haig came in as Secretary of Sate. One of the first things he said in a famous statement was, "This administration is going to replace human rights with terrorism." Now, I think what he meant to say was anti-terrorism, but it came out as "we're going to replace human rights with terrorism." Initially his thought was, I think, simply to abolish the bureau. It was brought to the administration's attention that there were many laws involved in our human rights policy, that congress had a say in this, that the bureau was established by law and the laws required certain actions such as the annual human rights reports, such as assessments of the human rights records of countries that wanted to buy weapons from the U.S. and that one could not simply come in and say we don't like having a human rights policy, it's finished. It was a very difficult time. Contentious. The new crowd that came in on the transition team, oh, it was a nasty transition. The assumption was that anyone who had worked with the Carter administration was obviously a kind of a lefty, and the idea that you could be loyal to the president regardless of who the president was was something somewhat alien to some of the more extreme people there. At any rate we soldiered on.

The solution that the Reaganites came up with for dealing with the human rights bureau was to nominate as assistant secretary eventually, they didn't do it immediately, they had to be persuaded that indeed there had to be a human rights bureau, was Ernest Lefever. He was with the Ethics and Public Policy Institute in Washington and his published remarks had indicated that he did not think that the government should have a human rights policy. I might be overstating his position, but he was on the record as saying some things that suggested he was not going to be too vigorous in pushing a human rights policy. At any rate he was the nominee. It was our job in the bureau to prepare him for his confirmation hearing. So, we worked hard. The man came in. I laugh when I say this now. He was elderly. He was probably younger than I am now, but he gave the appearance of being a frail, older man, thin and almost white hair and looked a little fragile, but he had very strong opinions. He had a conflict of some kind. An ethical issue.

Q: He had a problem over supporting Nestle formula, milk in Africa as opposed to natural breastfeeding.

TULL: In Africa, right, breastfeeding, yes and it turned out that the Ethics and Public Policy Institute had gotten funding from Nestle and supported the use of formula in one of it's analyses. So this was one of the many issues that got him, but anyway he was nominated. We worked very hard to get him ready for the hearings. This went on for quite a while and we did, what did you call those deals where you did kind of a mock hearing?

Q: Yes.

TULL: I remember: a murder board. An awful session where you would just bombard him with hard questions. We did our best; we really did try to get him ready for it. He expressed appreciation. He felt we were being real hard, but we assured him this was nothing compared to what he'd get on the Hill. Anyway, time goes on and he gets his hearing. It was brutal. It was beyond brutal. The committee brought up from Argentina that editor named Timmerman.

Q: Yes, Timmerman had been very, tortured and all because when the Junta, well the Junta was still going.

TULL: Yes, the Junta was very much in still, but somehow I think Pat Darien had helped to get him out of jail. He was one of the witnesses against having Lefever as assistant secretary. The hearing went on for hours. I honestly thought at the time that I didn't want Lefever. I did not want him to be confirmed. That's all there is to it, but I worked my heart out to get him ready for it, giving him answers that he needed, prepping him. Despite my personal feelings, I felt the senate, the committee was almost cruel to Lefever. The questioning went on for several hours and the committee members were popping up and down to make their little visits to wherever they had to go the men's room or what have you and they never gave him a break. He was desperate to get a restroom break. I remember that and I think he might have even had to ask for one at one point and they were kind of snotty about it. After this hearing he was voted down in committee. They did not vote to send this nomination forward. I believe the president said he would resubmit it, but Lefever asked that his nomination be withdrawn.

It was not until several months later that HA got an assistant secretary. Elliott Abrams, who at that point was probably only 31 or 32 years old, was Assistant Secretary for International Organizations at the State Department, and he was unhappy from what I learned. He was unhappy with Jean Kirkpatrick who was the very outspoken ambassador to the United Nations who reportedly didn't think she had to take instructions from the State Department on anything. Also, Abrams cared about human rights policy and I believe he wanted to save it.

Q: These were two scorpions put in the same box.

TULL: Right. They were at each other. Elliott asked to be relieved and become Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and that was the best thing to happen to the human rights policy during that administration.

I should back up just a little, though, and put in another, useful anecdote. This was early on. It was probably around the time of the Kim Dae Jung episode; it might have been even before the Kim Dae Jung trial. When Pat Darien had gone to the Philippines during the Marcos administration, one of the things she had done in a very outspoken manner was protest the imprisonment of the opposition's Benigno Aquino. He, too, I think had been sentenced to death or to a very long prison sentence. Pat had worked very hard, as had the Carter administration at higher levels to get him out of the Philippines. One excuse used was you don't want him to die in prison. Apparently he had a heart problem of some kind. Anyway this was a nice cover story: that he needed to come to the States for medical treatment. So, he was released. I think I'd only been in the bureau for a couple of weeks and Pat asked me to go to New York and meet with him. That was exciting. I went up. I think he was going to speak at the Asia Society so I went up and introduced myself as her representative and he was so appreciative, felt his life had been spared, which it was for a few years until he was assassinated later in the Philippines. That was a positive introduction into the human rights bureau, meeting this very important political figure whom the human rights policy had saved.

Moving ahead a year, to December 1981, here is Elliott Abrams coming onboard and we were a little squeamish initially, the professionals there in the bureau, but again we were Foreign Service Officers, we serve the president and his nominees the best that we can. If you get to the point where there's an issue that you simply can't stomach you have to get out of there, as far as I was concerned, and that didn't happen. Elliott came in and I was impressed with him. Very impressive. He's a brilliant man, a fast thinker, fast writer, very decisive. One of the first things he wanted done, and this disturbed me a little, related to the Human Rights Bureau's role in rendering advisory decisions on political asylum applications. By this time, December of '81, the asylum unit in the human rights bureau was receiving a lot of applications from people who had fled Iran. One of the contentions made by Jews who had fled Iran was that they were subject to religious persecution in Iran and, quite frankly, those of us who were studying the issue felt that was not the case.

Q: I have to add I was betwixt and between assignments and I was sent there and I was one of those people screening this and I remember talking, yes and it just, I mean the Jews at that point who had been persecuted had really been involved with the Shah. It wasn't for the rest no they weren't.

TULL: No. Because they were "people of the book" as the Muslims say, their religion was respected. We routinely looked at every case, but unless there had been some close relationship to the Shah, as you were saying, we were denying their application on the basis of religious persecution. Almost the first thing Elliott made clear was that that was not going to continue. The bureau was going to approve applications for asylum from Jews fleeing Iran, We told him quite clearly that we didn't agree with it and he said fine, but we're going to do it. I thought this isn't off to the best start in the world, but Jews have been persecuted throughout the 20th Century and perhaps he had a point. It was not an issue I was going to quit the bureau over it.

Eventually I concluded that Elliott salvaged the human rights policy for the U.S. government. Although I approved the idea of having a human rights policy, as a more circumspect diplomat I thought some of the tactics that Pat Darien had used were "in your face" and that over time might not be as productive as Elliott's "Quiet" diplomacy might prove to be.

As one example, the United Nations. There was going to be a vote on a resolution condemning Indonesia for its occupation of East Timor. This was 1980 and HA had tried to put up this type of resolution more than once. It was always shot down in the Department. So here it comes again and it fell on my desk. Pat wanted this resolution presented at the UN. I floated it around the other bureaus and of course they were kicking and screaming no this is ridiculous. We shot this down last year. This is not the way to deal with Indonesians. We're trying to work with them. I'm not saying that was the right approach, but at any rate HA had lost the battle. Bureaucratically the bureau had lost before. I made a proposal to Pat that since this issue had been beaten to death the previous year why don't I try to get agreement from the geographic bureau and the other folks to make another demarche to the Indonesians rather than take the issue again to the Secretary for a decision.

Q: You said you proposed to Pat or did you propose to?

TULL: To Pat Darien, in the fall of 1980. This was just an example of how she would like to do things. No issue was ever finally decided, in her view, if she thought the decision was wrong. So, I said, "How about I get the geographic bureau to agree to do a strong demarche to the Indonesians explaining to them that we have decided not to try to go forward with this resolution, but that they have got snap to and cut back on the abuses and things like that." She very reluctantly agreed to that. That's what was done on that. But she liked to reopen issues. An issue was never closed. You would fight it through the Department and lose, and then a couple of weeks later she wanted to push in another direction on basically the same issue. It wasn't as productive as it might have been, but real lives were saved. There was no question about it, witness Kim Dae Jung and all of that I said earlier, although the ultimate salvation there came from the Reagan people. Also, Aquino.

Elliott's approach to human rights was to use quiet diplomacy with your allies and public diplomacy against Communism. That meshed perfectly with Jean Kirkpatrick's push, which was the authoritarian versus totalitarian mindset. I thought oh, yes, this will be good to see. Will this actually result in a human rights policy or not? But, under Abrams and the bureau it was a vigorous policy. Although there were no public speeches denouncing Argentina and Chile, there were many knockdown drag out fights involving refusal on the part of the human rights bureau to approve requests for weapons sales to these countries on human rights grounds. He really stood his ground on Argentina and Chile against the ire of the Latin American bureau. I think Tom Enders was Assistant Secretary at that time. We had many a battle and Elliott wouldn't give in. We kept a lot of weapons from the hands of some of those right-wing dictators, which was unknown to the general public. The public perception was that we're only going to beat up on commies. At the same time we did work to try to get Refuseniks out of Russia, out of the Soviet Union, put pressure in various ways to try to get them out. These were people who were jailed and everything and in many cases they were Jewish, but not all. It was an interesting time, so I quickly reconciled to the new policy because it was a valid policy. We made many a representation on human rights issues. Benazir Bhutto for example, we pushed to get her out of jail in Pakistan. She came to the States and I met her in the human rights bureau. The door was open. Elliott met with the women from Argentina.

Q: The women of the disappeared people.

TULL: Yes, the mothers of the Plaza Del Maya. We met with a lot of those people. His door was open. His approach was different. I don't think I would be misstating his approach when I say I think he felt it was the way to salvage the policy in the administration. He believed in the human rights policy. It was a very vigorous public anti-communist approach, and a reasonably vigorous let's try through diplomatic channels and through withholding arms sales and things like that to get the authoritarian governments to shape up, too.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Elliott Abrams and Alexander Haig?

TULL: I don't think it was the closest in the world.

Q: It didn't sound like it would be.

TULL: No, and Haig didn't stay long did he?

Q: He stayed about a year a year and a half.

TULL: Yes, he wasn't in too long with Elliott because Haig came in right away and Elliott didn't get in that job until December.

Q: About a year maybe.

TULL: Was it Shultz who replaced Haig?

Q: Shultz, yes.

TULL: Shultz. Yes and I think Elliott had a very good relationship with Shultz. He had an excellent relationship with Shultz. I do recall that.

Q: I must say looking at it, the human rights side of American diplomacy was probably resisted by most people in the Foreign Service.

TULL: Absolutely.

Q: I know I was in Korea at the time and what the hell are we messing around with this human rights stuff? I mean we've got 30 North Korean divisions up north, but Pat Darien gave it the push and I guess Abrams institutionalized it. In other words, got us more into it rather than just running around. Maybe you had to be flamboyant to begin with. I don't think anybody was planning this, but it worked this way, but then you had to get into a working situation.

TULL: I would think that was a fair characterization. Pat did wonderful things really, but she burned a lot of bridges.

Q: Our human rights policy no matter how you looking at it from some distance now is really changed the world in many ways. Things you can't get away with, countries can't get away with as easily as before.

TULL: I think so. I think it served a good purpose and continues to serve a good purpose. Elliott's conviction was that the best way to insure human rights was to have democracy and that was his big push, spread democracy, which meant you got rid of communists where you possibly could and you tried to push the authoritarians closer to a democratic system and he thought that was the way to deal with it.

Q: Let me stop here.

TULL: He took a lot of flak. There was a major policy problem during Elliott's tenure at the human rights bureau and mine as well and that was the question of human rights in Central America, particularly El Salvador and, of course, the effort to support the Contras in Nicaragua which was highly controversial. Elliott was very strongly in favor of pushing to remove communist government that had taken over Nicaragua. So, he strongly supported the Contras. It became his Achilles heel later. But with regard to El Salvador the concern throughout the Department was to keep El Salvador from also being taken over by leftist guerrillas. The government of El Salvador was waging an armed struggle against leftist guerrillas as well. As a consequence the military in charge of El Salvador committed gross abuses of human rights. Our Congress, in order to allow the continuation of U.S. assistance to the Salvadoran government, came up with a special requirement that each year the U.S. government had to certify that the Salvadoran government was respecting human rights. This was quite a challenge. So, what you had was on the part of the Human Rights Bureau and I'll say that quite honestly because I was deeply involved in it, we tried to make that report as absolutely forthcoming as it could be as far as recognizing human rights abuses, but we also wanted to continue to resist a takeover by communist guerrillas. We thought that no matter how bad the government in power was it couldn't be as bad as a communist dictatorship as we were seeing in Nicaragua. That became the subject of many a vitriolic battle in the Department because it might seem strange, but the human rights bureau was viewed as going too far in the direction of coming up with criticism of the government of El Salvador versus the Latin American bureau and some of the other bureaus who thought what are you trying to do, kill the program? You can't say this or Congress will do that. On the other hand people outside government said this was just another big cop out and those people at the State Department are lying and pretending there's progress towards human rights and respect for human rights, but there was some progress. We were working hard to try to get progress, by aiding the judicial system and putting pressure on the military. That was a very contentious process.

Several years later after I had left the bureau I was approached by Ambassador Dick Murphy whom I had known when I was in the Philippines. He was part of a commission that was examining, sort of like a truth squad, the State Department's preparation of the certification reports. Did we stretch the truth? I was forthright with him. I said as far as I was concerned we told it like it was to the extent that we could, but at the same time we wanted to see that aid continued. There was no fudging. I said, any sentence I put on paper I believed in. That in fact was the way I approached my career. If I put it in writing, I believed it. I just had the one session with him and I never heard anything further about it. It didn't interfere with my future assignments.

Q: While you were with that bureau were there also groups human rights types groups that were coming to you all the time?

TULL: Oh, yes, definitely. We had very frequent contact with the various human rights groups: Human Rights Watch, a couple of law groups focusing on human rights, and various geographically oriented groups among others. We were constantly getting phone calls, getting material from groups across the political spectrum, but most of them tended to be liberal. We paid a lot of attention to what Freedom House said each year in its assessment of the status of freedom in the world. We always looked at that when preparing the human rights reports. We also had contact with Amnesty International.

As you know, there is a law requiring the State Department to prepare annual reports assessing the status of human rights in all countries that belong to the United Nations. The reports are prepared first in the embassy, and vetted in the geographic bureau and then vetted by us in the Human Rights Bureau. This process sometimes led to knockdown, drag out arguments, because frequently the geographic bureau wanted a softer report than the human rights bureau felt was appropriate. You would have battles trying to get the fairest possible reports. One of the things I recall about Elliott is that he didn't feel that he should be involved head to head in these disputes. He felt that's what I was for. A lot of times I would have to go head-to-head with an assistant secretary and I was only an office director, and they weren't too thrilled with having to deal with me. On occasion I would have to go back to Elliott and say you're going to have to do this one. You're going to have to pick up the phone because I have made every argument I can make and I can tell they just don't want to take me as the final word for the human rights bureau. If you pick up the phone and tell them that that's what you think it will push it along.

I remember I had a nasty run-in with the Assistant Secretary of East Asian affairs over the China report, oh come on, the name is escaping me. He was ambassador to the UN I think for a while under Carter, under Clinton he was ambassador to Germany, you know him, come on. I can envision his picture.

Q: Oh, Holbrooke.

TULL: Dick Holbrooke. Dick Holbrooke, yes.

Q: Not Near Eastern, but Asian Affairs.

TULL: East Asian Affairs, yes. He was assistant secretary at that time and I was trying to negotiate some language for the annual report with the office director for China who did not have the authority to accept HA's language. The next thing I know he's brought Dick Holbrooke in and Holbrooke is haranguing me about it and I'm haranguing him right back because I didn't intimidate easily, foolish that I was. We went back and forth and I think in that one I don't think I had to get Elliott. I think grudgingly Holbrooke might have accepted some of the changes, but he threatened that he would talk to Abrams later. Whatever, we got the language we wanted.

We were constantly having confrontations with people. If you were in the Human Rights Bureau nobody liked you. The geographic bureaus thought you were just messing up the bilateral relationship, by asking for demarches or coming up with criticism. Sometimes we denied the sale of some military equipment on human rights grounds. The Commerce Department, of course, was always interested in making sales and was distressed when we refused export licenses. If you would say no we're not selling that, the business people would call you and complain: why can't we sell cattle prods to South Africa, or the like? It was a stressful job.

I remember when I left the bureau and had my physical getting ready to go overseas, I learned the I had developed high blood pressure and heart arrhythmia. Once I got out to my post the blood pressure went down. The arrhythmia gradually disappeared. I wasn't facing the same level of stress as I had in HA. One of the most interesting and trying things, very educational, in HA was the policy making process as it involved coming up quickly with a press statement giving the Department's reaction to a new flagrant human rights abuse. You'd get into the office in the morning in the Department and here would be a report of some atrocity in some country that we were involved with and you knew that the press was going to ask a question at the noon State Department press briefing. So, we would write up a statement and in the meantime the geographic bureau would be rushing their much milder one to us (or perhaps trying to do an end run around us by flogging their statement to a higher level without HA's input). We would have fought it out. Sometimes it went to the Secretary for resolution. But you knew that that public statement was going to be U.S. policy for a while. That was going to be the face the U.S. government was putting to the world on that issue. It was tense because of the short time frame. But we felt that we had some meaningful input.

Q: Do you want to talk about the Israeli human rights report?

TULL: I didn't have a whole lot to do with that report. We would review it and refine, but that would be one that Elliott would fight out to the extent it had to be fought out. He had a particular interest in our policy regarding Israel. We made the effort, as we did with every country to make the report as tough and realistic as possible, but I didn't have a lot of input on that one.

Q: Well, we're issuing these reports, but was there another aspect that then we would say okay the report is out. Now we should start going back to countries A, B or C?

TULL: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And do something and that again would be a confrontation.

TULL: Oh, yes, almost everything was a confrontation, for the geographic bureau in most cases. I understood where they were coming from. I mean I spent most of my career in geographic bureaus so I know what it's like on the other side. You don't want to have this other bureau saying this is how you're going to handle your relationship with this country. No, geographic bureaus and embassies were encouraged to develop human rights plans. What do you plan to do to try to get them to treat their prisoners better? is the judicial system at fault? can the U.S. help? Now, here's an anecdote that is very timely right now. We did work, this is under Pat Darien, as well as under Elliott, to try to strengthen judicial systems in various countries that had human rights problems. During the period when I was an acting deputy assistant secretary in the Human Rights Bureau, before we had even a nominee for the position of assistant secretary, a program that we had had with Indonesia came up for renewal. It was a program run by the Asia Foundation, because the U.S. government, as you know, works with non-governmental organizations. They develop plans in consultation with us or the embassies, and the U.S. government provides funds. The Asia Foundation had a project with the Indonesian government that to the absolute best of my recollection because its kind of seared in my brain, I'm still furious when I think of it, translate and disseminate the Indonesian constitution and laws into some of the many regional languages of Indonesia and distribute the constitution and laws throughout the thousands of islands of Indonesia. The Indonesian government was in full agreement with this project. The Asia Foundation worked with the Indonesian government on it. It was not a huge grant. I think a few hundred thousand dollars a year. It definitely had been ongoing maybe two years, something like that.

I'm serving as the acting DAS and there's no assistant secretary and my USAID contact, a woman I worked with regularly on these types of programs, came over and she was really upset. She said, "Terry, I'm sorry, but Mr. Bolton will not approve continuing this project." John Bolton at that time was with AID, I think he was General Counsel; he might have been the equivalent of an assistant secretary, I'm not sure. But USAID had the money and had to sign off. They helped develop these programs and they had to sign off on them. But now John Bolton would not approve the continuation of this program. I said, "Why not? Why in the world?" She said, "I have explained that it is harmless. That it has the support of the Indonesian government, but he says no. Maybe you and Steve Palmer, maybe you can persuade him otherwise." I said, "Well, see if you can get us a meeting." So, Steve and I went over and my contact was there and Bolton and somebody else and I explained the program. I did a good bit of the speaking because I knew the nuts and bolts of the program more than Steve. I explained this program and how it had been successful and how the Indonesian government liked it and we would really like to see it continue. But Bolton says, "No, we're not going to continue that." I said, "Well, Mr. Bolton could you tell me why you won't approve this program when it has the support of the Indonesian government and the Asia Foundation is a respected independent group?" He replied vociferously (almost snarlingly), "Because Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States and we don't do legal aid." I said, "Well, this is not legal aid per se, this is translating the documents, giving logistical and administrative support." "No, when Ronald Reagan was governor of California, he was subject to class action law suits and we're not going to do anything that would further that." I said, "But Mr. Bolton this does not further that. This is letting a very poor country, letting people in some remote districts, letting the Indonesian officials in that district office know what the law of the land is." No, he absolutely would not hear of it. End of program.

Now, John Bolton, as future generations might know, is currently (summer of 2005) in the midst of a very difficult confirmation battle. He has been named by President Bush to be our UN ambassador and I am proud to be one of the many former ambassadors who signed a letter, which went to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee objecting to his nomination. He is the worst person possible for this job and I got a good dose of him early on. This is a deviation from our discussion, but the episode displays the hostile mindset of some Reagan appointees regarding human rights efforts. (Note: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted down Bolton's UN nomination. President Bush put him at the UN via a recess appointment.)

Q: No, it gives a feel for this sort of thing.

TULL: Oh, I should add to this, when Elliott came onboard as assistant secretary I went to him with this program and he approved it and since he was a political appointee he was able to get it through. So we renewed the program under Abrams.

Q: Did you find that you were particularly in Central America, you had a lot of religious groups and others who were you might say to the left of the spectrum and particularly Catholic church members who were lauding the Sandinistas and damning our efforts. I mean we had real problems in El Salvador and all, but lauding the Sandinistas and damning the Salvadorians. Did you find was there any dialogue with them over this?

TULL: It was hard to dialogue. We had church groups come in and meet with us. In fact later on when Elliott was there I recall one episode where Ed Dillery, who was a deputy assistant secretary at that point and I was office director, met with a religious delegation, a Catholic group. It might have even included some nuns. There was this horrible situation in El Salvador where you might remember four Maryknoll nuns were brutally murdered by the military there. I mean it was hideous, absolutely hideous.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: We discussed our policy and fielded questions calmly. We thought we gave a rational description of our policy. We listened too, heard them out, as they denounced our policy. But we weren't going to change the U.S. policy. Later, Senator Percy of Illinois, because this group was from Illinois sent a letter to Elliott saying that this group of people were horrified at the treatment we had given them. They claimed that they had been disrespectfully treated by Ed and myself and senior deputy (Mel Levitsky, who was also present). They claimed we had been rude and had snickered at his constituents, etc. The Senator was disturbed at our behavior and wanted us cubed.

Elliott asked us about the meeting, but the senior deputy was present and he said, "That is just a total crock. That is ridiculous. These people did not get the answers they wanted, which was that basically we would change our policy, and that letter was totally unfair." Elliott said something like, "Well it didn't sound like Terry or Ed. Ed is a very mild-mannered capable person, and I can't imagine either one of them behaving like that." He sent a stiff letter back to Percy saying that he had personally examined this and the allegations were just not true. These people had overreacted probably because of policy differences, but he certainly he would not tolerate rudeness on the part of his staff, and it hadn't happened. He felt it was important for Ed's and my future career that he rebut the accusation brought against us by a prestigious Senator on the Foreign Relations Committee.

So, that's the kind of thing you were exposed to. It was the heyday of liberation theology in the Catholic Church in Central and South America. For good or ill when John Paul II became Pope he squashed that.

Q: Well, I can't remember. I think he was ambassador to, maybe it was Nicaragua, but Tony Quainton?

TULL: Yes.

Q: Talked about one time when a group of I think Maryknoll nuns came in to see him and they said can we open this discussion with a prayer? He said, "why not?" They were all holding hands and the next thing you know they were praying that God would strike Ronald Reagan dead or something like that.

TULL: Oh my God.

Q: Well, I mean it was of that.

TULL: They were true believers. I mean they meant well, but.

Q: This is a problem with some of these things. I'm sure in other cases you ran across the problem of really true believers, they might have had, you might say well pulling the right lever, they weren't using it well.

TULL: Their hearts were definitely in the right place. Definitely in the right place and the Central American military leaders who were in charge of their countries were vicious brutes in many cases. But my personal view was that the communists trying to take over would not have been any improvement because, you know, I've had some experience with communist takeovers in Vietnam. But no, it was a wild time. That was quite a ride.

Q: Well after this pleasurable experience where'd you go in '83?

TULL: Okay, well I have another item to recount re HA.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: I want to include this because it was an indication of what you can get done with a political appointee who was well plugged in. I was sitting in my office, Elliott was Assistant Secretary at the time, and a little delegation of folks that I had known in Vietnam came to see me. One was from the Refugee Bureau and the other was with Consular Affairs. They had a proposal that was floating through the Department to come up with an immigration arrangement whereby the children, illegitimate Vietnamese children, of American personnel could immigrate to the United States. They were looking for allies in the Department for this and they wondered if Human Rights would have any say in the matter. They gave me this very simple little draft legislation that had been prepared. I was all in favor of it. As I say these were two people I had known, but not known well, colleagues, shall we say, and they knew me from Vietnam. I said, "Well, this makes sense to me" because it had bothered me that the French when they left Indochina made generous arrangements for the offspring of their citizens to come to France, get them out of there, but we had done nothing.

Q: They had troops including Senegalese troops and all.

TULL: Yes, they had a lot.

Q: Quite a lot of children and they brought them back.

TULL: They brought them back and we were not allowing that, we had no provision for that. At that point Allen Simpson, a senator from Wyoming, was putting together an immigration bill and my colleagues wanted this to be a little proviso in that bill. They were looking for support. I said it sounds great to me, we should do it. I think Elliott will be supportive, too.

This is the way he worked and I really admired it. I took the piece of paper and I immediately went in and met with him briefly and explained the issue and told him what the French had done and that we weren't doing this, and this would be a provision to bring the children plus their mothers to the U.S. because you couldn't have little kids come in alone. He liked it instantly and he said, "I'm going to have lunch with Ken Duberstein at the White House (a key White House staffer). Give me a briefing paper on this right away." He says, "Let me take it to lunch." It was like quarter to twelve. I typed a paper up quickly. He didn't like things long, so I guess it was a full page. He took it, came back that afternoon and he said, "Ken's onboard. This is a really good idea, thanks." As these things worked, it took a couple of years and other interests got into the act so when the provision finally did pass it included the Philippines and Korea. Philippines I saw no reason for whatsoever and I opposed it. Korea, yes.

Q: I was consul general in Korea at one time and I know there was a Catholic priest pushing for this and I thought it was a splendid idea.

TULL: They are. They're regarded as the scum of the earth, mixed race children are, just like in Vietnam. In the Philippines it was almost a plus to have American blood. But at any rate the bill did become law and I was pleased to have had even that small role in it. A political appointee well plugged into the White House could get things done. I had a lot of respect for Elliott. I felt it was unfair a few years later, when as Assistant Secretary of Latin American Affairs, he ended up with a vendetta against him for his role in the Iran-Contra men. It took the Special Counsel three years to determine that on one or perhaps two occasions when Elliott had testified before the Senate there were discrepancies in what he said so therefore he was liable, or whatever the deal was, and it destroyed him at the time. To me it was a question of the Democrats criminalizing policy differences. I think President Clinton paid a high price later for the Democrats' actins re Iran-Contra. He really did. I think the Republicans decided we were going to get somebody when we get back in here, we're going to get you guys and they did, with the Whitewater hearings and the absurd effort to impeach him. I indicated earlier that Elliott got along well with George Shultz. Shultz supported Abrams and at the time, yes, as Iran-Contra unraveled Shultz did not get rid of Abram. It was only after George H. W. Bush became president that Abrams, who had been pardoned by Reagan, was replaced at State.

A lot of good was accomplished in the Human Rights Bureau. I value a letter I got from Kim Dae Jung expressing appreciation for our help. He came to the bureau, too, because eventually we got him to the States for medical treatment.

Q: He went to Harvard.

TULL: Yes. He ended up being president of South Korea and started some interesting rapprochement with the North. There were a lot of good solid things accomplished in the human rights bureau and I always felt that Abrams never got the credit he should have gotten for that. I enjoyed working with him, and extended my tour or a year there.

Q: Was the Muslim world, particularly the Arab, you know, world including Egypt, Morocco, I mean the whole sort of Arab world, was that sort of off limits, not off limits, but I mean one you couldn't deal with?

TULL: I don't recall it being high on the radar screen. Well, we're talking 1980 to '83 is when I was in the bureau and we did as rigorous a job with their human rights reports as we did with anybody else's, but there was certainly no question of off limits. I mean it was just a question of more or less a routine thing. What was getting the attention was Central America because of the Contras and the El Salvador situation. That was getting press attention, government attention, Korea because we were allied with them and we had troops there. The Philippines, all of these issues came to bear.

The Human Rights Bureau gave me my first experience in multilateral diplomacy. When Elliott became Assistant Secretary in December 1981, he decided he wanted to have an HA representative on the U.S. delegation to the United nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, in February or perhaps March 1982. He had to fight IO to get the slot, but I was tapped to take the position. I was delighted, but it did not turn out to be my finest hour.

The co-heads of the delegation were respected conservatives Richard Schifter, who several years later became assistant secretary for HA, and Michael Novak, a distinguished lay Catholic theologian. I think they initially doubted whether I was sufficiently conservative for their tastes. On the flight to Geneva, for example, Dick Schifter talked with me at some length about Mark and Lenin, expressing the hope that I was familiar with their writing and teachings. (I was, I assured him.)

The session started satisfactorily enough, and I think my wordrafting reporting cables, lobbying for votes on U.S.-pressed issuewas adequate. I had not been briefed about speaking during the sessions, but on one day I probably should have taken the microphone and spoken extemporaneously. It was nearing the lunch hour, and Dick and Michael had left the hall! I was the only U.S. delegate left at our seats. A delegate gave a speech denouncing Israel for abuses against the Palestinians. The Israel representative rebutted the accusations. I asked myself whether I should chime in but I was uncertain whether I had the authorization to do so, and I also wondered whether it would simply look like the U.S. was being patronizing toward Israel. I decided not to speak. Later I learned indirectly that the Israeli had complained to Schifter about my silence.

I literally got what I subsequently regarded was a lucky "break" in Geneva. After two weeks there, friends took me for an outing on Sunday, to Chamonix, France, were I glimpsed Mont Blanc. Returning to the car after a very pleasant day, I slipped on a patch of ice and broke my right wrist. I was right-handed, and thus cold not take not take notes or type. Thus handicapped, I had no alternative but to return to the States for treatment and recuperation. I was disappointed and embarrassed at failing in my obligation to the delegation, and to Elliott, but in retrospect, it was a "lucky" break because it got me out of a situation where I do not think I was meeting the desires of my true believer delegation heads. I think I was too measured in my approach to issues and representations to fully please them, though they never said so to me. In brief, I was not well-matched with them and leaving when I did, instead of staying for the full, two month meeting, perhaps prevented me from a failure that would not have helped my career. Nonetheless, I enjoyed the brief exposure to the UN's multilateral diplomacy and found it overall a broadening experience.

Q: Well, then '83 whither?

TULL: Okay, 1983, yes, that was interesting, again I thought that it was time for me to be a deputy chief of mission or head of the political section and I interviewed again for some jobs and didn't get them. My personnel counselor, at that time was Bob Wenzel. He had been political counselor when I was in the Philippines. He called me and said, "I'm reviewing your wish list here, your bid list for onward assignment. There's a job I think you would be really good for. It's Chargï¿½ d'affaires in Laos." I said, "Laos, I don't know if I want to go back to Indochina." He said, "Well, Terry it's a chief of mission position. It's a small embassy, but it's good to have somebody who knows the area. What do you have to lose by applying for it?" I said, "Let me think about it." I thought well, I'm not getting anywhere by trying to be a DCM. Maybe I'll luck out and get to be chief of mission. I had very strong feelings as you might imagine about the area and I thought well, maybe its better to have somebody there who knows where the bodies are buried rather than somebody coming in cold. I mean I had the background in Vietnam and I had very strong feelings. I thought well, all right. I put my name in for it.

As Pat Darien had before him, Elliott took an active role in trying to get good assignments for the people that he and she had felt had worked well in HA because he didn't want Human Rights to be viewed as a dead end. He didn't want the bureau to be a place where if you go there you'll never get another good assignment because everybody hates you type thing. He wanted to know what I was trying for. In fact when I was trying for a DCMship he made a couple of phone calls, to no avail. I had wanted to be DCM in New Zealand and there was a political appointee there and some 50 people had applied for the job. I think I made it to the top five, but I didn't get the job. I said, "Well, now the latest thing is chargï¿½ d'affaires in Laos." He said, "Oh, I know Paul Wolfowitz pretty well (the assistant secretary for East Asian affairs). (You might have heard the name Paul Wolfowitz lately!) I knew Paul, too because I had peripherally been involved with EA on human rights issues. He says, "I'll put in a word for you. If you want the job?" I said, "I think so. I'm not sure, but I think so, yes, I want it." So, apparently I made the short list with Wolfowitz and again many people had applied for it because in the past people who had been chargï¿½ d'affaires in Laos, had a shot at getting an ambassadorship later. At any rate I was called in for an interview with Paul Wolfowitz and I remember him saying that we're thinking of upgrading to an ambassador there. I said, "Oh, that would be nice." He said, "But if you got this job I wouldn't guarantee that you would be our choice for ambassador." I said, "That's fine. I would be happy to see what you think of my work as chargï¿½ and see what develops afterwards." He said that a lot of good people wanted the job, and said that Elliott was very strong in his support for me, I had a good record, and I would be his choice. So, I got to be chargï¿½ d'affaires in Laos, never having headed a section, never having been DCM. I just jumped over those jobs and was chief of mission. It was a small post. It was a very difficult time, but I was very excited.

Q: You were there from '83 to?

TULL: To '86.

Q: '86. Okay. What was the situation first we'll talk about relations second, but just the plain situation in Laos when you got there in '83?

TULL: It was very quiet, very economically undeveloped. They were very much under the thumb of the Vietnamese, which they probably still are. Sleepy little town, not much economic development.

Q: The town is?

TULL: Vientiane, the capital, Vientiane. They had not yet moved toward a more open economic system so it was very quiet, very sleepy, but beautiful, nice old style Southeast Asia. I love Southeast Asia. Vientiane was this beautiful little town on the Mekong River with hills in the background, with Thailand across the Mekong. It was quiet. There were relatively few cars creating noise. There was, as I assess the government situation, the hard-liners who had been in the caves and up in the hills in the very difficult provinces during the war, they were at the top of the pecking order and they had the interior ministry and things like that. The more outward looking, common sense type people were in the foreign ministry, but they were not viewed as maybe sufficiently nasty to have a lot of say in running things. The deputy foreign minister, Soubanh, had been in the hills and in the caves and he was a smart communist who also realized you had to be outward looking a little bit. He had a very good person in charge of western affairs, Pheuiphanh Ngosivathanh, was his name. My predecessor, Bill Thomas, told me that when he informed him that the new chargï¿½ was going to be Theresa Tull he said in mock dismay, "Oh, a woman. We're going to have to be nice to her." And they were reasonably nice to me. I got to have a very good relationship with Pheuiphanh.

At that point Souvanna Phouma was still alive. He was ill and my hope was that at some point I could meet him. He had been head of the neutralist faction back during the peak of the Vietnam War, the Indochina War, when there were three factions in Laos: the communists, an extreme right wing group, and this Neutralist faction. I believe Souvanna Phouma was the Prime Minister of that tripartite government. He had linkages to the royal family. He had sufficient prestige that when the war was over it is my understanding that it was he who persuaded the communist government to allow a continuation of a U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, on a much, much reduced scale. We'd had a massive presence in Laos and it was kicked down. I think we had about nine Americans when I was there, but it was Souvanna Phouma who had enough sense to want Laos to have this little contact with the West. It gave us a window into Indochina. This was 1983 and the war ended in '75. We had never closed that embassy, just reduced it in size. We had to be very careful. We were very circumscribed. The Western community, particularly the Americans, were confined literally to the city limits of Vientiane. You could not go outside the city limits unless you had a special permit, special permission. The Lao claimed this was for security purposes. Nonsense. There was some rebel activity far outside the city, but it was basically because we want to watch every move you make and we don't like you. You know, you are the Americans and dropped all those bombs and left unexploded ordnance around. You're going to stay in the capital where we can watch you.

Now, one way to get out of town was if you had an aid program, which of course we didn't, but the Swedes could get out because they had an aid program. The British had little bits and pieces of one. The French were pretty successful. They had an excellent ambassador there. He could get around a little bit and he was very forthcoming with me so to the extent I could do political reporting a lot of it was what he had learned. It was a very interesting and difficult time. It was tough particularly being confined to the city. It was particularly hard on the staff. It just rankled me. I was so busy. At any post I've ever had I've always managed to find more work to do than there were hours in the day to do it in, so I was happy fulfilling work. The staff, when their work day was over, it was pretty tough being confined to a small town.

The Australians were there in pretty good numbers. They had a club with tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a bar and restaurant. A lot of our people belonged and enjoyed it. The residence I had was beautiful. It was the ambassador's residence and it had tennis courts and a swimming pool, which I made available to the staff, anytime they wanted it. There was a lot of tennis going on, not just the staff, but diplomats and aid workers from other embassies used our courts. To help deal with the morale situation, we had a weekly pouch run to Bangkok because we could only get limited classified material at posts. We could get cable traffic, but the other things that you needed to keep your systems functioning you had to go down to Bangkok and bring back. We had a generous policy for that, paying good per diem to get the folks out, get them down for three or four days, go down and pick up a pouch and spend three or four days in Bangkok and then come back. Each American got a pouch run about every two months.

Q: How big was your staff?

TULL: There were about eight or nine of us.

Q: Were they mainly married, unmarried?

TULL: Some of them had families in the States. We generally didn't have dependents there, although my initial secretary's young son, who was about ten years old, was at post when I arrived. Her replacement was single. The bulk of the Americans were unmarried, but there were a couple of married people who went home periodically to see their families in the U.S.

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

TULL: Well, the biggest issue we had, which was wonderful to deal with and one of the major accomplishments of my Foreign Service career, was attempting to persuade the Lao government to allow crash site excavations to search for the remains of our missing service personnel in action during the war. The big issue was POW/MIAs. I went there with the view that there probably were no POWs, but you had to keep an open mind on the subject. But definitely we had crash sites. President Reagan made getting a full accounting of POWs/MIAs and remains recovery a priority for his administration. My impression was the President Carter did not push this issue.

Q: They would be the MIAs.

TULL: They would be the MIAs from planes that had gone down and we wanted to recover remains. No recovery effort had been allowed in Indochina up to that point. The National League of Families in the United States was very active on this and I consulted with them. There was an Air Force colonel in the White House at the NSC and he worked with the League of Families and was very interested and active on this issue. That was the principal thing I did for quite a while: to try to persuade Laos to allow crash site excavations, to let American military personnel in for this purpose.

Our efforts were stymied by the efforts or a retired U.S. air force colonel, Bo Gritz I think his name was, who used to lead groups of rebel Lao across the Mekong River from Thailand. We were making progress toward getting a commitment for the crash site excavations. We had selected the site. We knew what we wanted and they were moving toward accepting the idea. Of course I believed the Vietnamese were using the Lao as stalling forces on this. If it worked with the Lao maybe the Vietnamese would consider excavations in Vietnam. I felt that the Lao could not agree without Vietnamese. Then Bo Gritz and his group crossed the Mekong again. There was no way in the world you could persuade the Lao government that a retired U.S. air force colonel wasn't working with the full consent and cooperation of the U.S. government. That shut that negotiation down, for many months, shut down the progress toward getting the crash site excavation, but we did get agreement eventually. It got the process started and it was very exciting.

Q: Let's talk first about the colonel. Was there anything, I mean I assume our embassy in Bangkok was leaning on them trying to do something about them or getting the Thai government to stop this?

TULL: Well, you know the Mekong River, that's a long, long river and you can't patrol every speck of it. No, I don't think the Thai up in the northern area opposite Laos supported the Gritz efforts. They were not happy with the Lao, of course, and I think they turned a blind eye to Gritz's efforts. I believe some highly placed regret wringers in the U.S. supported and/or condoned Gritz's activities. However.

Q: The Thai could just say as far as the colonel was concerned, you know, you have no reason to stay here, go.

TULL: I believe he was using former remnants of the Vang Pao Hmong group, some of whom were in refugee camps in Thailand. They didn't accomplish a thing except to derail what we were trying to do for several months. It was very frustrating, but eventually we did get all systems go for a joint crash site excavation in Pakse in southern Laos. First the team came in for an exploratory visit, got it all lined up and I flew down with them to the site. They were from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Honolulu. I don't know what it's called now; that's what it was called then.

Q: This is tape six, side one with Terry Tull. Yes?

TULL: We got the approval for a team to come in and do an exploratory visit to the crash site to determine what was needed for the actual excavation. I flew down with a young officer from the foreign ministry together with this group of about six I would say, six or seven team members from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center headed by a very capable colonel. We flew down on an old Russian helicopter, tremble, tremble, as you do this, a noisy thing, down from Vientiane to Pakse. It took a couple of hours in the helicopter to get there. I think they even had to stop to refuel. We got to Pakse and we were driven out to this crash site and our people started their search and literally you could see little unexploded ordnance where we're walking around. Well, don't step there, we don't know if it is still live. You're kind of tip toeing. I had to think of this when last week Senator George Allen of Virginia in his defense of John Bolton thought that Bolton would be a great person to have at the UN because you need somebody tough. You don't need these little striped pants cookie pushers with their little pinkies in the air. I would have liked to have taken Senator Allen tip toeing around with the little pinkie raised through the unexploded ordnance in Pakse. This type of nonsense drives me nuts. Anyway, that's what the Foreign Service people do. They're not there pushing cookies all the time. We were pleased to be on the site and it looked promising. Our men had just begun, no, not just begun. They'd been there maybe a half-hour. The province chief, the senior province official came over and tells the official from the foreign ministry, all right, we have to go now. She comes to me and says, "We have to go." I said, "No. They just got there. These people came all the way from Honolulu." I talked to the colonel and I said to the Foreign Minister, "No, we're not ready to go. We've only been here a half-hour. They have to do a complete survey. It's not worth their while. Why did they come? They might even have to come back tomorrow morning. Remember we made this arrangement? They could come here in the evening or late afternoon and if necessary come back in the morning. It was all arranged." I was arguing very strenuously and she's translating for me. I said, "The deputy foreign minister approved this." This local official, you could see him thinking, hey, Vientiane is a long way away; you could see it on his face. I'm in charge here. He kept pushing that we had to leave. I will say the young officer, she was able to deter him a little. In the meantime I'm telling the colonel, I said, "Look, I think we bought you another hour, but do it as fast as you can because I don't know if I can get you back here in the morning." In the meantime this guy is like this.

Q: You're kind of looking at me with a scowl.

TULL: Very unhappy. Kind of like get out of here, get off our turf. So, our people, they did the best they could, but I was upset and I made it quite clear to the foreign ministry official at that time. I said, look if you can put me through by phone to the deputy foreign minister. We got on and talked with him. I said, "We've brought these people here at great expense, great distance and its fruitless if they can't do the job they came for." He says, "Give me some time. I will try to sort it out tonight." We got back to the hotel and in the meantime the colonel said to me, "Look if we can't get back in the morning, I think we've got enough information to go on." I said, "Well, don't say anything now. We'll see what happens."

A rather cool dinner in this hotel followed. It was all right, but not a lot of mingling. It's kind of like them at one table and us at another. The Lao at one table and the Americans at another. The next morning, big smiles. Yes, we go back to the site. Oh, that will be very nice won't it? I said colonel, you're going? Oh yes. We went back to the site and he was only there about an hour with his team and everybody is smiling, yes this is fine. We have the information we need. We went back. They then put on a sort of a luncheon of amity you might say. We're all intermingled sitting together with the formerly scowling province official passing lau-lau, which is a very strong Lao drink, up and down and shaking hands and taking pictures and the whole bit. I don't know what happened the night before, but at any rate we got the preliminary inspection under control. It was great. It was funny, too because they wanted me to have lau-lau wine. It's a very small tiny drink made out of rice wine. It's a very clear liquid, but it packs a punch. For my country, I diligently drank one of these lau-lau and then they wanted me to have more. I said, "No, no, the colonel or his men will do it." They designated this sergeant and he was going one on one. I said, you're doing it for me. Anyway, that worked out.

Eventually we did get the crash site excavation and that meant a team of Lao coming to work with a much larger team of Americans. I encouraged the Lao government to allow publicity for this, that this would give them a good image in the United States, that they were allowing this. Of course, the Lao didn't want newsmen of any kind ever setting foot in their country, but they gradually gave in and they allowed NBC News and National Geographic and I think Time Magazine to come in and meet with them in Vientiane. I think they might have gone down to the crash site briefly. It was a very successful enterprise. I went down for the first day. They were there for two weeks and I designated my deputy to be there on the site. I didn't want any ruffled feathers; I wanted to have someone from the embassy there so if there were problems they could get to me. I also had great confidence in this colonel. At some point if I go digging back into my own papers I'll find his name because he was a superb diplomat himself, just the right person for this, because this was the first crash site excavation in Indochina. It was very important to the families of the people who gave their lives in Indochina. If our military had botched it up by being arrogant or stupid there wouldn't have been any others, and he and his team did a very good job. All of his team, they were very good and the Lao, too. I have to say it almost brought tears to my eyes having been through what I had been through in Vietnam, to be there out on the site and see an American, a Pathet Lao, an American, I mean we're talking soldiers in uniform, American, Pathet Lao digging in this dirt and searching for the remains of American military personnel. I just thought it was a very moving moment.

We could not because of various bans and law, we couldn't give aid per se to the Lao, but I worked it out with our military to bring in some medical supplies. They said they would have to bring in a doctor and people for the care of their own people and lots of medicine and they said we will bring in a lot of medicine and anything left over we'll give to the local officials. They did bring in a lot of medical supplies, basics that they really were desperate for in Laos at that time. It was a very successful undertaking. That was the first, Pakse. We did one later in Savannakhet probably the following year. You had to work it around the rainy season. Not too long after that the Vietnamese agreed to begin crash site excavation with the U.S. That's an ongoing project now with the Vietnamese and also with the Lao.

Q: Did you get the feeling that the Lao understood our desire to find the remains?

TULL: I don't know about the Lao. I know that the Vietnamese do because.

Q: They worship family.

TULL: They worship family and take care of graves and things. I don't really, I don't know that much, I have to be honest, about the Lao culture to know whether it was important to them, but they certainly were willing to go along with us. As I say the foreign ministry in particular wanted to move out of this self-imposed isolation into a little better relationship with the world. I even was able to get them to agree to receive an American oil company and discuss oil prospects. I had to work on that one for a while. There was some thought that there was some oil possibilities in Laos. I prayed for it. I really wished it would have materialized, but they did agree to have a team from I think it was Hunt Oil in Texas came in and they actually did some exploration I believe eventually probably after I left, but it was unproductive, but at least it opened up the door.

Q: Were they beginning by the time you left were you still confined to the city, I mean they hadn't opened it up yet?

TULL: We were still confined, but I kept pressing for relief. Laos had major flooding and I looked for opportunities that any diplomat would to push the envelope a little and to get better relations. We wanted them to move away from this total control by Vietnam of everything. They had major flooding and through the World Food Program the United States donated a substantial amount of rice. I made the point that when the rice comes of course we need to be sure that it gets distributed to the correct places which meant we would go out with the rice. I went to one distribution ceremony and then we had some that were sent up, taken out to the plains area. I forget the names of these provinces. It's been a while. I got one of my staffers, the economic officer, a very smart young woman. She was able to go out with them and see that the rice got there and it gives you a look at another part of the picture. Then I pushed the ministry to allow us to have a tourist visit to Luang Prabang, which I knew that other embassies were getting to do.

Q: That was the royal capital.

TULL: The royal capital of Laos. They did agree to that and I'll tell you, one of the joys of being chief of mission. Your staff is complaining the whole time, we never get out of this city, we're just trapped here, it's just awful. Guess what folks? There're going to arrange a weekend trip, three or four days to Luang Prabang. Oh, I don't want to go. Bang head against nearest wall. Half of them didn't want to go. I said, well, I don't want to hear any whining or complaining about how you're stuck in the city. I encouraged them. I said this is the royal capital of Laos. It's probably not touched. You think Vientiane is untouched. That's probably hardly touched at all. No, so half of them didn't want to go. Okay, good enough. Well, we had a great trip. We had a very nice trip. Of course they sent a foreign minister watcher who was with me every step of the way, but that's all right. I didn't speak Lao so they arranged it and it was beautiful. Luang Prabang is a gorgeous, untouched royal capital. We visited the royal palace and I would periodically inquire what is the status of the emperor or the king I used to call him. Well, you'd never get an answer. We know he was taken to a reeducation camp in 1975. Many Lao were still in the so-called re-education camps and the best answer we got much later was that he had died. He had diabetes and I don't think they gave him the medicine he needed, so he was treated pretty badly. Occasionally, somebody would materialize in Vientiane who had been in a camp for many years and they would have been released. That was an interesting time.

Q: Were you able to get any visitors in. I was wondering whether former, we had a lot of American AID people particularly who were married to Lao wives and all that.

TULL: Not while I was there. We did have some high-ranking delegations visit. Congressman Steve Solarz and I want to say Torricelli at that time a representative from New Jersey, later became senator and then was disgraced, but Steve Solarz and Torricelli came on Christmas Day. We appreciated that timing immensely.

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

TULL: Yes. I had a lot of respect for him, but I didn't appreciate him coming on Christmas Day. Basically the whole embassy couldn't have Christmas. He was only going to be there I guess that day and overnight, but I think he did the policy good work. It was worthwhile in terms of policy, so he came and that was interesting because I tried to get the Department to say could we celebrate and have the holiday for Christmas another day and there was some bureaucratic reason I could not do it the way I wanted to. Could we be closed on a Tuesday or whatever, whatever, we worked something out so that the people got some time off later. That's how Christmas was spent, taking him around.

Q: How did it work, I mean you still remained charge?

TULL: Yes, for three years.

Q: For three years. Was there any talk of raising it to?

TULL: No, not during that time at all. Not at all. We had some ups and downs there. I tell you. We were greatly constrained as I say in our movements and technically for every Westerner in Vientiane there was an 11:00 PM curfew. Everybody is supposed to be tucked in their beds by 11:00 at night, but the other embassies did not do this. They did not require that and I felt it was not fair for my staff to require that either so I didn't do anything about it. I thought this is crazy.

This went on without incident for several months, but then this one night my political officer was coming home from a party where he had been with Swedes and Australians and other Western diplomats who were also out at 1:00 a.m. at night and his home was close to the government guest house. Well, it happened that the government guesthouse that night had some high-ranking visitor from Vietnam. This was pretty early in my stay there, too I have to say. He drove past and went to his home. The next day I was summoned to the foreign ministry and told they are throwing him out of the country as a spy. Well, that's nice. That helps the Lao immensely. I will say that the Lao official representative was very regretful when he was telling me this. I was absolutely stunned. I said, "What are you talking about, a spy? He's my political officer." Of course you're always under that suspicion if you're a political officer. He says, "Well, he was out past curfew." I said, "So is every other young man or woman in this city. Everybody is, the Swedes, the Australians, the Brits, everybody else. I can't have my people treated differently." He said, "No, he was seen going past the guest house and I can't do anything about it. He has to be out of here" what did he say, 72 hours, 24 hours whatever it was. I said, "This is going to bring retribution, I have to tell you. The U.S. is not going to sit quietly by. You're going to lose somebody in Washington. That's going to happen. I really object strenuously. He was not doing anything inappropriate." Anyway, he had to leave and of course we reciprocated and threw out their person and when that message came, the official saw me at the foreign ministry and he said, "But, you're a big power, you didn't have to get rid of one of our people." I said, "You're in the diplomatic big leagues here. You throw out an American diplomat for no reason; we're going to reciprocate. It's definitely tit for tat. It's really regrettable, but that's it. This was totally unjustified." I told my political officer, "This will not hurt your career because I know you were doing the right thing. This was not right. So, if you ever run into difficulty, let me know." I saw him off at the airport. I made quite a thing of being there with him and everything in case there was any other nonsense that they try to lock him up or something. There were some hostile times. That was nasty and we had to live through that. You have to wait until you get a replacement. We were short-staffed for some time.

I learned a few weeks later that I really had to rein in my staff. That they had to be in at 11:00 p.m., this was a very tense time in our relationship. If we wanted to move forward with the crash site excavation (I think at this point we maybe had had the preliminary site visit, but had not had the actual excavation itself.) I learned that there were very angry people in the Interior Ministry who did not approve of the direction that was being taken. Quite frankly, I learned that one of my staffers was not only staying out late at night, but was having an affair with the wife of a Lao official. Very cute. I had to seriously rein in my staff and get them in at 11:00 because this was all going to blow up. I found this out and I sent this particular staffer to Bangkok on a courier run and I called up the security officer and I said, "I'm going to send you a message, limited channel and I want you to read it before this man comes and I want you to track him down. It's important." He said okay. I got a message down saying I wanted him interviewed about the possible liaison this guy was having and the fellow admitted it. So, he never came back to Vientiane. That was the end of that. I thought the Department would kill him. They didn't. I think they might have given him three days suspended pay or some nonsense. I was furious when I found out that this person, this was the wife of a Lao official and he mucking around with and I think this was a set up job. I think it was a put up job and they figured out who can we get there to latch themselves onto. So, at any rate I told the staff, I said I'm awfully sorry, but you're really going to have to for a while be in at 11:00, I hate to do it, but please, we're working here. We've big odds. You're getting 25% differential. I'll try to get you good onward assignments, but that's the law here and you see what happened to the political officer, and now this. They weren't happy, but they cooperated.

Q: How did you find, did you get good support from the Asian bureau?

TULL: Yes, very good support and also very good support from the embassy in Thailand because that was a break for me, too. The ambassador in Bangkok at that time, John Gunther Dean, who has a reputation in some circles as being kind of arrogant, was really very nice to me.

Q: He can be a very nice man.

TULL: He was wonderful to me. Really wonderful to me. He was really great. He had one of the biggest embassies in the world and I probably had one of the smallest, but when I would go into Bangkok as a courtesy I would call on him and we developed a real friendship. He was just very, very nice. He could talk to me, chief of mission to chief of mission about things that he couldn't talk about there and likewise. I stayed with him and his wife a few times at their home and he arranged for me to do a couple of neat things when I was there. When the Pope came to Bangkok for a visit Dean got in touch with me and he said, the Pope is going to be here. He happened to be Catholic, too. The Pope is going to be here at such and such a time. Make sure you have consultations during that period. Bangkok did a lot of support for us including covering certain traffic that I did not have access to. I'd have to go down and read this material among other things. He took me to a reception I think the prime minister was having for the Pope. He said if you want to come, I might not be able to get you in, but I think I can. You might end up sitting in the car. This is for the Bangkok diplomatic corps. I said, I'll give it a try. We get out of the car at this beautiful palace that they're having this reception at and somebody opens the door and Dean in all his majesty says, "I've brought our ambassador to Laos with us." I went and I met the Pope and it was very interesting. So, he did nice things for me. They gave good support to us, they really did.

Q: How did you find the?

TULL: And the bureau was good, too.

Q: How about the Vietnamese? Were they, I mean did you have any contact?

TULL: Yes, that was tricky because the Vietnamese ambassador was dean of the diplomatic corps. He had been there for a long time. He was a high-ranking person I think in the Vietnamese government besides and since he was chief of the diplomatic corps I had to deal with him. Go to receptions, I couldn't just stand at the other side of the room. I worked that out with the Department about how I could deal with him, but I had no contact with him otherwise. Could not have one on one. I didn't call on him when I arrived because we didn't have diplomatic relations. As chief of mission you pay courtesy calls on all the ambassadors, but I didn't on him because we didn't have diplomatic relations. He was a very dignified capable diplomat. He was at an arm's distance shall we say, but I knew he was calling the shots. I knew that there was no way that Laos would agree to the crash site excavation unless the Vietnamese had agreed to it first and that they were doing it as kind of a preliminary, let's see if this works here. We wanted to do it in Vietnam, too. In fact we started eventually in Vietnam before we had diplomatic relations.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: I think the first one in Laos was in 1985.

Q: Was there anything like an orderly departure program or anything of that nature?

TULL: In Laos?

Q: Yes.

TULL: No. People were still fleeing at night. They were taking boats. No, there was nothing. We had a very limited operation and there was no USIS, nothing, Peace Corps, nothing. Consular, yes, but routine. There was visa issuing for the officials or other foreigners in country, but not the Lao. Beautiful town, Vientiane.

Q: I'm just looking at the time. It's probably a good place to stop Terry.

TULL: I would think so.

Q: If you make a note to yourself or if you think of anything we haven't covered in this period any issues or anything like that you'd like to talk about.

TULL: Okay, fine.

Q: Great. Where did you go after you left in '86?

TULL: I came back to the senior seminar.

Q: All right. We'll pick it up then.

Q: Okay, today is the 11th of January, 2006. Terry, you went to the senior seminar in '86 to '87?

TULL: Right.

Q: How did you find the senior seminar?

TULL: Well, that's an interesting story. I had it in my mind that since I had been chief of mission in Laos during a difficult period and had done in my view and I think in the Department's view a good job, that I was now ready to go on to something bigger, an ambassadorship. I went back to Washington and as you do you touch base with the people that know you. I called on Elliott Abrams who had been Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and had helped me get the position in Laos. At that point he was assistant secretary for American Republic Affairs, ARA. I called on him and he said, "Terry, you were my choice to be ambassador to Haiti, but I lost in the shuffle. I couldn't push it through. I'm sorry. You were my choice." I thought, Haiti, thank God I didn't get it. It's a pretty difficult thing, but still I was very flattered that this was his view. He said there wasn't anything else coming up at that point in ARA, but he certainly wished me well in the assignment and to let him know how things went. I then called on the director general of the Foreign Service who was George Vest. This very distinguished career Foreign Service Officer had had quite a nice career, but I was turned off by his approach. His attitude was, well, Gee, Terry you've been a chief of mission. Not many people get to be chief of mission (because I was chargï¿½ d'affaires in Laos for three years) and that's really something. A lot of people never get that. Maybe you want to think about retiring. I said, well, that wasn't on my agenda right now. I felt that I had other jobs in me and since I had done a good job at that I thought that I should be considered for an ambassadorship.

Q: How old were you at the time?

TULL: 1996 I was '50. '96 this was.

Q: Oh, so we're talking about '96.

TULL: Oh, we're talking '86. '86. I was still 50. I was born in 1936 so I was 50 years old. I was a little stunned by that and I said, "Well, no, it wasn't quite what I had in mind. Well, if there's no possibility of an ambassadorship, maybe a really senior deputy chief of mission position, but I'm a little surprised because I was just speaking with Elliott Abrams and he told me that I was his choice to be ambassador to Haiti." He says, "Oh, no, deputy chief of mission. He was thinking of you for deputy chief of mission there." I said, "Oh, all right. Perhaps I misunderstood." He was just not at all encouraging. I tell you I've encountered this throughout my career and it was kind of a brush off of a woman officer and I didn't go around wearing chips on my shoulders.

Q: But your antennae zeroed on this type of thing.

TULL: This kind of like I'm the great wasp diplomat everybody thinks I walk on water and here's this pip-squeak who's already had an embassy for pete's sake, thinking she's got to have another one? It really irritated me. I said, "Well, if there's nothing of that nature coming up, then I'd like to be considered for the senior seminar." He said, "Oh, those decisions are pretty well made by now and didn't I noticed in your record that you had been at the National War College?" I said, "Yes, I was. I had a very good year at the National War College, but I don't think that would preclude the senior seminar in the hope that in the next year's assignment cycle there might be something coming up that would be more appropriate for my capabilities." No, he said, he didn't see any chance at the senior seminar, but that you know, good luck if you really want to continue looking around maybe something will develop for you.

I went back to Elliott because I wanted to make certain that I hadn't misunderstood him when he said I was his choice for ambassador. I recounted this story to him and I said, "Didn't you tell me that you wanted me to be your ambassador to Haiti?" He said, "Yes, yes." I was lost in the slugfest upstairs. I said, "Okay, I've had a very unsatisfactory meeting with the director general of the Foreign Service who told me that no, I was only considered for DCM and he didn't see any possibility of me getting an embassy right now and he was kind of wondering maybe if I should think about retiring." He said, "What?" I said, "Well, that's the vibes that I definitely got. It was a brush off." I told him I had asked Vest about the senior seminar and he said no, that was all taken care of, it was all full, it was too late. Abrams said, "Yes, that's a really great year program and it gives you an opportunity to be available for the next cycle." He had his secretary right then and there call George Vest. "George, this is Elliott Abrams. I've got Terry Tull here in my office and I understand there's nothing much on the horizon for her right now, but I think she'd like to do the senior seminar. Well, I'd like her to do the senior seminar. I think she'd be a very good candidate for the senior seminar and it will give us a year to get back in the cycle for next year. Thanks George." I was assigned to the senior seminar. That's how I got it, but I really, I had always respected George Vest before that, but this was a strange experience. Retire? Now very encouraging.

Q: Very fine, sort of compassionate reputation.

TULL: Well, I got a brush off, but there's nothing like a political appointee who at that point was still in good standing. I thought well, this is ridiculous. This is my career. This is my life. I've worked hard. It wasn't fun being in Laos. It was very difficult.

Q: No and Da Nang and all that.

TULL: Yes, all of that. You think, well, you know, you've had your embassy. A lot of people never get an embassy, even chief of mission. You might want to think about retiring. So, anyway off I went to the senior seminar and it was a very interesting year. It was well worth going. It was like a vacation in many senses compared to running a mission in a very difficult part of the world with a hostile government. It was a good opportunity to interact with people from other agencies as well as State. State was the predominant group as I recall then, but we had military folks and people from other branches of government and it was very interesting and we did a lot of traveling around the country. The focus at that time was to immerse people who were being groomed for higher positions back into your own country and to the key developments in your own country. We did a fair amount of traveling to various cities to get immersed in what was happening in these cities and I found it fascinating.

On one occasion, one of our trips was to Detroit for example and I'd never been to Detroit although I had gotten my master's in Ann Arbor, I'd never gone into Detroit. We visited the major motor companies. I think it was Ford, maybe Ford and GM and we also met with the United Auto Workers officials. We got both sides of the story. What strikes me looking back on that when you look now in 2006 at the difficulties that General Motors is having the idea that this was a lifetime job with good benefits, good salary, upward mobility for people from blue collar backgrounds, it really was brought home to me then. When we were meeting with the executives, one of the younger executives mentioned that his father had been on the line there and was a union worker for many years and he said, my dad's salary was sufficient to put me and my brother through college and now I'm here in an executive position. It was upward mobility, the best of the old corporate structure. I think it has now crumbled in many instances not to the benefit of our country.

We also then went to Dearborn and this was an eye-opener because we met with the large Muslim community there and it was like stepping into the Middle East. I had no idea that this community had developed in its own way, but for each of these trips there was a small corps group of students who organized the trip in every way, shape and form. They studied the area first. They had arranged a meeting with the Muslim council or whatever it was in the city, in Dearborn. We met around the tables with them and got their perspective on what it was like to be fairly recent immigrants to the United States. There were a lot from Yemen in that community and we learned what it was like for their children and the problems they had with their children wanting from their perspective to become a little bit too American. The girls didn't want to cover their heads and some of the parents had difficulty with letting their children live a U.S. teenage existence. It was quite an eye opener. This was of course 20 years before 9/11, 15 or 20 years. I had no idea that this large community lived there and they were so insular. You walk down the street, you barely saw English, the stores were all Middle Eastern with I guess we'll say Arabic signs. Mosques and women covered up, their faces weren't covered, but their heads, their long gowns. I thought is this the United States or not. It was a very good exposure to an element in our society that frankly I was not really aware had existed. It was fascinating.

On another occasion we had another trip to Florida, to Miami and there we met with the Haitian community, got their perspectives. Again I realized that the Haitians were there of course from my human rights bureau days, but the extent of it was surprising and the extent of the Cuban influence was massive and the fact that the two communities couldn't stand each other became pretty obvious in our discussions with the leaders from both groups. We also had an interesting meeting with the Coast Guard about their anti-drug interdiction and the efforts that they made to keep Haitians from landing. Of course if Cubans make it they stay. If Haitians make it they were sent back. I never thought that was a fair policy, but anyway, that was our policy. The Haitians don't rally many votes I guess in Florida. It was a very interesting experience.

We also went to Seattle, had interesting discussions there about Seattle's outreach, Washington State's outreach to the Pacific, their exploits and things of that nature. I think we had a couple of other trips. It was quite worthwhile and then within the conduct of our seminars we arranged discussions. We brought in top people. I mean it was really, all we had to do was to say I'm from the State Department senior seminar, we'd like to do a discussion on media for example. I did the media one and I got Cokie Roberts to come and Don Oberdorfer. At that point he was in Princeton, but I had known him and had helped him out a little bit in Da Nang. It was really interesting. If you wanted somebody, you'd pick up the phone and they would agree to come and give us their time and you would hear their presentation and make it an opportunity to question them one on one. It was a very enriching year. A very enriching year. About I guess about halfway through it, Elliott Abrams asked if I wanted to be ambassador to Guyana. It was a halfway decent sized post, but I knew it was going to be grim and he didn't pull any punches, grim in terms of their economic situation. The political situation had changed a little because Forbes Burnham, the black president who had been president for many years. Forbes Burnham had died.

Q: Forbes Burnham, yes.

TULL: Yes, he was the black politician who had, he had become president. Oh, I'll pull this out of thin air and say maybe 1965 when Guyana became independent. There was concern. It must have been earlier because Kennedy was involved in this and Kennedy wasn't alive in '65, but there was concern on the part of the British who were getting ready to relinquish Guyana as one of the colonies and also on the part of the U.S. that in a truly one on one vote Cheddi Jagan, who was communist, would have been elected.

So the concern at the time of Guyanese independence was that you would end up in a straight one on one vote with Cheddi Jagan who was an Indian and an unabashed card-carrying communist supported by the Soviet Union. We're talking about 1960 now, that you would end up with a communist government in Guyana which is on the northern tip of South America not too far from the Panama Canal, and Cuba. For strategic reasons that was not desired by either the British or the U.S. A lot of effort was made into getting an electoral system that I think it was based in proportional representation and the leading black politician was Forbes Burnham, but the concern was that he was pretty far left himself. There was a successful effort made to induce a very respected Guyanese of Portuguese extraction to form a party and run in the election. The man probably already had a party, I don't know, but at any rate to run for president. There were three leading candidates basically and two, the black and the Portuguese, ended up with more votes proportionately than Cheddi Jagan so they formed a coalition government between the two of them with Jagan in the minority as the opposition. It didn't take Forbes Burnham long to push out the Portuguese gentleman, a distinguished man. I wish I could remember his name now. At any rate, push him out and become a virtual dictator of Guyana, although they did have the trappings of bureaucracy. They had an assembly and Jagan was free to make his speeches, his anti-government speeches. Burnham went more and more to the left. He didn't become communist per se, although some Americans in our government thought he was a strong socialist, nationalized everything, basically destroyed the economy and ruled ruthlessly. If you put your head above ground you literally could get it chopped off. There were political killings and it was not a nice time.

Anyway he ruled, now when did I get down there? I ended up going down there in '87, so let's say I think maybe in early '86? Maybe '85. He was operated on by Cuban doctors in Guyana and he died on the operating table. His number two in command was a man in the same party, another black, Desmond Hoyte, but he was cut from a different cloth. He was a decent gentleman. He became president and he had to carry over some of the less attractive elements of the Burnham crowd including the prime minister, what was his name? Hamilton Green I think. Well, he was a piece of work. At any rate, you had a new president, Desmond Hoyte and our ambassador at that time was Clint Lauderdale. He was able to persuade the U.S. government to reinstate the PL-480 program. I'm getting a little ahead of my story here.

Q: That's all right.

TULL: So, at any rate I accepted this assignment and we had some interesting developments in the meantime. There were two other Foreign Service Officers in my seminar who thought that they were up for ambassadorships, too and I believe they were both in the Africa bureau. This one day they are beaming and they came and told me, we got our phone call. The assistant secretary called us and we've been approved and we've got our embassies. I said, oh, that's great. I hadn't told anybody that I was expecting it, too. I'm waiting and waiting and nothing happens. In fact they were even having a little party after the seminar session to celebrate their good news. I came off the track I guess, I don't know. Anyway, another day goes by and I got a phone call from someone at the White House, a woman in White House personnel and she said, "Miss Tull, what's your political party affiliation?" I said, "I'm a Democrat. To be quite honest, I voted for Ronald Reagan, but I'm a Democrat." I thought to myself you shouldn't be asking me this, but only after I had answered. I got on the phone to Elliott Abrams and I said, "Someone from White House personnel just called and asked me what my political party affiliation was. Stupidly I told them because I don't think it's anybody's business, but I'm a Democrat and I told her that. I also told her I voted for Reagan. What's going on? A couple people here in my seminar were informed yesterday about their ambassadorships." He said, "They had no right asking you that. That's ridiculous. I'll get right on it." Later that day I got a phone call from President Reagan because he at that time, he had reinstated the practice that he would personally call and ask you if you wished to be his ambassador. That was pretty thrilling.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: I had that conversation and of course I accepted, but I had a couple of days of what the devil is going on here? Do I have it, do I not have it? Anyway, I got it and finished the seminar and headed on down to Guyana.

Q: Did you have any problems during your hearings?

TULL: No. I wondered about it because I had been in the Human Rights Bureau for three years, but no. I was guided through the process. I don't know if I even went and called on anybody on the Hill, I might have. It's kind of vague with me, but I remember everybody was a little concerned about Jesse Helms. At a certain point I got a phone call from one of his senior staffers saying, you know, Miss Tull, the senator has no problems with your nomination to be ambassador to Guyana. I said, does he wish to meet with me? No, that won't be necessary. He's satisfied, he's looked at your record. At any rate I didn't have any difficulty at all with that. I did have difficulty with the Internal Revenue Service because when I was in Laos where we got mail every couple of weeks if we were lucky I was audited by the Internal Revenue Service for a tax return that had been submitted several years before like these things usually are and of course I'm trying to deal with this from Laos and the accountant who had pledged at the time he had prepared the papers if there's any problem, I'll take care of the IRS. Of course when the time came, oh, no, he couldn't be found. No, that was a misunderstanding. My brother-in-law, God rest his soul, he hired a lawyer for me and we fought this out for a while and I won. There was nothing difficult or questionable about my return. The IRS concluded that there was maybe something like $3.92 owed on that return. Well, I didn't think it was by golly and you know, struck my blow for principle. I wrote back and explained that by my records and here's the figures and here's your statement and there is a zero balance due and I wouldn't send them $3.92, whatever it was. Well, this dragged on and finally I didn't hear from them anymore and I was in Laos. I kid you not, Laos at that time you were lucky if you could make a phone call. You'd go two or three weeks and you couldn't get a telephone call to Bangkok. It was just awful. At any rate that was the end of that. When it came time to get the IRS clearance for my ambassadorship, I owed $3.92 according to the IRS. I still wouldn't pay it. I fought that out for a little bit. Finally they conceded, oh yes, we're sorry that we troubled you. In the meantime, sometimes I think that standing up for principle is a pain in the neck. Send them the blasted check, you know, but doggone it I didn't owe it. It was just ridiculous. At any rate, I'm kidding about the delay; it was probably a couple of weeks.

Q: But still.

TULL: Irritating, absolutely ridiculous. I'll pay as a single person, I pay more in my view than an awful lot of other people, I was probably audited four times and the only time I lost an audit which was totally unfair, in my view and I'll say that until the day I collapse was after I had my three children from Vietnam, I took the refugee children and as I read the instructions since I had them from April something or other, I had them more than six months of the calendar year that I could file as unmarried head of household because those kids weren't being declared anyplace else. That was definitely it. I filed that way and I lost. They said no. You would have had to have had them for the entire calendar year. I had the children for approximately three years, two full years, but only one full calendar year. I had to pay extra taxes. That's the only audit I ever lost and I thought boy the government really needs money badly. Here I'm keeping the kids off the welfare roles, keeping their parents off of welfare and I can't file as unmarried head of household. I had to rent a house, furnish it; most of the things I had taken to Vietnam were down the tubes never to be seen again. At any rate, that's the only one I lost.

Q: Well, then, let's get when you were, you were in Guyana from when to when?

TULL: '87 to '90 and roughly I guess it would have been August.

Q: What was the embassy like, your DCM and how big was it and what were they doing there?

TULL: It was a decent size. Unfortunately I had a DCM who was already on the way out of the service. He had been low ranked, so he was finishing what was going to be his last, well, he maybe got one more tour after that I don't think so. He was known to be a loser. Pleasant, but he knew the handwriting on the wall, too so he wasn't going to kill himself. Pleasant, knowledgeable. I think all told we maybe had about 25 Americans there at that time. We had a large consular section because half of Guyana was trying to immigrate to or visit the States one way or another. It was a horrendous consular load. I think we had five consular officers. We had a USIS operation and a very capable USIS officer, a library, decent programs being run, a nice center there for USIS. I had two economic officers, political officer, security people, a couple of communicators, Marine Guards, the whole nine yards of a decent sized post. We didn't have Peace Corps and we didn't have AID and even though we were administering this PL-480 program which did so much to help the Guyanese.

Q: That had been reinstituted after Burnham died.

TULL: After Burnham died, yes, under the initiative of my predecessor.

Q: Who was your predecessor?

TULL: Clint Lauderdale. It was a wonderful thing to have done and he was able to get it organized and it made quite a difference in the lives of the ordinary Guyanese to have flour coming in and they could have bread again and it certainly went a long way toward shaping attitudes, which had been very leftist there, shaping attitudes more favorably toward the U.S. At the time I was there, there was a huge Cuban presence, large Cuban health presence with doctors and nurses. A large Russian presence. A large North Korean presence, very heavy diplomatic presence on the leftist side. There were some elements in the U.S. government some individuals anyway who thought that Burnham was a communist, none of this socialist nonsense, but everything we had indicated no he was not a card carrying communist, he was an extreme left wing socialist who just didn't like the U.S. and if he could get anything from the other side, fine, that would be good. At any rate, we had a decent-sized staff.

Now, what it was like was at that point our embassy was an old wooden house right on the sidewalk of one of the main streets in Georgetown. It was a firetrap, a cigarette, a thrown cigarette would have been our biggest terrorism problem. It was bad. One of the things that had been hanging fire for several years was to build a new embassy in Georgetown. The money had been appropriated and it had been going through the various planning and approval stages. The plan was to build a really beautiful state of the art embassy meeting all of the new security requirements: setbacks, walls, everything and the decision was made before I got there, not that I could have influenced it, but the decision was that they would take the property of the ambassador's compound for this building project. There were two or three houses plus tennis court and swimming pool, plus the ambassador's residence on this plot of ground. The decision was that that would be an ideal place to build this big embassy. They were in the process when I got there of cranking up. A contract had been awarded and the contractor was due about the same time as I was. One of my jobs was going to have to be overseeing the construction of this embassy in a loose way. The ambassador, my predecessor, strongly disliked the ambassador's residence. It was an old Georgetown style colonial house. I thought it was great. It was a big, wooden place with the Georgetown shutters.

Q: Big verandas?

TULL: No, actually the verandas were inside, but you'd open these shutter type things to get good cross ventilation. It had good representation space, but since the theory was that the new embassy was going to be built just about 18 inches from the wall of the residence that they would get another residence and the existing residence would be the headquarters of the contractor and eventually we would tear it down. I believe ultimately the Guyanese government said, no you don't tear that down, it's a historical house. So I don't know what they use it for now. At any rate, Clint Lauderdale and his staff then had to find a residence for me. They did not have very good luck with it. Housing was at a premium in Georgetown so when I first went down I spent the first couple of weeks in the old ambassador's residence until the contractors came because the contractors weren't sleeping there. In fact even after they came for a week maybe I was still there, they would use what had been the living room as their offices and I would be on the upstairs floor. That's where I started in the old residence and what Clint had in mind was that I would move to the DCM's residence and they got a new residence for the DCM.

I ended up moving over to the DCM's residence, what had been his. I disliked it intensely. It was inappropriate. It was next to a hotel, using the word hotel loosely, more like a boarding house where people would come in from the country on the weekends and carouse and carry on. My residence was only a driveway and an alleyway from this hotel so you'd hear all this noise, the music and everything else. Across the street there was a vacant lot where people dumped their trash and horses occasionally grazed. It was not very nice and that was to be the ambassador's residence. I didn't like that so I checked out the residence that they had found for the DCM and by my standards it was light years better. None of these places met any security requirements for anybody. Everything was right on the curb, no set-backs. This residence that he had found was next to a compound owned by the Guyanese Sugar Company, Guysuco, where they had a couple of guesthouses for their executives and visitors. There were a couple of decent looking houses in a compound with some grass, well-maintained. The house for the DCM was again an old house. Again it wasn't very big, but I was one person and I figured while I was looking for a decent residence that this would serve the purpose. It had, you talk about a veranda, it had a screened in porch. The first room you went into was a screened in porch and then there was a very large living room, dining room combination, just one big room, not air conditioned and there was a kitchen that was adequate and there was as I recall two bedrooms. There might have been two baths. I'm not even sure that there were two baths. The only rooms that we were able to get air conditioners in were the bedrooms. On the ground level, there were pathetic holes in the wall for the servants. They didn't sleep there, but they could rest there during the day and there was a shower, whatever. I looked at that and I thought this is much better because you were on a main street and there was a canal, so naturally you're going to have odors, but there were rice paddies. You had a view. You weren't looking at trash. You weren't hearing all this raucous noise from people coming on weekends. I exercised my prerogative and said, well, that's the house I want compared to what we've got so far. The DCM for some reason, I don't think he wanted to go back to the house that he had been in. I think we gave that to the admin person.

At any rate the DCM eventually found another home, but in the meantime, with all the ramifications of arranging the purchase of this place, getting it painted up, getting it fixed, I lived in five different places as ambassador. I ended up back in the residence for another week or two. They put me in a hotel for a couple of weeks. That was a total disaster because again the noise level was ridiculous. They had one decent hotel in town and this was a so-called decent hotel, using the phrase loosely, The Pegasus, but it ended up not working out. At any rate I finally ended up in this house and I was able to get the Department to cough up a few dollars to get some decent furnishings and it worked out. It worked out for me, not meeting anybody's requirements for security. In the meantime I had my staff looking to see what's available because I resolved I would never do this to my successor. I know its going to take forever to find a decent place, but there's got to be something and to jump through all the hoops that the Department posed would take time. My admin staff launched an effort to find another residence. Anyway, visions of glory of being ambassador and having a nice residence did not apply.

Q: Well, how did you find dealing with the government when you got there? Were there any particular issues?

TULL: I got along, I think I got along pretty well with them. The issues that were high on our list were political reform and economic reform and you don't make a lot of buddies when you're pushing for political reform, but I did so. Likewise we and the British and the Canadians with whom I had marvelous relations, excellent people at that time, we were pushing hard to get the Guyanese to agree to a structural adjustment program under the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund. That was the I'd say the principal focus of my work there, getting them into a structural adjustment program and encouraging political reform by whatever means I could.

My biggest struggle internally with the U.S. government was maintaining the PL-480 program. After this program was established apparently without a great deal of difficulty a new individual, over this desk in USAID in Washington and he had been among the USAID people who had been thrown out of Guyana by Forbes Burnham. There was no way that you could convince him that anything had changed in Guyana and it was ridiculous to have restarted the program and it was going to stop, thank you very much. I had to fight and fight to keep that program. He kept insisting that you can't have that program without a USAID officer on the scene and we don't have any USAID officers to send you so therefore the program is finished. We fought and fought. I would have to go to higher levels and spend a lot of time writing cables and be on the phone trying to get around this guy. If he had been in place when Clint wanted to start the program, I wonder whether we would have gotten started because he just felt nothing had changed. We were all being hoodwinked, nothing will change in Guyana, it's not worth it. I had many heated arguments, impassioned discussions to keep this program going. Now, the USAID people in Barbados would have been very happy to have sent somebody to Guyana. They were anxious to get back in. They could have backstopped, but they were forbidden from doing so, but they offered to get us as much help as they could within their limits.

Fortunately for me the young economic officer I had at post, James Dudley and I suspect he must be going to the top, he was an absolutely superb young man, he handled this program beautifully, capably. He wrote beautifully. Anything you wanted him to do he would do yesterday type thing and yet he had a life. He was not a nerdy type. He was just very capable. If it hadn't been for James, I don't think there was another officer at post who could have kept this program on track. He kept assuring me, no, I can do this. We can keep this program. I can comply with every requirement. I can supervise it adequately. I think throughout my whole tour I had to battle to keep that program. We did keep it, but it was so draining to have to fight with your own bureaucracy when you think that the ambassador's voice should mean something. But USAID had the money, and the USAID officer was the one who's got to sign off to get his bosses to sign off. Anyway, James Dudley, God bless him, he was wonderful because we never did get a resident AID person in, but we did manage to persuade the higher ups in AID that we were not being hoodwinked, that this was a valuable program and we would complete whatever reporting requirements they had.

James was also amazingly competent when it came to everything related to the International Monetary Fund effort, the restructuring the bridge loan. I would take him with me to meet with the Minister of Finance to discuss the developments on this program, how the thing is progressing with the IMF and we could find out what requirements the IMF was levying and James could handle the conversation well. He was the technician. He really was a very capable young officer. I really hope his career has flowered. At any rate, again I encountered great resistance from AID to having the U.S. help with the bridge loan and the restructuring program because naturally we were one of the big voices behind getting the Guyanese to push into this program so the time came when it was time to put a little money where your mouth was to push the program forward. What a struggle. What an absolute struggle. I think I was able to get $5 million, but considering it was the United States of America I think that's pretty petty. I think the British and Canadians came up with more.

At any rate the Guyanese did bite the bullet and go into this program and after a lot of battles we were able to get some funding, but it was not as much as I would have liked. AID would have liked to have given like nothing. We made a contribution.

Q: Did you have any contact with AID officials who came in above the rank of your nemesis in the bureau?

TULL: Yes, but it didn't seem to make any difference. Yes, and he would be in the meetings, you see, he would attend the meetings and I'd meet with say the equivalent of a deputy assistant secretary or something. They were kind of, I've never been to Guyana and he's the expert, type thing. We kept the PL-480 AID program, we got the economic restructuring program and it did make a difference for Guyana briefly.

One of the major problems we had was just keeping the embassy and our houses functioning. Guyana was in such drastic shape economically. They had no hard currency to import anything. If you needed a doorknob for a house we'd have to get it from Miami. It was pathetic. After this program got started, they did get their credit back and suddenly you saw there were a few things on the shelves in the stores. I mean you would go into a major, they had one major government department store and you'd see a few ratty looking Chinese tee shirts and a couple of handmade things from the Indians in the boondocks, but you would not see consumer goods to speak of. It was really pathetic. We imported our food. We had a small commissary, which we had the Canadians and British use, too to built up the volume, but we would get our food from Miami largely. After this program you started to see an improvement. Definitely there was an improvement in what was available for people to buy. It made a difference.

Q: Was there any concern about the workings of at that time it would be the Soviets and the Cubans?

TULL: Oh, on our part, yes. I had of course a CIA presence and they were looking into the activities of the Cubans, Russians and North Koreans because you didn't have many opportunities to see what they were up to. Yes, we saw a bit of what they were doing. As I say the Cubans were primarily in health care. The Russians were supporting Cheddi Jagan, but as I say he was a card carrier, there's no question about that. He would go off on his vacations to the Black Sea every year.

Q: Did you have any contact with Cheddi Jagan or his wife who was an American from Chicago?

TULL: Yes, oh definitely. He was the leader of the opposition and my attitude was he was a functioning politician. I paid a courtesy call on him when I arrived, flags flying on the car. I figured every move I made was going to be watched, so I would make it easy for the Guyanese. I would call on him and had some good talks. A charming man, very bright. He went to Howard University. He was a dentist and he still practiced as a dentist when I was there in Guyana. His wife as you say was from Chicago and she was a Jewish woman and a lot of people say she was the real communist in the marriage and that she had gotten him more interested in communism. She reportedly led him into the communist party and he was quite happy there. He was quite charming. If I had a major function I would invite him. I had the country's president and the prime minister and I had Cheddi and other people. That's the job of an ambassador. You don't cut out the opposition, so I saw him a reasonable amount of times.

Q: What about the Cuban representation, they were off limits for you weren't they?

TULL: Yes. Cubans and the North Koreans.

Q: Did that prove awkward at all?

TULL: Well, you know you go to diplomatic corps luncheons and they would be there and I would go, too. I just wouldn't sit next to them. I've got a tray here somewhere that was the standard farewell gift of the Diplomatic Corps to departing ambassadors. I think it has the North Korean and the Cuban ambassador's names engraved, together with those of all the ambassadors there when I served. But I had plenty on my plate without trying to duplicate what the CIA was doing.

Q: This was obviously a very critical time in Europe where the Berlin Wall was falling. Did that have any repercussions in your area?

TULL: No, I don't think so. The main difference it made related political liberalization. We were pushing for that, and I warned the State Department to now bear in mind that if there's truly a free election, Cheddi Jagan will win and you will have a communist in charge of the government, but the Soviet Union is weakening. They're not giving him the support they did. The Soviet Union is almost over, you know, so, but bear in mind that with a free election you're going to end up with a communist president in Guyana. When they did, when the Soviet Union did collapse and I think that pretty well ended any financial help that Jagan got from them.

Throughout my tour I encouraged the president, Desmond Hoyte, to think along political liberalization lines. I was there about three years and toward the end of my tour they were gearing up for an election and by this time I think I had irritated him enough with my occasional references to how good it would be to have a free election and that he might want to consider inviting international observers to witness the election. During my final courtesy call, my farewell call, I mentioned to him the possibility that the Carter Center could be approached to come down and observe the election which was going to be in maybe six months after I left and he said, "No, if there are going to be any international observers, I'll have them from CARICOM" (that's the Caribbean community of which Guyana was a member). "If we had anybody it would only be from CARICOM." I said, "Well, that would be fine. Of course the United Nations sends observers." "No, no it would just be CARICOM." I said, "Okay, just keep in the back of your mind that President Carter's Center does do elections. They've done it in many countries around the world and his center's statement that it's a good election certainly gives a lot of prestige to the country that conducted it." He was not happy with this presentation, but at any rate, I did it anyway, it was my job. As I say he was a decent man and as it turned out when they did have the election maybe six months later, maybe even later, the Carter Center did go down. I think CARICOM as well, but he did admit the Carter Center and it was a free election without a lot of nastiness. Some little bit of I don't want to say violence, that's too strong, a little bit of rowdiness, maybe rough housing by some of the supporters of the black politicians. Cheddi Jagan won clearly, there's no question about it, and he was not enthusiastic about all the economic reforms that had been introduced. We knew that would be the case, so he dragged his feet on it and it didn't achieve everything that we would have liked. It was a little better in terms of goods coming in and anyway they got the president that they wanted and he served for a couple of terms and I believe I've lost touch, but I believe his wife succeeded him when he died. And President Hoyte accepted the election results and became the leader of the opposition.

Q: I'm not sure.

TULL: Yes, Janet Jagan, she was in the parliament and I believe she actually succeeded him. I believe to this day they still have an Indian as the president.

Guyana was fascinating. You should know a little bit about the history of the place. The British I believe got it from the Dutch in one of these wars and of course the British promptly imported blacks from Africa to grow sugar and things of that nature. Then the British freed the slaves in about 1831, well before we did and there was some thought that the blacks would then become paid laborers on these estates, but that wasn't what the British had in mind. They imported indentured servants, a type of mini-slave from India and also got people from Portugal, China to come over on seven-year contracts as indentured servants. The Indians came in the largest number. The Indians tended to stay on the sugar and later rice plantations. The Chinese and Portuguese went into business after they had finished their term and much of the business community was of Portuguese descent, Chinese descent and a few Indians who left the fields. But the blacks benefited from an excellent education system that the British put in so they got good educations and ended up going into government, police work, the professions, whereas the Indians in the early stages preferred to keep to their own culture and stay on the plantations. This accounts to a certain degree why when the country became independent you had this very articulate, capable black professional class who had participated in government, knew all about it and saw themselves as the natural leaders - even though I believe by this time I think the Indian populations exceeded that of the black. But Cheddi Jagan was the exception - a politically active professional type Indian. He organized the workers and I'm going to say it was the rice plantations, I don't think it was sugar, it might have been sugar, but at any rate he was a union leader although he was a dentist, but that was his base, the agricultural worker. That was the background you had there. The Indians had not taken great advantage of the education system.

The Guyanese people were charming. They were so likable, so intelligent and I'm talking primarily I guess of the blacks who were the ones who were mostly in government, but I certainly met many articulate, charming Indians as well. One man whom I would have liked to have seen be successful in politics organized, developed, and ran a rum distilling company. Just was a top-notch person. It was a very interesting mix of people there.

Q: Did you get out beyond Georgetown? I mean was there much out there to go to?

TULL: Yes. Getting out was very difficult. The British in their colonial period had focused on the coast and roads tended to go east west along the coast. There was even a railroad at one point that went east-west across the coast. I think it went into disuse under Burnham. But getting into the interior was very difficult. There are some beautiful rivers: the Essequibo River, the Demerara River were north-south flowing rivers and getting out from the coast was tricky. Yes, I did get out a few times, more than a few times, whenever I could. They had some fabulous trees, lumber and of course it would break your heart if it were done to excess because the Amazonian type forests are so beautiful, but they had certain types of wood, green heart and purple heart, very strong, durable wood. I got to know a businessman in the lumber business who was of Belgian descent. He and his family had been in the country for generations. He had a thriving lumber business along the Essequibo River, a beautiful arrangement there that he had built and developed through the years with his family and he took me down to his facility a couple of times on his private plane. This was the only way I could have gotten there so whether the Department would have approved or not, if you wanted to see what the lumbering industry is like, you accepted the offer. I went with him and spent a delightful weekend in his home with his wife right next to the river. It was just great. So, I did that a few times. A couple of times with the British high commissioner and his wife.

An Indian gentleman took me and a deputy assistant secretary who was visiting at the time to his rice plantation, again on his private plane. On a couple of occasions I got together with a couple of other ambassadors and we hired for pleasure an airplane to take us to Kaieteur Falls which are absolutely magnificent. They're higher than Niagara, not as wide, but high. Absolutely gorgeous. The only way to get there is to fly. Then on a couple of occasions I was able to get down to the Rupununi, again with the British high commissioner and the Canadian and his wife and my sister who was visiting. We took a few days vacation and flew down to the Rupununi, which is the southern area adjacent to, it borders on Brazil and there was a ranch there that I had read about in a book years ago before I had gone to Guyana by Durrell, Gerald Durrell, he was an expert zoologist and biologist. He had written a book about going to this particular spot. I forget the name of it. We all had it in our heads okay we're going to go to this ranch. We had heard that the daughter of the man who had run it when Durrell had gone, had reactivated it and was very anxious to get some cash customers there. We went there, interesting, but what a disaster. She was not equipped to handle visitors, but it was an interesting experience to see what life was like in the boondocks.

On another occasion I was able to go out with a U.S. military group that was down in the Rupununi doing some work. That's another aspect of the activities that I should get into a little bit. I was anxious to strengthen ties between the U.S. and Guyana in whatever way I could. Maintain the PL-480 program, get them in a structural adjustment program with some U.S. aid, encourage political liberalization, but also see if we could restart military to military ties, I had established good relations with their chairman of the joint chiefs and his deputy. I got in touch with SOUTHCOM who were then based in Panama. They were fishing around to see if there were other areas where they could do some training activities. I arranged a visit by a three star general, General Woerner, head of SOUTHCOM. It was a big success. He came down and the Guyanese were thrilled to get this kind of high level attention. They wined and dined him and took him around and it was quite a success for a couple of days. While he was there we arranged for military missions to come down on training activities with the Guyanese military.

Q: We used a lot of National Guard engineer units and all to go down and do things in Latin America for one thing.

TULL: I'm not sure who these folks were. I think they were regular army. I think these people were regular army.

Q: This is tape seven, side one with Terry Tull. Yes?

TULL: There were two focuses principally that the Guyanese wanted and that our people were more than happy to deal with. One was well drilling. Certain villages needed wells and it was good training for our folks to come down and go to work in a relatively remote village and dig a well and leave water and good will behind them. Also, health missions. Medical as well as dental. For our folks the more remote they could get the better. This one trip I remember particularly it was down in the Rupununi area, not as far south as I had been with the ranch that had turned into such a fiasco, but it was pretty significantly down there and our folks, our military was delighted because they got to bring helicopters and to fly their people in and set up in the boondocks, you know, get all the training that they could get. From the standpoint of the Guyanese it was good because our military set up a medical clinic, dental clinic. I enjoyed so much dealing with our military. They were so professional and so enthusiastic. They were so delighted to be in Guyana, isn't this great, you know, a change for them and good training experience and afterwards I was fascinated. They told me that in the Rupununi many of their clients, their patients were ethnic Indians from the various groups that had been there forever and ever like the Caribs and the Wai Wai. The Indians would walk for hours to get to the clinic and they said what struck them was the fact that these people who were maybe just in their early '40s from what they could determine, one of their principal problems was arthritis and probably because of walking up and down these hills and mountains all the time. The patients were thrilled to get anything and our people were glad to get the experience. That really made some good contacts.

Q: Were there any, did Guyana have any border problems?

TULL: Oh, yes. Venezuela still claims about a third of Guyana. If you go to Venezuela and look at a map which I did before I went to Guyana, I remember being in a Venezuelan government office on a tour I took before going down and they had the map and it shows I think it shows Venezuela being all the way over to the Essequibo River which of course is not the case. I believe that the final border was fixed by Teddy Roosevelt, although Venezuela still resists it.

Q: We almost went to war with Great Britain. It was a very nasty thing. I think this was the, was it the?

TULL: We did an arbitration in the early 20th Century.

Q: Yes, but the British and the Americans got into this. I guess this was the Roosevelt proviso or something like that. I got a question on my written exam. This was back when I took the three and a half-day Foreign Service exam.

TULL: Oh my gosh.

Q: I didn't know what the hell they were talking about, but I had to write on something. It was Venezuela, the crisis. I think it was called the Roosevelt proviso, anyway we invoked the Monroe Doctrine and the British said don't do it. Anyway.

TULL: I'm surprised because the border dispute was resolved I believe by Teddy Roosevelt. I don't think he was president at the time. It's rolling around in the back of my brain that he resolved it. I don't know why the British would have opposed it because it gave Guyana a good chunk of what Venezuela thought was theirs.

Q: I'm not sure they proposed, but they were, something was going on there.

TULL: Butt out or stay out, whatever. Oh, no Venezuela would like a nice chunk of Guyana, but the relations were good when I was there. I don't know what its like now with Chavez.

Q: How about Brazil?

TULL: I wasn't aware of any real problems, border problems there.

Q: Did you ever get up to Jonestown or was this the place everybody didn't even want to talk about it?

TULL: No. We knew where it was, but there was nothing there. They didn't turn it into any kind of a memorial or anything. I wouldn't have touched it with a 10-foot pole, no way. It wouldn't appeal. From everything I gathered, there was nothing there. There was nothing there to see. I got out a fair amount. I did establish good ties with some government ministers and some private business people, things of that nature and got around a fair amount, but I was very pleased with the way we were able to resume military ties.

Q: Did you get any high level visits at all?

TULL: No. The highest level was this three star SOUTHCOM commander. I had a deputy assistant secretary I think that was it. I don't think anybody higher than that came that I remember. One little aside that I found was interesting; a very powerful figure in Guyana at that time was the head of their national police who was also the head of their secret police, sort of the CIA equivalent. He was the principal contact of my station chief. He happened to be very good friends with the general who was in charge of the armed forces, the equivalent of the Joint Chiefs of Staff commander. Well, I had only met the police fellow once or twice, he had quite a reputation. I did know the general pretty well. At a reception I was at the general said to me, "Ambassador, I hear that you play bridge." I said, "Yes, I enjoy bridge." (That's another thing I did. I'd play bridge and you play with average people, business people, you wouldn't just be locked in with a narrow crowd. You'd learn a lot about what was going on in the countries over a bridge table.) I love bridge. I said, "Yes, I play, I'm not that great, but I play." "I like to play" he says, "I like to play, but I'm not that good. Could you play sometime?" "Yes, I'd like to do that." He says, "Oh, good." He says, "So and so and I, he wants to play, too." It was the secret police fellow. I said, "Oh, that would be fine. Yes, well, where would you want to do it? I can get somebody else to make a fourth." He said, "I have the fourth. Mrs. So and So. She's my wife's friend. We've played a couple times. You've met her." I said, "Yes, I have." Anyway, we established that we'd get together at my home the following Wednesday night. Well, it was kind of cute because I got a call from my station chief saying, "I understand so and so is going to come and play bridge with you." I said, "Yes. Do you play bridge?" He says, "No." I said, "Oh, well, I'm looking forward to it. I'm playing with so and so." He says, "Yes, I know." I said, "Well, you're welcome to come over if you want. You can kibitz." "Oh, okay, maybe I would." We got together and he got absolutely bored to death. He could see that we were just sitting there playing bridge and anyway, so, "well if you don't mind I think I'll go. I promised my wife, blah, blah." So, he went off. We had such a good time with these games and I never asked a single question. We stayed completely on bridge. I thought here's an opportunity for the police chief to see me with my fangs removed. This is the nasty woman who is meeting with the opposition and Jesuit priests who are opposed to the government and we'll just see how it flows. We had a great time because these two men were so aggressive in their bridge. You know bridge; you can be aggressive if you've got the cards. They frequently didn't have the cards and they got were funny. They couldn't stand to have me and my partner take a bid on a few occasions. They would bid higher and I would say, "Double." Well, we set them. It was so funny to see their reaction. They would be so annoyed, but they'd laugh. I went out to this man's home a couple of times on a Sunday afternoon for bridge and I went to the general's house and it really helped establish a relationship. I did not use the occasion to say, are you going to crack down on the demonstrators, you know, nothing, this was social. I think it served me well, as well as being fun.

Q: You mentioned the Jesuit priests. Was the church a factor there?

TULL: There was a group of Jesuits who had been a real factor in the opposition to Forbes Burnham, opposing his brutality and lack of freedoms and absence of human rights. This one elderly Jesuit, I think he was British. They were known to be opponents in the sense that they were seeking human rights and free elections. In fact during the Forbes Burnham period, a priest who was a dead ringer for this priest literally became a "dead ringer". He was murdered on the streets of Georgetown about a block from the rectory where he was staying. He had come in from another country to visit and went out at night, not late, and he resembled this man. Thugs came and killed him. The Jesuits didn't have a lot of warm feelings towards the Guyanese government, but they were also a source of some information and I also felt that they could use a little protection in the sense of letting the government know that the American Embassy knew these people existed and valued their views. I met with them a couple of times and occasionally on a Sunday night I would go and play scrabble with them. With the official car, you know, the whole routine. I never did anything surreptitiously. I always let the government see what I was up to. The Jesuits were an opposition element in a subdued way. They were pretty bitter having had one of their people murdered.

Q: Were there student demonstrations or things of this nature going on?

TULL: No, not at all. Not at all. When I was there, I never heard of any thuggeries or murders perpetrated by the Hoyte regime, if it was taking place I was unaware of it and I did have pretty wide-ranging contacts. The biggest problem, the worst part of all, was the economic disaster. Guyana was regarded as having some of the finest bauxite in the world and they had gold, but the big crops were rice and sugar. The sugar was highly prized in England, but at any rate the biggest thing was bauxite. At the time of nationalization, the Burnham government did a few smart things. They entered into an agreement to repay the companies that they were expropriating and they maintained a payment schedule. One of the companies was Reynolds of the U.S. and I believe Alcan a Canadian group. But with the best intent in the world, you know, this group of unqualified government officials were incapable of maintaining the bauxite mines and therefore, hard currency became extremely scarce. The electricity grid went down. Terrible. They didn't have enough money to import enough oil to keep the generators going. It was terrible. It was just an awful situation. You would go with massive power outages a day two and a half days at a time. Of course it would shut down the mine, too. If they were trying to keep the mine open they'd shut down the grid elsewhere and get the power going into the mines. It was just so unnecessary and so sad. While I was there Reynolds came down and one of their executives, a very nice man, came down to see if there were opportunities for more investment with the Guyanese and he did generate some. There was also a company that came in to try to do something about the power situation. It was terrible. Eventually the embassy was able to get generators for every house. That meant of course buying gasoline, diesel I guess to run the generators. It meant noise. It meant the neighbors weren't happy because they didn't have generators and oh, gosh, it was just an awful situation to deal with. It was such a shame.

On one occasion, I think I was on leave in the States so I missed the worst of it, but they had a massive shutdown for two or three days and if you don't have power, you don't have water coming into the pipes. You can't flush toilets, or any of that. The water situation had gotten so bad, now here my general friend did a smart move. He sent army tanker trucks filled with water into the neighborhoods in Guyana and let people bring their buckets and fill up from the army tankers to try to keep the peace. They were on the brink of riots and it was over water and power, principally water. On this occasion the Department very smartly because I hadn't been there for the worst of it, and they said if I asked for it they would authorize an additional R&R for my staff which I did ask for and it was granted so they were able to get out again. It was a hard post. A hard post. It was hard enough for me, but I had the enthusiasm of my job to get me through. It was hard for me, but if you were a regular staffer and particularly if you had little kids it was awful. Really difficult. It's the worst living situation I've ever had.

Q: Well, you left there in 1990. Is that right?

TULL: Yes.

Q: Where did you go then?

TULL: Well, there's a few things I want to say more before we go into this.

Q: Oh, sure.

TULL: The biggest, well, given all this background of economic difficulties, you couldn't buy anything, very limited entertainment possibilities, power shortages, water shortages. Morale was very difficult. Morale was low. It wasn't that high when I got there and I promptly in my view in retrospect I did something to make it even worse. Before I went to Guyana I was reviewing cables and paperwork and guidance and one of the elements I found was a cable from the Department to all posts that had currency exchange problems that you had to be realistic in your currency exchange, that you could not give inflated rates of exchange for your people when they sold cars, or personal property. It was all laid out chapter and verse and I remember it happened that my predecessor was there in the Department and I discussed this with him and he said, oh, you can't do that in Guyana. It would be too hard on the staff. You can't implement this there; it's just too hard. The staff, it's awful, everybody hates it. You have to give them some break. I said, but it's against regulations. It's probably against laws.

As I recall the situation in Guyana there were in effect three exchange rates. Guyana's currency was not convertible. The official exchange rate was 10 Guyanese dollars to one U.S. That was totally absurd. The Guyanese government had worked out that diplomatic missions could exchange their currency at the bank for 21 to one. Now, on the black market the rate did fluctuate, maybe 100, or 150 to one, because the Guyanese dollar had no value. What had been happening in Georgetown was at the end of their tour, people would sell their cars having gotten all of their Guyanese dollars for their own personal use throughout their tour at 21 to one and they would come into the embassy and the ambassador had authorized converting any Guyanese dollars they came in with at 10 to one, which was not right in accordance with this instruction from the Department. It also went against my grain; it wasn't a proper thing to do. It created the impression of people bringing goods down and just putting it aside and then selling it to make a killing off the U.S. government. We didn't need Guyanese dollars. You know of cases in other countries where people who bring a car in and put it up on wheels and then sell it and get this ridiculous sum because of the exchange rate and the Department had been trying to crack down on that. Again, in retrospect I think I should have handled it differently with a more participatory decision-making process perhaps, but I was concerned. One of the reasons I was concerned is that I knew we were going to be inspected within about six weeks of my arrival and I figured well, that could be worse because basically anything that is here is on my predecessor, not me, but still they're going to look at me. Six weeks or two months, whatever it was. Anyway, I came in and I started looking at this problem and I met with the administrative officer who was upset at the thought that I might be changing it and I guess I might have met with a couple other heads of section. I'm not even sure I did. Probably the USIS fellow, but in retrospect what I should have done was to have presented a small select group of maybe section heads with this cable, what should we do about it and let them generate a proposal to me. Instead I went in there knowing I wanted to exchange final end-of-tour transactions at 21 to one. To me this was a reasonable compromise.

At any rate, we implemented this change and people were not happy. They were not happy at all because they expected to make a substantial profit when they left on selling their vehicles or selling anything. Old sheets and towels, old pots and pans, anything at all. Everybody who left it seemed to me had a yard sale including the previous ambassador and ended up with thousands of dollars being converted at this 10 to one rate with all the Guyanese dollars they brought in. Before fully implementing this I was particularly concerned about the big sales which were cars. I asked my admin officer, I said, "Before I make a final decision, would you please pull together your records on automobile sales at the end of tour over the last two years and I'll review them in my spare time." He put these together for me and I'm looking at them and the numbers were very high. I mean in terms of the amount of dollars people were getting for all the cars, but that was past. I'm looking at this one exchange and it seemed high to me. All these Guyanese dollars being converted to the sale of a car and it was a car that was sold by the ambassador's communicator, the former ambassadors' communicator and his wife to a new junior officer who had only been at post six or eight months. I called the young fellow in and I said, "I understand that so and so left and you bought his car?" He said, "Yes, I did." I said, "Do you mind if I ask how did you pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I got a loan from the credit union and gave him a check." I said, "A U.S. dollar check?" He said, "Oh, yes. I've almost paid it off." I said, "Okay, well, thanks very much." Because on this piece of paper the communicator and his wife had presented multi, multi thousands of Guyanese dollars which they converted, they claimed that was the money they had gotten from this young fellow and it had been converted at 10 to one with the approval of the previous ambassador. It ended up being several thousand dollars, many thousand dollars. Then I asked for other pieces of paper and we looked into these two people and as I recall they had converted on the order, I'll say $60,000 to $80,000 U.S. of these monies coming in and then other folks would tell me, oh, yes, they went to Brazil a lot over to Manaus and in Manaus you could get 300 to one and they would come back and they would sell things. Wonderful. This was clear chicanery and it also reinforced my view that changing 10 to one was not a very good idea. I did implement that we would change at 21 to one and morale did not benefit from that. I was not liked. I'm sure I was probably the most disliked ambassador to hit that post for quite a while, but I thought I had done the right thing.

Then we had the inspectors come and the head of the inspection team for this group was Clint Lauderdale, my predecessor. Of course he couldn't inspect his own post, but he was the boss of the team. He stayed in Barbados while other inspectors came over to Guyana. I met with them and I presented them with the evidence of this crime on the part of these people, my predecessor's secretary and communicator. They sat and looked at me like what are you doing, ambassador? "Gee, this puts us in a bad position, an awkward position. He's our boss." I said, "Yes, I know. It is very awkward, I understand that, it's very awkward, but this is clear. It's wrong and it has to be corrected. If you feel that you can't deal with it this way I can just send it into the Department and they can take care of it." "No, no, we'll take care of it." So, they did. I could see their situation. Ultimately many many months later I found out that the case had been sent to the Justice Department, but the Justice Department had concluded that it wasn't worth the resources to pursue. I believe these two were fired and maybe they lost their pension rights, but I'm not sure. At any rate it was not a happy time. I just kept uncovering things like that there. The corruption was just so bad, morale was bad. I did not come out of the inspection with high marks for morale. I was not good for the staff as far as morale was concerned. I had to dig out of a hole on the whole issue of morale. I was viewed as too demanding and not considerate enough because I had taken money from them, really as I say in retrospect I should have probably had a much more broad based approach and let a recommendation bubble up from the section chiefs. I think I did consult with a couple of people, but obviously not enough and when you hit people in the pocketbook.

Q: You can consult all you want, but if you're taking money away from people.

TULL: They're not going to be happy even though you're right. I'm sorry, I was right. There had been in the past diplomats even high level ones who had run into serious difficulty with that issue. I thought it was the right thing to do, but I could have handled it differently I think.

Q: I'm looking at the time. This might be a good place to stop. We can pick this up the next time. We talked about the problem of the exchange business and other things and I don't know if there is anything else we should talk about there, but.

TULL: Well, let me take one or two more minutes now and I think I could finish it up.

Q: All right.

TULL: I should back up a little bit by saying the administration at the post was in bad shape before I went down to Guyana. The Department got a desperate phone call from the admin officer saying he was quitting. He was resigning. He couldn't stand it anymore. They begged and pleaded with him to stay. You'll be all right. Hang in there. Very reluctantly he did. The man was clearly in over his head. He had the best intent in the world and he was a hard worker, just not extremely competent, but he tried very hard. That's what I went into. Well, then the DCM as I say was one that knew that he was on the way of being moved out because of time in class. Fortunately I made it clear that I'm trying to get this place shaped up a little bit and try to get me a decent DCM when this man leaves. I got a fine DCM. Dennis Hayes, who in his younger days had been president of the American Foreign Service Association and he really helped a great deal. He came down with a bright, cheerful, can-do attitude. He took a lot off of me and I think things really picked up a lot by having that good competent cheerful person in place. By the end of my tour that I was satisfied with the job I had done and I think the post was better for my having been there.

Q: Then what happened. You left in 1990. What did you do?

TULL: Well, then I had trouble finding another job. I felt careerwise that I probably should be a deputy assistant secretary or get another embassy, but a DAS would have been fine. Can't shoot too low in this business, you know, but that wasn't to be. I thought my natural home was the East Asia bureau, but I hadn't been in it for a while and the assistant secretary at that time was Richard Solomon, a political appointee. There were no possibilities for a DAS. I did see that other ambassadors were taking office director positions in certain bureaus and I thought well I don't think I'm ready to retire yet. This is good. We'll see what happens. Then I decided that maybe another, give me a year, maybe diplomat in residence. I could see if maybe I wanted to teach in retirement, but I thought I could do that adequately enough. Well, nothing was easy, but eventually I did get a diplomat in residence slot. The morale question in Guyana plagued me a little bit as far as getting another good position right away, at least I think it was morale that did it because everything else as far as I was concerned was excellent in my performance, but I did not have a happy staff. I became a diplomat in residence at Lincoln University, one of the oldest black colleges in the United States.

Q: That's where Nakruma went, didn't he?

TULL: Yes, Nakruma and Thurgood Marshall and there was another African head of state that was educated there. It's in Chester County, Pennsylvania which wasn't far from my old stomping ground. I was born and raised in New Jersey. I went to Lincoln University for a year. I was the diplomat in residence there and taught a course and did seminars and lectures and things like that. Did that for a year.

Q: Good, well, then we'll pick this up the next time about what happens, we'll talk a little bit about Lincoln and then we'll talk about what you did afterwards.

TULL: Okay.

Q: Okay, today is Friday the 13th of January, 2006. Terry, you wanted to put in something about Guyana?

TULL: Yes, I had mentioned toward the beginning of our interview the difficulties that I had and my predecessor had had in finding a suitable residence for the ambassador. I noted that I had actually lived in five places and that it was unsatisfactory, but I had ended up in a place next to the Guyana sugar company compound that worked for me as a single person, no children and all that. It worked for me, but it wasn't desirable for the long term and I had determined that I was not going to leave a similar circumstance to my successor. I gave my administrative staff as a priority job trying to find a suitable ambassadors' residence. Now, I knew it was a difficult job because of all the security requirements that had been layered on, setbacks on all sides, possible means of escape in the sense of two roads - you just couldn't be at a cul-de-sac or something like that and Guyana did not have many residences that fit that bill. My staff did work hard on that and I guess about a year before I was due to leave they found a house under construction in a development, about four or five miles outside of town along the coastal highway which the government of Guyana had been encouraging diplomatic missions to look at as a place to have ambassadors reside. There were two or three ambassadors living out there and I had been out to a couple of their residences for social occasions and I thought this is a possibility.

Well, a very nice house was under construction and it had a double lot. The owner owned the lot next door which he was probably going to sell and have somebody else build something on, but it met as far as I could see just about all of the security requirement. Nothing was 100% in that regard, but this was darn close and it was a large residence with big rooms for entertainment, several bedrooms, several baths, very nice servants' quarters should they choose to live in. Very nice. The second lot would have been available for us and that would have provided room for a swimming pool and a nice garden. Now, this was all in semi-completion stage, so I had my staff get to work with the developer and they got a price and really were very close to completing the process as it was moving forward. It seemed like for every hoop we jumped through the Department had another hoop for us to jump through, but we were doing it and getting this plan and that plan and this, that and the other and it looked like a done deal. The only thing we needed was a final security clearance from the Department of Diplomatic Security. My security officer strongly recommended this as a great improvement on what we had or anything else we could find around there, so he had no hesitation and recommended approval. They took photos of the house and the area and I went back to Washington for consultation on some matter and I met with my successor, George Jones, who had been named. He hadn't been approved yet, but we knew that George was going to be the man.

I met over dinner with George and his wife and I very proudly showed him the photographs of this house and I said it looks a little bare now, but all you need are some Bougainvillea plants draping over those verandas and believe me this is really going to be a nice place. George's wife was unimpressed. He had not been an ambassador before. I don't know what she expected, but this was not what she had in mind. I could see this cold attitude with regard to these pictures so I'm explaining how difficult it is to find anything there and what I'm living in is certainly unacceptable, but that this house would really do the trick and she just wasn't getting interested. She didn't say oh, I wouldn't want to live there. She said, oh, but it looks so bare and it's so plain. It's just box like. I said, well, believe me it's a great house. It will be really wonderful. It's just about all signed, sealed and delivered and believe me I know you're going to like it. It's a good area.

So, anyway, the only remaining detail was to get the final approval from diplomatic security and I learned to my absolute shock that there was a problem in this regard, that they were holding back. I want to see the assistant secretary. Now, the name escapes me. We were well acquainted. He had been ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago for a while I guess at the beginning of my tour there in Guyana. We knew each other. A nice man and he was now assistant secretary for diplomatic security. I went in to say I was certainly looking forward to the approval of the purchase of this house because its going to be such a great improvement from what I've been living in. He told me, no, it just doesn't meet every security requirement. I'm sure that you folks can do better and find something better than this. I couldn't believe it. I said, we have been looking. I'd been there at this point two and a half years, pushing three, believe me, this is incredible and there's room for the swimming pool. The staff can use that. They also used the Marine House swimming pool, which was in town. It is really a good house and for Guyana and Georgetown it certainly is secure. I just can't understand why you have any hesitation. He said, "Well, I was over to Georgetown a few times when I was ambassador to Trinidad and there's nice houses over there. What about that house on the main street, not too far from the embassy, a big wooden structure? I think the British high commissioner or something used to live there." I said, "Oh, you mean the residence of the prime minister? Yes, the prime minister lives in that house; it's not for sale. It's not available and also I have learned from the grapevine because we have inquired about it that it would require a fortune in repair, but he's still living there and no, its not available. I have lived in Georgetown for two and a half years in bad conditions in something that is not suited for an ambassador's residence. I swore that I wasn't going to do this to my successor. You really need to approve this. Well, he didn't see how he could do that. It just didn't meet absolutely 100% of his security standards. I forget what his requirement was. Maybe on one side it was 90 feet back instead of 100, whatever it was, it was some insane thing. So, I immediately concluded that George's wife had told George, I don't want to live in that house. That's a boxy looking place. Then George had gotten to his friend and he knew the head of DS just like I did and he said, well, we'll hold off and we'll find something. This is my assumption. We'll find something when we get down there. I was absolutely flabbergasted. I told diplomatic security, I said, "I want the record to show I found a nice ambassador's residence, or my staff and I found it, because I was not going to have done to my successor what was done to me. You're making a mistake here, but you've got the final authority there. Fine, I wash my hands of it." I was ticked off. I was really ticked off. Anyway, I went back, I told my absolutely shocked staff, including the security officer that diplomatic security wasn't going to approve it. I don't think I told him my suspicion as to why that was the case. I said if you can find any more places fine, but you've exhausted it. Don't make it something that you're losing sleep over, but if you stumble across something, fine, otherwise it's a dead issue because we have been working on that house for one year trying to get complete sets of plans and maps of the area and every bit of nonsense that you could imagine.

At any rate that was that. I left Georgetown at the end of my tour and came back to Washington and eventually my successor went down and of course he and his wife moved into my residence, which I had warned them about. They moved in there. Well, I will say to George's credit about I guess after he had been there six months to eight months I got a letter from George saying, Terry, you were so right about that house. It would have been wonderful. We have looked and looked and we haven't found anything that could have come up to it and in fact we went to the new owners because the owner did sell it and the new owner did exactly as you were planning to do, they bought the second lot and put a nice swimming pool and garden in there and we asked if we could buy it from him and he just about laughed in our faces, there was no way he was going to sell. We have been looking around and he said, we have now rented a house within a block of this place, but across the street and up a little bit. We rented a house there. It doesn't have room for a swimming pool. There's a small garden. It's nothing compared to the house that you found. I just thought I would like to let you know that. I thought that was decent.

Q: Very nice of him, yes.

TULL: Very decent. So it confirmed my view that basically, maybe George, I think it was his wife because she looked at these pictures and was unimpressed. It was unfortunate. I don't know what the status of the ambassador's residence in Georgetown, Guyana is these days. They were renting this house and there's no way in the world it could have met the security standards because the security arrangements for the house that we found were much better. It had decent setbacks, but at any rate it was a difficult situation, but I did respect his letting me know the circumstances. You're not putting a good face on the U.S. presence if you're living in substandard quarters. It looks like what's the matter with this country; can't they afford to get a decent house? Well, it was a tight situation and when we did find a good house it was shot down. At any rate, I'll be curious eventually to find out what was finally resolved in that case. We found a nice place and unfortunately my successor did not get to live in it.

Q: Well, then you went to Lincoln University, is that right?

TULL: Yes.

Q: From when to when?

TULL: Well, roughly for the academic year '90 to '91, say August of '90 to approximately August of '91, yes. Lincoln is the oldest historically black college in the country. It was established in the late 1850s by a Presbyterian group looking to educate free blacks. It is in a beautiful area of Chester County, Pennsylvania and it educated many leading African politicians who went on to become presidents of their country, at least two I think Nakruma and I think there was one other whose name escapes me. Thurgood Marshall was a very proud graduate of the school. In the early 20th Century it was referred to as the black Princeton. It had high standards and gave a good education. When I got there in August of 1990, it had changed a bit. It was a reasonably respectable college, but of course like most of the colleges in recent years they had lowered their entrance requirements so they got a large cross section of students.

Q: Let me stop here.

Q: Yes?

TULL: Predominantly black. Well, overwhelmingly black I should say although there was a handful of white students as well. There was no prohibition against it. The president and the administration were black. Certainly the people I dealt with were very nice, very capable people. The president ended up with difficulty over expenditures and I think she eventually a few years after I was there lost her job because her husband was spending a fortune on decorating their house and things like that.

Q: Sounds like Benjamin Ladner.

TULL: Yes, that would never happen at American University in Washington.

Q: Oh, no?

TULL: She was very much interested in Africa. Africa and promoting African students, getting African students to come to the school, programs in the summers for various African students. South Africa in particular was a cause. She was a sociologist by training and she had lived and worked in her field for a couple of years in Africa. I found it absolutely intriguing when I first visited Lincoln and made my initial calls. I went into the administration office where the secretaries and clerks were all white and the bosses were all black. I just thought that was great. It was really great because Chester County is not an area of high black concentration so the staff people, the janitors, the lawn people were white and the president of the college, the vice president, the professors were almost all black and very nice people. I thought that was intriguing.

Another thing that I found interesting there was, although I can't be much whiter than I am, very fair skinned, that even before the students knew who I was in the first few days walking across campus, anytime I encountered black students they were very polite and they would say good morning, good afternoon. I thought this is going to be pretty good. So, I never encountered any hostility, any difficulties whatsoever with the student body. It was unfailingly polite. So, I settled in. I taught a course of political science. I think it was for juniors and seniors and it was something I was very familiar with which was the role of U.S. human rights policy in our foreign policy. I developed a course based on material I had and my experience in the Human Rights Bureau. That's the principal course I taught. I also organized a series of brown bag lunches which apparently they had not had, where I suggested that we could get speakers and everybody could bring their own lunch and just sit around a table and people could come and go as they wished, listen to a speaker, and they'd take questions. That went over pretty well. We did that maybe once a month. I kicked it off and I was also asked if I could do a series of foreign policy speeches for the university as a whole and they would be offered as optional events for the student body to attend. I did put together five, maybe five or six of these sessions. They were not that well attended. It was optional, but those who did attend seemed to enjoy it. I established hours to meet with students who might be interested in joining the Foreign Service to discuss what State Department life was like, what the Foreign Service was like. I offered some prepping on the Foreign Service exam for those who might be interested. I did that at night. I didn't get too much of a response. There were maybe half a dozen students who came and we worked on some pretty basic things. I had an old exam book with sample questions. I did not do any writing on my own when I was there. Some of my diplomatic colleagues who were diplomats in residence did use the time to write articles for State Magazine or other publications. I didn't do that. I felt that I was making an adequate contribution there. I didn't want to exploit the fact that I was at a black college to write about what was taking place on a daily basis or anything like that, so I didn't do it. It was a very interesting year and when the regular academic year came to a conclusion, I was asked if I was interested in staying for the summer program. I checked with the Department and they had nothing for me to do yet at that time. It was like early June, a little bit before the assignment cycle so I stayed for a couple of months and I did a seminar on Asian governments and politics. That took some preparation. It was interesting. I thought that worked out pretty well and I did a couple more individual lectures. One of the professors in the political science department to which I was assigned was an avid supporter of getting rid of the De Klerk government from South Africa. He was from South Africa. He was very active in the African national congress.

Q: The ANC, yes.

TULL: ANC, very much in that and we had lunch together occasionally and I would get his views. I remember saying on one occasion I certainly hoped that it would be possible that black rule could come to South Africa without violence because it would just be so hard for all concerned particularly the blacks. They could really get hurt. I remember him agreeing that it would be nice if that could be the case but he didn't really see that happening. We were both I'm sure delighted when it did happen. I understand he went back as soon as it was clear and I believe he got some position in the government. He was pretty bright, but he was very far left, there's no question about it. It was interesting to have that occasion to meet with him. They were professors from other countries. Nigeria, there were a couple of professors from Nigeria.

Q: In your class were you getting much response from the students, questions and this sort of thing?

TULL: A fair amount. It was interesting to be teaching human rights to an all black class who were well aware of the fact that when the constitution was written their ancestors would have been 2/3 of a human being. Was it 2/3 or 3/5 or something like that?

Q: I think 2/3.

TULL: It was pretty bad. I remember having one exchange, it was always very civil and not too many participated too actively, but I do remember one exchange where a student was saying, well, you're talking about the U.S. and getting involved in helping to draft a universal declaration of human rights and pressing for human rights and improvement on the part of other countries. This is a country that didn't even recognize black rights to vote until the mid-20th Century. I said, you know, you're right. The only thing I can say to that is at the time that our country was establishing our declaration of independence and our constitution was written, if you put it in the context of the rest of the world, Europe was still in the situation of the divine right of kings. The idea that ordinary human beings, be they white landholders, could determine their fate, could rule themselves, establish a government, that was pretty shocking. In that context it was a pretty far-reaching change, but wouldn't it have been a lot better if everybody's rights were recognized? Women's rights, black rights. I said it was a slow process, but against the concept of I am the king because my father was and I will rule you as I please, our system was pretty forthcoming. It was pretty forward looking into the future, pretty far-sighted. They accepted that. But by and large there wasn't tremendous interest in the subject. As I say I was always treated politely and they didn't like the idea of doing term papers. I did require a paper and tests, you know, were not exactly welcomed. I didn't have any stellar people shall we say. I had several that you would put in the B grade category and others that you think oh, I don't want to fail him, he's a senior. You kind of edge around the edges a little bit, but they were a nice group and I wished them well.

Q: Well, when you left there, what happened?

TULL: That would have been the summer of '91 and I began another search for a decent job in the Department. I was interested in at least an office directorship, ideally a DAS and that wasn't going to happen apparently. Again I viewed my expertise principally as being East Asia because I had spent most of my career there except for this deviation into Guyana and my first tour in Brussels. So at any rate I pressed to get an office directorship. The Philippines directorship was open and I think the Indonesia Singapore one was open and Regional Affairs was open. So, I bid on all three and I felt I was a strong contender for the Philippines having served in Cebu. I had that background, but the Assistant Secretary, Richard Solomon was very taken with a particular younger Foreign Service Officer who was at least one grade below the job designation for the Philippines, but Solomon wanted him in that job. He fought very hard to get him. Then there was another person he wanted for the Indonesia/Singapore job. I don't think Solomon was thrilled at the idea of having me for Regional Affairs, either, but I went in to Personnel and said it seemed to me that I should at least get one of these positions and if not the other two, Regional Affairs. I believe that they pressed pretty hard on Solomon to say if you want to get this officer who was below the grade for the Philippines position, then you have to take Tull in Regional Affairs. I was shoved down his throat, basically. Not an ideal way to get into the bureau.

So, okay, I'm in the Department now and I settled into the job, but I discovered that it was not much of a job as it was then constituted compared to running an embassy. The Assistant Secretary had a political appointee, a very capable man, who was a speech writer, but he dabbled also in policy issues. A good man, nice man, we got along well, but he would be designated to do studies and things that I thought would be more of a Regional Affairs office requirement, part of our portfolio. It was not a good assignment. I was bored to death. We had certain fixed things we had to cover and I had decent staff for that. We followed the UN issues. I had a civil service officer who had been there for a while and he did that. We did military licensing review and that sort of thing. I had an army colonel who did that. But I felt as a regional affairs office we should have the ASEAN portfolio (the Association of South East Asian Nations) which I knew a lot about, but the Assistant Secretary decided no, that should go to the Indonesia desk which had three ASEAN countries in it. I remember this one beautiful fall day, a beautiful day and I'm thinking what am I doing here? I'm old enough to retire. I don't have children in college. Why am I wasting my life? I could be out if nothing else taking a nice walk along the mall and this is really a bummer. I'm not being utilized. Why am I doing this? I seriously considered retiring at that point and was giving it very careful consideration, but I believe it was around this time, when the Foreign Service Act was amended to extend the time in grade for senior officers. I was already a minister counselor, but at that point I was thinking oh, I've only got two more years or whatever of eligibility. Well, all of a sudden that's changed and I'm looking at maybe five years more and also a major salary increase was put in and I'm looking at the numbers on that. I decided it would be foolish to retire. Staying longer would give me a much better pension, and with more years allowed in class, there was always a chance of a decent assignment in the future. I knew I would never be promoted to the next level - what was that, career ambassador?

Q: Career minister. There's minister counselor and then the next one is career minister and then career ambassador.

TULL: Well, I figured that I had gone as high as I could go. I was happy, very happy with my progress in the Foreign Service. Very satisfied. The equivalent of a two star general, that was fine. At any rate, I thought well, no, I'm not going to walk out on a much more substantial pension, more time in grade with the possibility perhaps a better assignment in the future. One of the aspects of the Foreign Service that I loved about the Department and the job and the career, no matter how uncomfortable your relationship might be with a boss or whether you didn't like the particular country you were serving in, you were only going to be there a few years. You would get transferred or he or she would get transferred, so you don't fall off the limb that you're sitting on. You wait and give it a shot and see what happens. I thought well, we'll scratch thoughts of retiring just now.

Now, I don't have firmly in my mind right now the dates of this, but I know that for two years when I was in the regional affairs office I went to the United Nations during the fall General Assembly session as the East Asia so-called expert and that might have started in '91. I suspect yes it must have been '91 so that was a saving grace, too. I did not go up and cover the period when the president was there with all his meetings. They usually divided it into two elements. You had somebody up preparing all that and then when the President has left and the regular session started you had other staff to work the issues. I went to the UN, to our mission and that proved to be a very interesting time. Basically we were senior lobbyists. We had an ambassador or other very senior officer from each of the geographic bureaus. I called on each of the ambassadors from the East Asia Pacific countries to introduce myself so they'd know who I was. I got to know them all and then when votes would come up, issues would come up, we would go around and try to get their votes, we would canvass for vote support and get their positions, find out why they weren't going to support it, what their view was. It was a very interesting time. I was there I guess for about two months and that helped to mitigate my feeling that this was a total waste of time. It was a very interesting experience so that would have gotten me back on the job then around January of '92. Somehow, you get through the down periods and occasionally an interesting thing would come up to do.

I got very interested in security issues in the region right around the time the bureau was learning that ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, wanted to expand their dialogue with us which had been principally economic and political. ASEAN was concerned about security issues in the region and we thought expanding our dialogue to security issues was a good idea. We eventually developed or helped to develop the ASEAN Regional Forum which brought in the ASEAN countries and the dialogue partners, a group of half a dozen countries including the U.S., China, Russia to discuss regional issues, including security issues, and we had some preliminary sidebar type discussions that even brought in North Korea which was interesting. (I believe this development, in which I was deeply involved, came about after Solomon left the bureau.)

1992 was an election year and President Clinton won the election and that meant that we said goodbye to Richard Solomon who was a George H.W. Bush appointee and so he left and he was replaced by Winston Lord. Lord, although not a career diplomat, had a lot of diplomatic experience and he came in as assistant secretary. My fortunes lifted immediately because he shared my view as to what the Regional Affairs office should be doing. He seemed pleased to have a former ambassador heading the office. He treated me much like a deputy assistant secretary. He had meetings I think everyday or three times a week with his DASs and he had me attend those meetings because the issues discussed covered a range of what was happening in the bureau. I suddenly had a really great job. Lord delegated a lot of things to me, a lot of meetings he didn't feel he had the time to attend including international conferences and things like that. It ended up being a very interesting experience working with him.

One of the highlights of my service there which I look back on this with a lot of satisfaction, was an initiative regarding APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperative). Now, again I wish I had calendars or notebooks. I didn't keep journals or take things with me out of the Department after retirement, so I'm drawing on my memory, but I remember that after the Clinton election we in EAP were interested in engaging the new President on Asian issues. President Clinton had not shown a great deal of interest in East Asia and the Pacific before becoming president. In the several years preceding his election a predominantly economic grouping called Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] had gotten established. APEC included the countries of Asia and the Pacific and the Pacific rim, including the U.S. APEC had had meetings every year, usually at the finance and economic ministers level. They would alternate venue, country to country, each year. Well, in 2003, December of 2003 the U.S. was going to host the APEC meeting, in Seattle. I remember sitting at a staff meeting one morning, very early in '93. We discussed how we could get the president focused on Asia. Various ideas were discussed. What emerged from that meeting was the suggestions that President Clinton should attend the APEC meeting. Other recollections may vary I guess, but Sandy Kristoff, who was a deputy assistant secretary for economic affairs, a civil service person, smart as a whip, very nice person, she and I both had the same idea, and we said why don't we have President Clinton go to Seattle? Why don't we have President Clinton go? He would meet all these people. Well, you know, you brainstorm and one thing leads to another and the thought is well, if the president is going to go, then we should invite the heads of state of all the APEC countries, his equivalents, in addition to the finance and economic ministers. Well, we batted that around and got excited with the idea and Winston Lord liked it. But I remember there were a couple of issues that were key to pulling this idea off. One was that both China and Taiwan attended APEC and they didn't seem to have any problem as long as it was at the finance and economic ministers' level, you know, little nuances were worked out, but it was thought that there was no way that the head of China would come if the head of Taiwan came. Well, that was an issue we thought could be worked out, that maybe there would be a slightly lower level official from Taiwan. Another issue was that ASEAN, the ASEAN countries, at that time I think they were Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand and the Philippines, operated by consensus.

Now, at that time prime minister of Malaysia was Mahathir who was very much I'll say anti-U.S., that's too strong because we did have a working relationship with him, but he liked to go his own way. The thought was that Mahathir wouldn't accept an invitation, wouldn't come and if he didn't come, the others wouldn't. Well, I remember this went on for weeks of discussion, I remember taking a position that if you offer the heads of these other countries the chance to come and spend a couple of days with the president of the United States, they are going to accept whether or not Mahathir accepts. The China thing will take a little nuancing, but it will work out, I insisted. But the ASEANs are not going to miss this opportunity. I agreed. So, the White House was brought onboard. I really think that the germ of the idea of having a heads of government summit at APEC was generated by Sandy and me and we pushed it hard and then of course you sell it to the appropriate people and Winston Lord sold it to the White House. What happened was Mahathir did not accept that invitation, but the other ASEAN leaders did just as I had said, they weren't going to miss the opportunity, all accepted. And something was worked out whereby China decided yes, they could go, whatever it was with a slightly lower level of representation from Taiwan. At any rate, President Clinton did go in December of '93 to Seattle, Washington and they set up a meeting facility on an island off Seattle. It was a raging success. Ever since that, every year, there has been a heads of government summit, an APEC summit, they call it. I'm proud about that.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: It certainly introduced Clinton to Asia, you know, what the issues were there and he met one on one with these people. It was really quite nice, quite nice.

Q: They also, I think from that, developed one for Latin America too, to get him involved with heads of state of Latin America. The idea to engage the president which started in Miami and has continued.

TULL: I'm not aware of that.

Q: Yes.

TULL: I'm not aware of that one, but it's certainly a good idea. As I say my focus was Asia, but that was very interesting. I view that as a highlight, I really do. I think Sandy Kristoff would probably have similar recollections of our role.

Backing up a little, I also went in '92 to the UN, had another good experience at the General Assembly session doing the Asia bit for our government. At one of those sessions, I forget which one, we were able to get rid of that ridiculous "Zionism is racism" nonsense against Israel. We got that withdrawn and we did some interesting, I think some worthwhile things on whaling, putting some limits to whaling and on these driftnet boats that the Japanese in particular were using, a lot of interesting issues. I had never done multilateral diplomacy efforts before. I found it an interesting field. I wouldn't want to do it permanently, but it was a broadening experience.

Another interesting UN-related experience I had while I was office director for regional affairs - I think this would have been in maybe the spring of '93, again my dates are fuzzy because I didn't keep detailed records - but we were gearing up to have elections in Cambodia. There was quite a large UN involvement in the process of preparing the elections with a large expenditure of money. I was tapped after this proposal had come out of the UN for putting advisors in, putting observers in, things of this nature to get this massive free election process undergoing in Cambodia to head a U.S. team that would meet with the contact group of UN ambassadors in New York very carefully vet this program with ideas for trimming the costs, but also making sure it was beefy enough in the necessary areas. I spent about a month in New York. We met at the French mission. It was a very interesting experience going through that UN proposal. After we had completed our review we met with the team from the United Nations and gave them our views. The UN team was headed by a former U.S. attorney general, Richard Thornburg.

Richard Thornburg was undersecretary of the UN for administration or something like that. This was a massive sum of money. The Department wanted to be able to go to congress and say we have looked at this hard and we have concluded the expense is justified. We've pushed for this and we've reduced this item, etc. I think the plan that emerged was a little bit improved, at least, by our efforts. So, what else?

Q: Well, during this time from the time you started with regional affairs was the bureau wrestling with the problem of post-Tiananmen Square in China? In other words China was certainly in bad odor for a while and I was wondering if it was something you were working on or had it been pretty well taken care of by the time you got there?

TULL: Well, it was something that was definitely not in my bailiwick because we had a very large China desk and they had just about exclusive purview over anything dealing with China. I know any time an issue would come up that would involve China as part of a group you'd always be sure you were going to get this input from the China office director. It was a hands-off kind of thing.

Under Winston Lord, I got involved in a lot of security issues. I wrote a paper about the developing regional security mechanisms, including recommendations to encourage and beef up the ASEAN Regional Forum, having our senior people attend and the like.

Dealing with China on human rights issues was always a problem. When President Clinton came in he brought a perspective for dealing with China a bit different from his predecessor, but when push came to shove I think he did the realistic thing. Some liberal elements in Congress were pushing to deny China most favored nation status. That issue came up every year. China's no good. They abuse human rights. Let's get rid of most favored nation status, which is an unfortunate term for a basic trading relation. It sounds like we're going to give you really special status and it isn't. It just says, we'll give you whatever we give the people who have the best deal; practically everybody in the world gets it. So, even Clinton when he came in and looked at the issues carefully ended up granting most favored nation status to China. We worked on human rights issues, but it was not a big issue for me personally because that was so held by the China desk, but representations were made on human rights issues to China. Nobody was happy about Tiananmen Square. That was in 1989, wasn't it? This was a few years later and our relations with China just moved on and you deal with whatever's there. So, no, it was not an issue that involved my office much.

Q: What were you looking towards as you sort of finished up with this regional affairs?

TULL: I was interested in another ambassadorship if possible. I had been given encouragement in that regard early on by Winston. He liked my work. As I say he dispatched me around to various conferences, one in particular that was quite interesting. I believe it was the South Pacific Forum. This meeting was being held in Nauru, which I knew a fair amount about from my days as an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Q: You're sitting on a hunk of guano, bird shit, essentially.

TULL: That's right. It's incredible. I remember I was on vacation in Italy with friends and of course I could never leave without leaving a half a dozen phone numbers. So the phone rings and my host who had been the British ambassador in Laos, he answers the phone, yes, oh, yes, she's here. Ambassador Tull, the State Department wants you, you know. They had tracked me down to find out would I be willing to go to Nauru and head up our delegation because Winston had a conflict. Now the heads of delegation of the other countries attending were the prime ministers and president. Suddenly they're not even getting an assistant secretary, they get me. I said, yes, it sounds interesting to me.

I think I got back from my leave one day and had one day to pack and left for Nauru. What an experience that was. I flew to Honolulu and because I knew I would be having an early flight the next day, I didn't take a fancy hotel, I wanted a simple little motel close to the airport, 10 minutes away. A CINCPAC rep met me, got me settled in and said we'll stay on top of this, ambassador, and we'll get you to the airport. The next morning I get up and I'm ready to go and the phone rings and this CINCPAC officer says, I'm awfully sorry, but the flight which is on Air Nauru is delayed. There's no sense in you going to the airport until we know what the situation is and we'll stay in touch. I'm probably in a minus five star facility, very basic, but anyway it was supposed to be for a one night's sleep. I hung around the room and a couple of hours later he called and he said, again, no definitive word, but it doesn't look promising for today. Well, this summit type meeting with all the heads of state was going to be that night. Now, our staff, the other members of the delegation including the office directors for the islands, Australia, New Zealand and the islands, she and at least one other Department type had already gone down a couple days before so I knew there was somebody there, but this was to be the big event with the prime ministers of Australia, New Zealand, the heads of the little countries in the area, Fiji, the others were going to be there for this meeting. According to the schedule we would have been arriving around 2:00 in the afternoon for a 7:00 dinner so it would have been good. Anyway, another phone call, sorry, really sorry Ambassador, they have canceled the flight. Okay. He says, I'll keep on it and we'll let you know. They say it should fly tomorrow. Okay. He says, I'll try to notify your staff what the situation is. I settled in in this dingy little room and went out and bought a magazine or two. I usually have a paperback with me or whatever and I had some papers to study so I'd know the issues to deal with during our individual sessions with the group, so I reviewed those some more. That was one of my less attractive days in Honolulu because it was such a poor hotel by my choice. At any rate, so the next day comes and yes the phone call comes and the plane is on schedule. Well, it turns out I was not alone in being left in Honolulu. The French ambassador to Washington who had been designated to go down and represent France was also stranded. A lot of disgruntled people got on this airplane and we stopped at least twice. I want to say we stopped at Easter Island, but it must be a different Easter Island is all I can say, it was not the one off of Chile.

Q: Chile, that's way down.

TULL: No, but people were saying it was something called Easter, but then we also stopped at Tarawa and we were told there would be quite a delay. Wonderful, another delay, but I did ask was there anybody, any vehicle available to take us around a little bit, just around the beach area.

Q: See where the battle was.

TULL: See where the battle was and see what remnants there were because as a little girl during the Second World War I had brothers in the service and I was well aware that at Tarawa there had been a major battle. We did that. I saw a couple of frigate birds flying overhead. Anyway, we then eventually get on this plane again and we fly to Nauru. Well, you have the most beautiful day. You have this gorgeous beautiful blue Pacific Ocean and the plane starts to descend and you think, there's got to be some land down there somewhere. Here's this tiny little fly speck of an island and its Nauru and we landed. I'll tell you seeing it from the air you can really see where all the mining of bat guano has taken place. It's just amazing. It was an interesting experience, but of course I missed the dinner. The heads of state had left, but it was a nice experience for the Office Director because she got to represent the U.S. with them.

Q: Who was that do you remember?

TULL: I forget. It was a woman, I forget, but she was very capable. She got to sit there and wonder what was going on. We found out later that apparently, Air Nauru had one airplane and the president's brother decided he wanted to visit another island that day. The airplane was put at his disposal and he flew off to this other island for some reason while we all cooled our heels in Honolulu, but I got to see Nauru. Not many professional diplomats have been to Nauru. The bulk of the island is a moonscape from the guano mining. A narrow coastal strip is where the small population lives.

Q: This is tape eight, side one with Terry Tull. Yes?

TULL: So, you were asking what I was thinking about for my next assignment. Fairly early on in my service with Winston Lord and his team, it was suggested that I would be a good candidate for the ambassadorship to Brunei. Winston was interested in getting a career person in that post. Since its independence from Britain we had only had political appointees there and it apparently in the eyes of the Department needed a professional. It was suggested that this would be a good possibility for me, not concretely offered, but strongly suggested. I remember on this one occasion in the spring of '93 I guess it was I had been sent over to Thailand. There were two conferences in Bangkok, one related to human rights at which the Department definitely wanted to have representation and I was asked if I would go. Winston made good use of the fact that I was an ambassador, so we'll send Ambassador Tull. I was assigned to go to this conference. When the embassy found out about it, well, they were happy, I knew people there. They said there's another conference that we would really welcome having Ambassador Tull attend. It's going to be about four or five days after the one that she's coming for. Is there any way in which you can consider having her stay and attend that other conference since she's in the region anyway. I liked the idea and I suggested that I could go to Laos in-between and see what type of changes had occurred. This was now '93. We had an ambassador there now I believe, yes, Charlie Salmon. I said I'd be happy to go up to Laos if its agreeable to the ambassador and just for my own curiosity see what's what and take a breather before coming back for the other conference.

That was worked out, Charlie, an old friend, was happy to have me. I attended this one conference which was interesting. I think it was a UN conference of some kind, the first one, and then the second one I don't recall the details. Between these two conferences I flew to Vientiane and saw what had happened in the years since I had left. They had made a lot of changes. At the time that I was leaving Laos in '86 they had pronounced that they were undertaking a new economic plan which would lead gradually to more private enterprise and things of that nature. I was frankly skeptical of it and hadn't seen much materialize from it while I was there. In the years that had passed they had really opened up quite a bit. Vientiane was alive with motorcycles and also the little type of Jeepney they have in Bangkok. Brightly colored little things, little vehicles, maybe the size of a station wagon in the old days and people would hop on and off, very colorfully painted. They had imported those to give people quick trips around town. There were cars, more cars on the street. A couple of new hotels had opened. You could actually see tourists around, whereas when I was chargï¿½ d'affaires there, I mean a car on the street was unusual. People would be on bicycles or walking, but I remember one of the main drags you'd drive down and maybe there'd be another car and it would be a government official or something and you'd have your vehicle. It was quite a contrast.

Likewise, the reception I got was a surprise. The ambassador, Charles Salmon who I had known in my Vietnam days and had stayed in touch with, he said well they're happy to have you. The government officials want to meet with you. We've got appointments laid on and so it was really interesting. I met these folks and they acted like it was old home week. Ambassador Tull, how nice to see you again. I'm thinking well, you didn't treat me this well when I was here, but hey, okay, very good, you know. The next day Charlie shows me the Lao newspaper, the government newspaper, my picture on the front page with this minister I had met with and they had translated it to something about I had come back on a good will mission or whatever it was, so it was quite interesting.

Q: Oh, yes.

TULL: To see the changes and everything. Well, another interesting thing happened when I was there. I got a phone call at Charlie's from George Moose who was Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the time. I had known George also in Vietnam and subsequently. George asked if I would be interested in being the African bureau's choice to be ambassador to Burundi. Rolling around in the back of my brain, Burundi, isn't that near Rwanda and isn't that a horrible place with problems, with really major problems? I said, "Well, George I'm just delighted that you would think of me. You know I have no African experience." He says, "No, but you've got good experience. I'd be pleased to put you up as our candidate." I said, "George, thank you so much. Let me, give me a day, okay?" "Yes, no problem." "Just give me a day to think it over and I'll be back in touch with you." I knew in the back of my brain that Winston Lord was thinking Brunei, but it hadn't been concretely offered. I got the human rights report, which are wonderful volumes of information. I got out that book and sure enough Burundi was what I thought it was and I'm looking at it and I'm thinking oh my gosh. On the other hand, one doesn't turn down an offer. If you're seriously interested, you've got a few more years. It would be nice to go out as a serving ambassador, to retire as a serving ambassador. I thought it over and there had been some improvements at that point, we're talking '93. It was before the Rwanda genocide, but at any rate, I thought, yes, okay, I'm going to tell George that he can put me forward. In the back of my calculating little brain was the fact that as soon as I got back to Washington I had an obligation to tell the East Asia bureau, Winston, through his deputy at least if I didn't deal directly with him that he should know that I had agreed to have my name put forward for this other ambassadorship. That's what I did and I think Winston was away, whatever, and I dealt with his deputy. I think it was Lynn Pascoe, I forget, but Lynn might have been the senior deputy at that time. I said, "Look, I feel I have to tell you that I was approached to see if I'd be willing to have my name put forward as an ambassador, the Africa bureau's choice for Burundi, and I have accepted." "But we want you for Brunei." I said, "Well, I'm delighted to hear that, but this was a real firm offer and I didn't feel that I had that firm a commitment here." "I'll double check it, but yes. I'm sure, but I'll be back." He did talk with Winston and yes, I was the bureau choice to be ambassador to Brunei. My understanding of it was that when the Deputy's meeting which determines the State Department's choices for these embassies came up, my name was put up by two bureaus, from Africa and also from East Asia. The word that I got indirectly was that the White House had a choice for Burundi, a political appointee wanted Burundi, and therefore Winston pushed very hard for me to get Brunei. We want Tull for Brunei. The White House agreed, so I was selected to be ambassador to Brunei.

Q: So, you were at Brunei from when to when?

TULL: I went over to Brunei in early December I think, late November, possibly early December of '93.

Q: You were there until when?

TULL: Until my retirement April 30th, '96.

Q: What was the situation in Brunei, I mean sort of political and economical?

TULL: There was no political situation in Brunei.

Q: There's no economic situation either was there?

TULL: They were drowning in money.

Q: Where do you stack it?

TULL: No, it was interesting. One of the ironic things was that as a result of this effort we had made to establish this APEC summit the Sultan of Brunei was coming to Seattle and he would be part of this gathering that would meet with President Clinton. Because of the protocol of not meeting with the head of state before you present credentials, it was determined that I could not go there and meet the Sultan. He went to Seattle and I went to Brunei. Once I got there it took a week or so to present credentials.

Politically, there was really no political situation in Brunei to speak of; the Sultan was a total dictator, a benevolent dictator who seemed to be genuinely loved by his people. The same family had ruled Brunei for 600 years. There had been a fair amount of inbreeding, but I found the Sultan to be certainly of adequate intelligence for his position. There were no political parties, there was no national assembly. There was a government mechanism, of course, with ministries and ministers, but they answered to the Sultan and he answered to God, I guess. This was the way that worked. Being a political officer by nature I was always interested in seeing was there anything out there, what's going on, is there unrest, and I couldn't find it. There really wasn't much. There were a few cases stemming from many years before as far as we were aware, a few cases of political prisoners, people who had been rounded up at a time when there was a mini invasion/revolution that they launched from Indonesia I think it was. At that time a few folks were rounded up and put in jail and you never really could find out what had happened to them. They were probably still alive, but at any rate there was very little political foment in Brunei.

The country economically was thriving on oil and natural gas money. The population of the country was very small, and the Sultan who lived like an incredibly wealthy person nonetheless shared a lot of that money. A lot of that money got down to the average person in various ways. When I was there it was probably a little better for the average person than it is now because in the last couple of years they went through a bad spell with some corruption on the part of the Sultan's brother apparently and also when oil prices went down. When I was there oil prices were at a reasonable level, production was good. There was absolutely no tax of any kind in the country, no income tax, no real estate tax, no sales tax, no taxes whatsoever. Free education through the university level for those capable of benefiting from it. Free health care. Most people who were Bruneians worked for the government in various capacities with a very relaxed type work day. The government was the largest employer. The grunt work in the country was done by imported laborers from the Philippines and Indonesia, but the Philippines were the largest single contingent. The average Bruneian would not mow a lawn or do anything of that nature. The grunt work was done by foreigners. It wasn't a bad life for Bruneians. Being a Muslim country, the government gave interest-free loans or near to it for the purchase of your home. There were dirt cheap trips organized by the government to take people to Saudi Arabia for the hajj, the pilgrimage that Muslims are supposed to make once in their life if they can. It was hard to find a lot of discontent in Brunei at that time.

One area of concern was the fact that the Chinese element in the community was discriminated against on the question of citizenship. They tended to be intelligent professionals or business people, the Chinese, and they'd been there a few generations, but the Bruneian constitution made getting citizenship very difficult for non-Malays, including being able to speak the language of Brunei, a variety of the Malay language. That was a little difficult for the Chinese. On the plus side, all these tax-free elements I mentioned made it easy if you were a good business person to profit, to have nice homes and to live well, but you couldn't really participate in the sense of being a full citizen. Of course no Bruneian could participate in the political life of their country, either, as there was, in effect, no political life there.

With regard to religion there were also constraints. Brunei is a Muslim country, a moderate Muslim country, but with an element in the country personified by the education minister at that time who wanted a tougher, more fundamentalist approach to the Islamic religion. The Sultan, in my view, walked maybe a middle path. He was certainly not a fundamentalist conservative Muslim, but he would give a little nod this way to conservatives and then a nod to the more liberal approach, back and forth, so they didn't get extreme re the practice of Islam. I mean they didn't have too many religious police going around. There were some. I heard about them sometimes from ministers' wives. They would tell me sometimes that they were really annoyed because their daughter or someone had been criticized by somebody or they had gotten a phone call because their daughter was seen out at night, for example. But basically it wasn't as bad as in many Muslim countries.

As an indication, women could work anywhere they wished to work. I'm talking Bruneian women. They were encouraged to cover their hair, but not compelled to. One of the Sultan's sisters flatly refused. She was one of the princesses, and she didn't do it. They had beautiful colored gowns, the type that Malay women would wear, beautiful gowns encrusted with jewels and some of them would have a very pretty matching headdress. It wouldn't cover their eyes or anything of that nature it would just be a lovely little scarf type thing. You wouldn't see hair, but it would be very nice. If they didn't choose to wear it, they weren't beat up about it either. They could drive cars. They could do all of that by themselves. It was a decent life for women considering Brunei was a Muslim country. The right wanted to push Islamic practice a little further. For example, the education minister introduced a requirement that from kindergarten on or preschool the little girls had to cover their hair. Now you think of little four and five year olds with little headscarves on. That's a drag, running around the play yard. As an independent woman, I did not think that was a particularly good thing to do. Essentially I think the Sultan walked a bit of a tightrope, but leaning on the side of liberalization.

One element, for example, apparently the previous year to my being there one of the stores or hotels had put up a Christmas tree and they had it taken down under government order because you don't have things like that in a Muslim country. Well, when I was there, there were Christmas trees with some lights up in some business establishments and nobody came and tore them down.

On the religious question, there was nil tolerance, I'd say nil tolerance for the expansion of other religions. The Chinese were represented in both the Catholic Church and also in the Anglican Church. So, when I was there, there were at most two Catholic priests. I think there might have been just one Catholic priest in the entire country. He was Chinese, Bruneian. He joined a religious order and was working overseas in Pakistan as a missionary. At a certain point, several years before I got there, the Bruneian government expelled all foreign priests from the country. There had been mostly Australian priests, white Australian priests, and ministers, too. They were expelled. Brunei was not going to have any foreign priests there. The Catholic Church called upon this ethnic Bruneian priest to abandon his missionary work and come back to Brunei which he did.

I happen to be a practicing Catholic. The Catholic Church in Bandar Seri Begawan was a very small wooden structure with a reasonably small concrete area outside. Now you had huge numbers of Filipinos in Brunei doing grunt work, maids, construction workers, things like that and Filipinos go to church. The core I guess of the traditional Catholic Church there before all this influx had been Chinese, so there were frictions between the Chinese Catholics and the foreign Filipino Catholics in terms of the services and who should do what and what are you doing running the church and this kind of thing. The priest I think did a good job of trying to balance off both group's concerns. I remember being really surprised the first time I went to church. It was a mob scene. The outdoor area was filled with people standing, sitting, whatever they could do, but it was really crowded. Of course they had loud speakers so those outside could hear the service. I thought well, this is a good sign for me, the next time I'm going to have to come a lot earlier. I was just standing in the crowd. Of course, the arrival an American ambassador, particularly if she is a female, is news. In some countries you get a lot of pictures in the paper, and Brunei was no exception. One of the Chinese ushers spotted me and came running out and said I had to come into the church and I said, no, I'm late, I'll stay here. He said, no, come on. I got in church and I thought well, all right I'll go with this. People seemed to be happy and nodded and smiled as I went by. Nothing would do, but he takes me right up to the front, moves somebody out of their seat and plops me down. I thought I don't like this, this is not right, me being a egalitarian democrat, but then I thought it over and I thought, you know, again this sends a signal to the government that what they're doing to the Catholic Church is not going to go unnoticed because the American government cares about people's rights to practice their religion. There's the ambassador sitting right there. I also think at that time, the Korean ambassador was Catholic when I first got there. I spoke with the priest afterwards. I said, you know I felt really bad, I got here and there were no spaces and they insisted on bringing me in. He says, no, we really appreciate that. He said, that's great, really wonderful to have you here. Visible to everybody, it's an element of additional protection.

The core element of both the catholic and the one small Anglican Church was the Chinese, who generally were wealthy people. The church had plenty of money. The Catholic Church, in particular, wanted to buy land and build a bigger church. They were thwarted every step they took. They were just denied, denied, denied permission by the government with one excuse after another. They were not told no, we don't want a bigger Catholic Church. It was just, well, no, that land is not available. The government might want that for something later. The whole time I was there the Catholics were never able to expand from this very small church and the extremely crowded conditions for these poor people even though money was not an object. They could have written a check and built a nice church, but they were forbidden from it and I believe the same thing happened with regard to the Anglican Church (although most Filipinos were Catholic, so the numbers of Anglicans were smaller than the Catholics). The government had not closed these churches, but the religions were prohibited from proselytizing. I mean you have to realize in Saudi Arabia you wouldn't even have a visible Catholic or Anglican Church, but everything generally in Brunei was in moderation, but with pressure being exerted.

Q: I was wondering with Brunei being known as a place with lots of money and I know I've talked to people, I think it was Barry King who was saying that after the Gulf War we were sitting around and sort of hat in hand trying to get money from Brunei. Was Brunei seen as, from the people in policy elements, seen as sort of a cash cow that we should go to from time to time to get money for this or that during your time?

TULL: That's maybe a little crassly stated. We knew they were wealthy and we did hit them up for various initiatives for example on KEDO, Korean Energy Development Organization, I did approach the government and got commitments for assistance from Brunei for that. Also for Palestinian aid. They came up with money for Palestinian aid.

Q: These are quite legitimate concerns with which we're paying a lot, too.

TULL: No, well, I don't think it was overdone. I mean the most embarrassing situation they had preceded my time when the government of Brunei was approached to provide money to aid the Iran Contras and they did. Then it turned out that the money was put in a wrong bank account and apparently it was never used anyway. That was a bit of an embarrassment, but that preceded me by a few years. No, I have to say that I was treated very well by the Sultan and I would say by his ministers. He accepted the idea of having a woman ambassador. I was the first resident woman ambassador in Brunei. There might have been someone based out of country who would come in a couple of times a year, but I know I was the first resident one and he handled that very well. He treated me like he would any other ambassador.

Now, interestingly, a couple of the older elements of his administration did not quite share that view. The first time that I had an occasion to be at the palace with the entire diplomatic corps would have been at the conclusion of Ramadan when you have the celebration of Aidilfitri. You have three days of visiting people and wishing everybody well. The Sultan had a reception for the diplomatic corps in the palace. Now, the palace is another piece of work, 1,700 rooms I think, incredible. Just absolutely incredible. Wild. At any rate this would have been in January 1994, I think. I presented credentials when the Sultan got back from Seattle. I think I presented credentials in December. That was a very nice formal situation. You had to rehearse for it and it was very nice and I had a good discussion with the Sultan. Then this would have been just a few weeks later, the first big opportunity to share a reception in the Palace. The diplomatic corps was ushered into this main reception room of the palace to meet with the Sultan. When I went into the room the ministers' wives were all seated off to the right and the spouses, the wives of the ambassadors were all also seated off to the right, chit chatting with each other. I was not a spouse of an ambassador I was an ambassador, so I remained in the central area with the ambassadors and ministers. I had a little company because the Philippine chargï¿½ d'affaire was also a woman. Her ambassador was ill and was in the Philippines a good bit of the time so she was also there.

We're there and chit chatting and I feel it's my job to meet these ministers. I had met some of them and so I greeted them. Suddenly this older Bruneian gentleman came over to me and said, "Women over there. Women have to be over there." I said, "How do you do? I'm the American Ambassador, Theresa Tull." "Women over there, women have to be over there." I said, "Well, actually I believe that's for the wives. I'm the American Ambassador, but thank you." I edged away and he started to follow me. I spotted the deputy foreign minister and so I went over and explained what was happening. I said, "You know, I'm not going to go over and sit with the wives." He said, "No, no." He looked a little nervous. He was a little jumpy. I said, "That gentleman is telling me that I have to go over there, but I'm not going over there." He said, "Oh, no." He still looked nervous. The Philippine chargï¿½ had gotten the same word from this man, but she'd moved with me to the Deputy Foreign Minister.

At this point the Sultan and his family came in. On this particular occasion he came with his wife and his children and we lined up by protocol rank, in terms of when you had presented your credentials, so I was at the end of the line, the chargï¿½ was next to me. The Sultan couldn't have been nicer, just completely normal, shook hands which I discovered subsequently a lot of Muslims don't want to do, to touch a woman's hand, but no he extended his hand and we did that and we chit chatted. His wife was with him, and the children. After this formal phase was completed, the wives came out from their area and everybody mingled. I didn't get to eat much of the delicious food because I was working the floor. I also wanted a few minutes with the Sultan like the other ambassadors were getting, so I managed that. Nothing substantive, just to let him know who I was and I did my job. I had to say it was a little disturbing initially to have to deal with an attempt to chase me to the other side of the room.

Ironically the following year at the same reception, a similar incident occurred. An officious woman from the palace staff told me, "Oh, no, no, you have to go over there (with the women)." I said, "Well, no, I'm the American Ambassador. I'm not the wife of the ambassador, so I'll remain here with the ambassadors." "No, no, you have to go over there." I thought, lady, you're going to have to get a crane, I'm not leaving this area. By this time we were starting to line up in protocol rank. By this time there are a few more ambassadors behind me who had presented credentials after I had. She was getting a little vocal. I spotted a minister who was very close to the Sultan and I had gotten to be pretty close to him and his family and I left my spot in the line. I went to him and I said, "Do you see that lady there?" He said, "Yes." I said, "She is insisting that I have to go over there with the women and I'm not going to do that." He said, "I am so sorry. I thought we had sorted that out. She must be with the palace. She's not with the foreign ministry." He said, "You just ignore it and if it happens again, if she really tries to move you again, just come to me." I said, "I've been here a year and a half now." He said, "I know, but they've got a slightly different arrangement this year." Again I stayed where I was. When the Sultan came in his wife was separated from him. He only came in with his sons and the wife and the daughters went over to the other side of the room and they met with the spouses. Again there was no way in the world that I was going to go over there. No problem. Again the Sultan was as gracious as can be. As I say any time I needed to meet with the Sultan I got very quick favorable responses, even when it was a little unreasonable as far as I was concerned in terms of deadline. When you get something on a Friday, the Department would sometimes insist they had to have this answer from the Sultan by Monday. You know, they've probably been fighting it out in Washington for two weeks. But the Sultan always came through for me, I have to say.

I had several occasions to go in and seek funds for various causes that we were pushing. I usually got a favorable answer, maybe not as large a chunk of money as they might have come up with, but $5 million or whatever, nothing to sneeze at. They were receptive to what I thought were legitimate appeals. I knew they'd have no trouble coming up with money for the Palestinians. I thought they might be a little more generous, but I think it was $5 million. It turned out it probably went down a rathole anyway, but no, he responded. The Sultan dealt with me very straightforwardly, very charmingly I would have to say. I had a good relationship with him.

One of the things that ambassadors are these days are sales people. I was frequently required, and I was perfectly willing, to push U.S. products even though they were in some instances military products. We were pushing hard for Black Hawk helicopters to be sold there because they were in competition with the British, a couple of other outfits were pushing hard, so I knew the British were pushing hard for various things and I figured it's my job, too, so I pushed hard and we did get the helicopter sale. I pushed for Boeing for Bruneian Airlines. They were pretty committed to Boeing so that was good. I met with a lot of defense contractors who would come through and we would set up meetings for them and attempt to get other sales. There was not a great deal of room really in Brunei for the import of U.S. products because the market was so small so it would be hard to interest too many exporters. As far as Bruneian products were concerned I think we did take some of their oil. One of their big problems with their economy was the lack of diversification. The government talked about the need to diversify because all they had really was oil and gas and a population that was not the most energetic skilled group. The citizens were used to working in government offices. Occasionally the government would make efforts to bring in a clothing manufacturing company, but inevitably it would be Filipino workers who did the work, with one or two Bruneians theoretically at the head of the company. It really didn't do a great deal to broaden their economy.

We had good military relations with Brunei, interestingly so because the British were very much the dominant foreign power there, which was to be expected given the history. But the British had a large contingent of active duty officers who were assigned to the Bruneian military in various capacities, principally logistics, ordering major purchases, things of that nature, pushing goods but also helping to train the military. The Sultan was defended by Gurkhas, the tradition of the British from Nepal. The British had quite an "in" as far as having access militarily, but the Sultan was always happy to see U.S. military visitors come to the country. He relied on the 7th fleet there, the Pacific fleet. We had a lot of high level visitors. I don't think we got CINCPAC himself when we were there, but we had his deputy, we got the head of the army in the region, we got the head of the navy in the region, vice commander, and a couple very senior officers from Washington who came out to just tour the area. I was always happy to have them. I had an excellent defense attachï¿½, Colonel Richard Welker, who was based in Singapore as the army attachï¿½ in Singapore. We developed an excellent relationship and in Brunei he was the defense attachï¿½ so he could have a broader base of involvement. He was a marvelous help. He liked the leeway that I gave him and I had complete confidence in him. He was instrumental in getting ship visits and would help with the arrangements and enjoyed military exercises and things of that nature to increase the U.S. visibility to let Brunei know that it was not alone, you know, that little tiny Brunei wasn't alone in Southeast Asia and that it was highly regarded by the U.S. We had good military to military relations there. In fact I gave my farewell reception on a visiting navy ship because it was scheduled for just about the time I was going to leave and I had always had some kind of an event, a reception, on the visiting ships and thought well, I can't really do this one night and then expect the same crowd to come two days later. Let's be sensible and look at it from a sensible financial point of view and it was a lot of fun. The navy was delighted to do it. The reception went over very well with the Bruneians and the diplomatic corps.

Q: While you were there were there any problems with the Bruneians with Malaysia or Indonesia?

TULL: No, no, none at all, that had ended several years before. Decades earlier there was stress when there were incursions over the border from Indonesia with elements and expat Bruneians who had come into Brunei to attempt to overthrow the Sultanate. It was very frightening for the Bruneian government at the time, but the incursion was quickly defeated. I don't think the Sultan was even in power then, it might have been his father. I would say this took place in the late '60s or early '70s before they were independent. In fact I believe that the Sultan's father who was Sultan at the time used that incursion as an excuse to extend the British Protectorate. He was not eager to become independent at that point. But no, ASEAN, the Association of the South East Asian Nations to which all these countries belonged, which was developed in the late 1960s to curb some of these differences between these countries who were frightened about what would happen when Vietnam fell.

Anyway, the ASEAN countries got together and thought we've got to at least start talking to each other and stop this border nonsense and insurgency and accept the status quo. They were frightened because particularly Thailand and Indonesia were the famous dominos that the U.S. was concerned would be the next to fall to Communism when Vietnam became totally communist. Those countries believed it, too and they formed ASEAN. Gradually they began working together better. But no serious problems existed between these countries when I was in Brunei. There are frequent meetings of ASEAN. In fact one of the reasons I was pleased to be named ambassador to Brunei at the time is that the ASEAN foreign ministers meetings and the ASEAN regional forum was going to be hosted by Brunei in the summer of 1995. I thought it would be very interesting to host the Secretary of State for these meetings.

That was one of the reasons I was pleased to accept this ambassadorship and in the summer of '95 then Brunei hosted the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting and the ASEAN regional forum. Secretary of State Warren Christopher came with an entourage of too many. We took over - we fought for this - but there was only one decent hotel in Brunei at the time, but others were being built, but one that was very convenient to the embassy was the Sheraton and we were able to get almost the entire hotel which is what it took to have the U.S. contingent. We had an incredible number of people. I had asked the Secretary's people to please keep the size of the delegation as small as you can, but I think we had about 100 people come with the Secretary. Awful. They thought that was small I think. He travels with all the Intel and everything else that he might need. We had secretaries of state or foreign ministers from all the ASEAN countries which by this time had expanded. I believe that membership had bumped up to 10 with Vietnam itself joining. Also present were all the dialogue partners, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, China, countries with an interest in the Pacific, Korea, South Korea. It was an impressive gathering. I wanted to get the Secretary to the embassy, but his staff said that was impossible, but he did reserve about 20 minutes to meet with the staff at his hotel. He posed for pictures and he was quite gracious. It would have been good if he'd seen the embassy. I used to joke that we were the only American Embassy in the world on the top of a Chinese restaurant.

I had had a very favorable opinion of Secretary Christopher back when I was in the human rights bureau. I believe he was deputy Secretary of State, but he had the particular portfolio of human rights and cared about it deeply. I had seen him in action and felt that he was a very good person. I have to admit to being a little disappointed in Brunei. I think I'll attribute it more maybe to the arrogance of the Secretary's staff and their approach that this was God and what do you, the Ambassador, know. For example, the opening session, was held in the Bruneian conference center, chaired by the foreign minister who was the Sultan's brother and a decent man. I had made it clear to the Secretary's staff that it was going to start at a certain time. It was important to be there, that things started on time in Brunei. So, what happens. Everybody is there, all of the foreign ministers are in their places and I'm looking to see where is the Secretary of State. I got my staff on phones trying to track him down, and he was late. I didn't think that was very nice. He was staying at a hotel that was only two miles away. I had really emphasized to his staff that Brunei was a place where things start on time. All of the other foreign ministers - China, Russia, etc. had made it on time. I think the foreign minister might have actually called the meeting to order, and then I walked in with the Secretary of State and his delegation. I just thought that was not the way to go.

Another tradition of these ASEAN meetings is that on the final night there's a kind of oh, let your hair down, have a fun type affair and the various delegations and ministers get up and they do skits. Well, I don't fault the Secretary for this. He wasn't too keen on doing a skit. The rest of us put together something and we're going to do a skit. Well, again, I made it clear to his staff that all of the foreign ministers were going to meet in the anteroom in the reception area with the foreign minister of Brunei, the host, and when they were all gathered then they would walk into the main ballroom to their tables. They were all going to gather by 7:00 p.m. and they would meet for a few minutes with the foreign minister of Brunei. 7:00 comes and everybody is there except Secretary Christopher. 7:10, 7:15 and I'm getting concerned, queries from vice foreign ministers as to where is the Secretary of State, all the other ministers are waiting for him so the planned evening activity could begin. I had my staff on the phone pressing for the Secretary to come to the meeting site. One of my staff told me that one of the Secretary's staff was really indignant that I was pressing them about this, that the Secretary would be there when he finished. Well, what he had to finish was he had decided to have a little cocktail party for his staff to celebrate the end of the meeting. They're there back in the hotel from what I hear having cocktails and foreign ministers from 14 or 15 different countries are cooling their heels waiting for him. He bopped in I guess around 7:30. In this case the foreign minister, Prince Mohammed, did wait until he got there, but as soon as he walked in the room, they all came out and walked into the dining room. Now, that kind of thing irritates me because what does courtesy cost when you are the only remaining world superpower, can't you show courtesy to a little country?

Another irritant related to the visit involved security concerns. Everybody was required to pass through a metal detector on entering into the conference center. Well, the word came from the Secretary's staff, he doesn't go through metal detectors. My staff asked if there was a particular reason, thinking does he have a pacemaker or any problems of this nature? The staff would not respond except to insist that the Secretary would not go through a metal detector. I told me staff to ask again if there's a medical reason. I think eventually we were told it wasn't, or else it was none of our business and butt out, but Christopher wasn't going to go through that metal detector. My deputy, a decent, competent person, pushed hard with the Bruneians to get an exception for the Secretary, all the way up to the vice minister of foreign affairs. A more substantive person was the permanent secretary, a fine person and very capable diplomat. H told my deputy that Prince Mohammed, the Sultan's brother, is going through the metal detector, and since he is, everybody is going to do so. Unless there's some medical reason not to do so, everybody has to go through it. I told him to tell the Secretary's staff that that's the case. The Secretary will go through the detector like everybody else. But the word came back that I had to make a personal appeal. Again I asked if there was a medical reason, a pace maker? No - finally I got the answer - no, there wasn't. My deputy is saying, they're insisting you have to do something. I said, okay, I'll make an approach to the permanent secretary. I went to the permanent secretary and I said, I understand my deputy has been to you more than once on this issue of a metal detector. He sighed. I said, well, consider that I am making a personal request to you. This is what I'm doing now. I have been asked to raise the issue at my level. He looked at me and I said, but I'm just going to report whatever your response is. He said, there's no change, the prince is going through the detector. It is a hard and fast rule. Everybody goes through the metal detector. I said, fine, I've raised it. So, I'll tell the Secretary's staff I raised it and the answer is no. So, he went through the metal detector, and lived to tell the tale. But I mean this type of thing is nonsense.

Q: Well, it sounds like the staff is playing a game isn't it or not?

TULL: That's what I thought.

Q: That's what I gather all the time.

TULL: Trying to exert power? Yes.

Q: I mean, again and again you find that the people around a high important, particularly the Americans tend to make these demands. You know they're really down at an essentially low level.

TULL: I know it.

Q: But they're exerting their power.

TULL: Yes, they're trying to and they're leaving a nasty taste. As I say when I found out that the Secretary was having cocktails with his staff and keeping all of the others foreign ministers waiting, I was angry. We had spelled out the drill minutely on is schedule. Maybe he never looked at his schedule, maybe I'm angry at him when I should just be angry at the staff. It would seem to me that you would at least skim it and see you know, this is what you do, you have to get there at this time and do this. Why come halfway around the world and leave a nasty taste in peoples' mouths? Now, one thing that that session did develop, we were having a very difficult time with China at that time. I don't know whether the cause was one of our planes making an emergency landing in China or something else, but our relations had been in the freezer for months.

Q: Was that when we had actually put some rockets into the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade?

TULL: What time are we talking about here? It might have been.

Q: This was Kosovo.

TULL: Yes, that was in the early '90s, wasn't it?

Q: Mid '90s.

TULL: It might well have been that. In any event, our relations had soured. We wanted to reengage with China at a high level. The thought was that since the Chinese foreign minister and Secretary Christopher would both be at these meetings that maybe we could arrange a bilateral on the fringes. That was done and it took the chill off the relations. It was the first contact we had had at a high level for many months, so that was a positive result of the ASEAN meeting.

The next day after the dinner, the last event on the program was a press conference to be attended by all the foreign ministers and a very sizable press corps who had come for these meetings because we also had the regional forum discussions which were security related. There was a large contingent of press, some from the U.S. and Australia, New Zealand and the other countries that were involved in the meeting and it was to be a press conference by the foreign ministers. That morning I was informed by the Secretary that he wanted me to handle that press conference, that he was taking off for Malaysia. Again it was on the schedule and whatever he had worked it out that they would take off an hour earlier than originally planned and they would head to Malaysia. I asked if he had any particular points he would like me to make. We talked about it for maybe 10 minutes or so in the car as I was taking him to the airport. So I learned with virtually no notice that I was going to get up there on the stage with all these foreign ministers, and I'm hardly at their rank, and it looks again as if the Secretary was ducking out of a commitment. Of course, the first question of the press conference was directed to me. I forget what it was, but anyway I handled it. Then another question to me and after that it was quite clear that I was the ambassador, I wasn't the Secretary of State, so all the other questions were directed to foreign ministers. It was a rare experience, sharing the stage with the foreign ministers of various countries.

We got a sizable group of people in from the Department to help with the arrangements for the Secretary's visit in advance. They were decent sorts. They worked well with my staff. We had a very small staff in Brunei. Initially my inclination was to involve myself in the details of the arrangements. But it became clear that that wasn't necessary, the advance team, working with my staff could handle it well. I backed off and confined myself to the substance of the meetings, including meeting with the Bruneians to draft the final communiquï¿½, which are always worked out in advance of the actual meetings. I worked on these issues. I think, all told, the logistical arrangements, and the substantive ones, were handled well.

On the first day of the meetings we were notified that there was a bomb threat at my residence. Now the Secretary's security people had brought in a sniffer dog which fortunately we knew about in advance so we were able to assuage the concerns of a Muslim country about bringing in a dog. The team kindly went out to the residence and checked it out and didn't find anything. I remember when the Secretary met with my staff at his hotel the sniffer dog handler came over to me and said, "Please, can I have your picture with the dog?" So I posed with the dog and the handler by a flag. I told the handler, "Well, I appreciate his service." Thank you very much. I shook the dog's paw.

I might back up and say a word about the embassy itself in Brunei. I'd like to say that to my knowledge it's the only American Embassy in the world that's on top of a Chinese restaurant. It was in an office building in downtown Bandar Seri Begawan. There was a very good Chinese restaurant on the floor below us and we occupied a good chunk of the floor above it. Of course we had no security whatsoever, not that much was needed. We had a very small staff, perhaps five Americans and ten local employees. When I first went to Brunei I knew that the deputy there, the number two gentleman who had been chargï¿½ for a reasonable period of time between ambassadors, had a poor reputation for performance that seemed to follow him. I knew that he was not exactly a winner, but he did things right in terms of settling me in and arranging introductions. He was a decent enough human being. But the day after Christmas (now, I had presented credentials maybe two weeks before) he is notified that he's selected out and he must report out to Washington no later than like March 1st or something like that. He's gone, finished with the Department, no ifs, ands or buts. I'm thinking, my God, no matter how inadequate he is he's a warm body and he was the only political officer there. I mean there was the ambassador, a communicator, this gentleman who was the political officer and we had a GSO and a consular officer, it was consular/admin. We had about maybe eight to ten Bruneians there, none of whom were Bruneian; they were all foreigners, you know, from the area. I'm thinking, I'm going to be flying solo if they pull him out now. The assignment cycle isn't until the summer. This is just ridiculous. I cabled the Department and appealed for an extension, listing all the reasons why he should not be pulled out just then. At least let him stay until the summer, I asked. My plea was rejected. I might have bought him another 30 days at max. He left and that was the end of that. I didn't get a replacement until at least August. I was juggling a lot of balls and trying to put the place back on a more professional level. Fortunately, the admin/consular officer was an excellent young woman who had felt stifled under the departed deputy. She flourished frankly with me there and the communicator I remember paid me a good compliment because he was due to be out in about two months. He said, "Gee, Ambassador, if I'd known we were going to have a good person like you, I would have extended." I thought that was nice and he did get a replacement on a reasonable time frame, so we weren't left without a communicator. As I said, it was a very small staff and I did not feel well served by having my deputy away with no replacement lined up for several months because of our small staff. We were supposed to be a "special embassy". I didn't see where we were freed or spared from much in the assignments being made. I mean you would get half a dozen appeals for representation on UN votes or votes in various multilateral institutions. You'd have to go and to try get the Bruneians to support the U.S. candidate for this or the U.S. position on that. We had to go in for various financial appeals. At the same time we were supposed to do a little reporting about what was taking place in the country, as much as we could manage. At the same time I was trying to straighten out the administration of the post. It was a killer of a job. You would not think that Brunei would be a huge pressure post, but when you don't have staff, when you lose your political officer, it was very hard. In addition the staff had problems a little bit similar to Guyana in terms of off-duty entertainment. For me, it was in one way like going from an economic basket case to Nordstroms in the sense that if you wanted to buy anything in Brunei it was there, in contrast to Guyana. They had material goods galore. But it was a Muslim country an entertainment outside the home was scarce. You could not legally buy an alcoholic beverage outside of your home. They allowed diplomats to import alcohol for their own personal use, but if we went out to a restaurant, you couldn't have wine or liquor. Occasionally the Sheraton Hotel would get a little frisky and maybe bring in a bottle of wine for special guests, but basically alcohol was prohibited. There was one movie theater in town that I understand was rat-ridden and showed a lot of old Indian films from India. It was primarily patronized by the expatriate worker community, the Filipinos and people like that. There was not a great deal for the staff to do in the way of entertainment.

There was a club with a swimming pool and tennis court, so most of them belonged to that. The DCM's house had a small swimming pool. My residence pool was open to the staff, but it was a 30 minute drive from where most of them lived. You could go out and buy the goods you needed, but you didn't have a whole lot of amusement opportunities. It was a pretty monotonous place to be for young active Americans. Fortunately for morale, we had regular pouch runs to Singapore. Someone went to Singapore every week, over the weekend, so each staffer, including the ambassador got to get away to Singapore roughly every six weeks. I followed that tradition, too because I would have gone stir crazy if I had stayed there without a break. Also Singapore provided certain essential services for us, certain backup. There were some economic interests to pursue. I would meet with U.S. businessmen there looking for opportunities, and we discussed the status of certain contracts they were trying to get and I felt was worthwhile. But we did get our people to Singapore. It was not the easiest assignment in the world for staff. I mean if you're the ambassador or senior officer working up the ladder, you can put up with a lot of isolation and deprivation, and not having much opportunity for a recreational life. If you're there as staff you're not going to get the same job satisfaction that the ambassador would get or that a senior officer would get, so it was not the easiest post for those folks. I had some good people there. You always end up with a loser or two, but I had some good folks. In general it worked out.

In the summer of 1994 I did get a good person as a DCM. He worked out well. He was a competent drafter. He had a wife and two children with him. He wasn't as diehard committed to working the hours that I had foolishly done all my State Department career life, but I think it was also clear that he wasn't going to make ambassador, either. He was a good solid officer who after he had been there maybe a year came down with cancer, Hodgkin's Lymphoma. This became apparent right after the ASEAN meetings, in the summer of 1995. He was diagnosed not long after those meetings and he had to leave post. Did I ever get a replacement for him? No, I didn't. I worked without a deputy/political officer for the rest of my tour.

I had decided to retire December 31, 1995, but no deputy had been assigned to the post. I was feeling ticked off that the Department couldn't come up with a replacement and get him over there. I asked for a TDY person, someone to hold the fort, but that didn't happen. When it became clear the Department didn't have anybody lined up to replace me and no interim chargï¿½ on tap, I offered to extend my service until the 30th of April 1996, but I need the month of January off because my plans were made on the basis of me retiring December 31st. I had arranged to take a trip to Indonesia for the month of January and I had friends coming from the States to accompany me. So if you can come up with a chargï¿½ for that period then I'll stay until the end of April. That's what we did. An interim chargï¿½ came a few days before I left and I introduced him a little bit and I went off on my very interesting trip to Indonesia and I came back. Now, that would have been like the end of January and I stayed February, March and April, three more months during which time the Department still did not have a replacement for my deputy. They were lining up a replacement ambassador and the assumption was that they would have another chargï¿½. I think the same man who had replaced me for that month was going to come back and hold the fort until the new ambassador came.

Brunei was a very interesting tour in the sense of having the ASEAN meetings and watching ASEAN take on new members and having the experience of the Secretary's visit which, all told, went very well. We had a visit just a week or so before those meetings: Winston Lord came. I forget what the occasion was for that, but anyway he came and we had a good session. We had a difficult consular problem around that time. The Bruneians had a lot of foreigners piloting their airplanes, private airplanes, piloting some of their Bruneian Air planes and planes belonging to the royal family. There was a very nasty episode where a young American woman was brutally beaten by her husband who was a pilot for one of the Sultan's brother's airplanes, Prince Jeffrey. This woman had gotten in touch with our consular officer because this was not the first time it had happened. She was frightened for her life and so the consular officer told her well, if it happens again, call me. He apparently did beat her up with a golf club or something and she was really frightened for her life and she grabbed her little boy and called the embassy, got the consular officer. She came to me and said, what should I do, she's pleading for help. I said you've got to go help her. She said, well I know her personally. I said I'm not surprised, there's not that many Americans here. But because you happen to know her personally does not mean that she is not entitled to help, so I authorized it. She got our GSO, a nice young fellow, and they went off and they picked her up at her house with the little boy. Her husband saw this car leaving with his wife and child and he got in his car and gave high speed chase to the car and tried to bump them off the road. We're talking an American doing to this to an official American car, trying to bump it off the road. It was very scary and hairy for them and at one point he's pushing and bumping and there was a ravine, not a deep one, but a ravine. They could have been seriously hurt. They were approaching as it turned out the Pakistan Embassy. They pulled into the grounds of the Pakistan Embassy and went inside and I will hand it to the Pakistani Ambassador, he was a general, he basically gave them refuge. The American husband, the wife beater comes charging down trying to get in and the general was very strong. He wouldn't let him in. My people call me. I got the police and the American was arrested. The consular officer and GSO brought the wife and child to the embassy and she was in tears. Her whole face was beaten up. It was terrible. The husband apparently was a pretty vicious person. The child was frightened. He was a boy about five years old.

Then we had a problem. Brunei had the some of the same laws on the books as Singapore including caning for certain offenses. This was not long after there had been an episode in Singapore where an American teenager who had violated a Singaporean law and was sentenced to be caned. This became an international incident. Despite U.S. intervention the young man was caned. Now, in Brunei, charges are being brought against this American for beating his wife and also for damaging our vehicle while trying to run the car off the road. You could have almost levied an attempted murder charge.

I had conference calls with the Department - three or four elements on the line - and initially the Consular Affairs Bureau was very supportive. They were really appreciative of the courage shown by the consular officer and the GSO for saving this woman. The next question was what to do about the assault. We agreed that the American wife definitely should bring charges. Her husband was in custody, but he was very close to Prince Jeffrey, the Sultan's brother. I hadn't heard from the Sultan on the case, but I warned the Department to be aware that this was going to be high profile. I reminded the Department to bear in mind that Brunei also canes as punishment and we had just gone through the Singapore incident. We had a lengthy discussion, thrashing this whole thing out and the decision was that the American be brought to trial. I insisted that the Department had to clearly understand that if he is brought to trial and he is sentenced to caning, I didn't want a word of complaint out of the Department. I told them caning was a possibility and all had to be aware of that fact. I urged them not to take a tough line now and then later be shocked if he's sentenced to be caned. I noted that perhaps because of his connections it won't happen, but if we're taking a tough line, it's got to be a tough line from now through the end. All agreed, a tough line was taken. But over time that started to unravel.

I engaged a lawyer who was pretty gutsy, a 40ish, Chinese woman who was brave enough to take me on to serve as my advisor with regard to Bruneian law on this question. I wanted to be sure we were maneuvering correctly with the whole thing because at trial my staff members were going to have to be called as witnesses. They might well be maligned and I wanted to know first of all from the Department, could they be called as witnesses? What type of immunity would they have in this? There were a lot of issues involved. Again, the high ranking connections that this very despicable young American had with officials in the Bruneian government was an element, but it was not going to deter me. At any rate, we found out that when it was coming to trial the Bruneians had arranged to have a Queen's Counsel come from Great Britain to represent him. A Queen's Counsel? This was a really big deal in the British court system. I asked the State Department for help from L, the legal bureau. I said I need help on this. I have a very capable Chinese lawyer who is advising me, but I need someone else here.

A very capable lawyer from L came over to help us. We were concerned frankly about the stress that would be put on our staff if they actually had to testify, particularly the consular officer who was a woman with two little children. It was not impossible that she would break down and cry on the stand, however capable and excellent she was and is. The representative from L met with the Queen's Counsel and with the Bruneian lawyer for the defendant. I believe the case same to court, but on the first day our people did not yet have to testify. After this however, the lawyer worked out a plea agreement whereby there was a cash settlement made to the wife and a cash settlement made to each of my officers, plus payment for the damage of our vehicle. Our officer from L thought that he had worked it out that there would have been a minimal jail sentence for the defendant. But when push came to shove that wasn't the case. I think he got probation or a warning or something of that nature. It was put behind everybody with some satisfaction. The wife was astounded that she got anything and she went back to the States to divorce him and at least she had a little settlement from her injuries and my two staff members received $10,000 each which I thought they were fully entitled to for all of the grief they had been put through.

Now, an interesting sidelight to this to let you know how highly placed this miscreant was. During the Ramadan house visits, the ambassadors had to call on every government official of any substance, all the ministers, deputy ministers, etc. It was an ordeal. One of the highest-ranking people in the Bruneian government was a man who was very close to the Sultan. He was sort of like the Sultan's chief of staff. He was very powerful and very decent, I had thought. I went and called on him in his home at Ramadan and as I entered the room to pay my respects this American pilot and his lawyer scurried out of the room and went up the stairs. He was obviously staying with this high-ranking official because he had been a good friend of the family for many years. I just don't think that you should turn your back on a woman being beaten to a pulp just because her husband works for the Sultan. It worked out, but it created extra stress for all of us. I suspect that in a Muslim country, even a moderate one like Brunei, women's rights vis-ï¿½-vis husbands were not taken as seriously as I would have liked.

A few months later, on April 30, 1996, I retired from the Foreign Service and left Brunei. I had been in the Foreign Service for 33 very interesting years. I was grateful for the opportunity to serve my country in such a fascinating, challenging way. I believe my career demonstrates that in the United States a meritocracy was a reality, that capable, dedicated people could rise to the top ranks of American diplomacy, without political or other connections. I am proud of that reality, and of my service to the country.

End of interview