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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Toufiq Siddiqi Interview Narrative

10-28-2008 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

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Toufiq Siddiqi

10-28-08 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

My name is Toufiq Siddiqi. I grew up in undivided India, before partition of the subcontinent, in a place called Hyderabad, which was one of the princely kingdoms, probably the largest one in India. And that's why I have a special feeling for all the countries that used to be part of the sub-continent -- whether or not people talk about India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and so on -- it all used to be one country.

I had my early schooling there. It was a really unusual Indian kingdom, in that unlike the typical image of the potentate being very rich -- which he was, at that time the richest man in the world, the king of Hyderabad, the Nizam. But he was also a very enlightened guy, in that he essentially had free education and free healthcare throughout his kingdom. People dreaded to be invited to his birthday parties because he invited only the nobility, they were all supposed to bring gold coins with them, and he used that as a source of revenue to build the schools and hospitals for all. And he dressed very simply, and rumor has it that he was one of the few people who actually slept with gold and bank notes under his bed.

Anyway, it was an interesting place to grow up. The capital of the state, which was called Hyderabad, was a small town in those days. The capital city itself had about 300,000 people. And now it's 10 million. And this is typical -- what's happened to most towns in the subcontinent.

India became independent in 1947, and after that, in 1948 Hyderabad was annexed as part of India, following a short three-day war. And in 1951, my father went on a lecture tour

to Pakistan, and they persuaded him into staying there and building universities in that country because they had only one major university at that time. So we packed up and moved to Peshawar, which is about 30 kilometers from the Afghan border. It's the capital of the North-West Frontier Province.

My father was at that time the vice chancellor, which is what they call the president, of the university. The chancellor is always the governor of the province, by law -- so the vice chancellor is the chief executive officer of the university. He had the same role in Hyderabad in his later years, and so they were looking at people to help them build a few universities.

So I went to college in Peshawar. It had quite a different style of education from Hyderabad, and I stayed there for about four years and then went to England for undergraduate studies. It was tradition in those times that people didn't come to the U.S.; they went to England because of historic links with the British.

Life Before EWC

Schooling in Europe

I was admitted to Cambridge University. Since I wanted to study physics, Trinity College was a famous college where Newton had worked, and it had about half a dozen Nobel Prize winners -- that was the college I went to.

It was a good place to go to. After I finished there with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and physics, I went back to Pakistan. For about a year, I taught at Peshawar University.

My father had left by that time. When he finished one university, they would send him off to improve another university somewhere else. So he had, by that time, gone on to

Sind University. And then, later on, he established the main university in Islamabad. It's called the Quaid-e-Azam University.

Quaid-e-Azam means "the great leader." It used to be called University of Islamabad at that time. So he built up three universities in Pakistan. That was not so good for me because it meant he would never employ me.

No nepotism in those days. So after I came back and taught there for a year, I took and passed the exam to join the civil service of Pakistan but at that time, I decided to do a Ph.D. instead. So I went to the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany. My father had also studied in England and Germany, so it seemed natural to me to go and study in another country which has a different language and a different culture. And Germany always had good physics programs in their universities.

In the high school -- in the elementary school in which I went to in Hyderabad, the medium of instruction was English. And also in the universities, the medium of instruction has always been English. In some elementary schools in Pakistan and in India, they have different languages, but if you live in a major city, then the chances are that people would use English.

It was fun to learn German. They have a very intensive course there [*at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University*] for people who want to study at a university. They go to this course for three months. Its eight hours a day of instruction, plus the fact that students are housed with rural families who did not speak anything else. So if you wanted to communicate with them, you had to learn German.

Immersion studies. Right. So after about three months of that, I was able to pass the entrance exam for the university and get in.

And it was a good experience, too. And as a fringe benefit, I met Ulrike, and we later on got married as well. (laughter)

Arrival in U.S.

After I got my Ph.D. in physics, I went back to Pakistan for a few months and was trying to work there, but the only university which had an advanced program in nuclear physics was Islamabad University where my father was the president and he said, “No, you can’t work here. You’ve got to go somewhere else.”

Ulrike and I packed up after a few months and left for the United States. I had applied as a post-doc at several universities. I got accepted at Indiana University, which had done work similar to what I had been working on before in Germany. And Indiana is a wonderful place. I don’t know whether you’ve been to the Midwest.

A lot of people have impressions of Indiana as a land of corn -- unlimited cornfields in all directions, but it’s actually quite different. Southern Indiana is very different from the north, and the Bloomington campus is in southern Indiana. You have lakes, and small hills, and parks -- it was a beautiful place. You have all the fall colors, and they had some very good programs, too.

From Nuclear Physics to Environmental Studies

I started off there with two years as a post-doc in physics. During that time, I got very interested in the problems related to nuclear power. They were running, at that time, into difficulties, finding storage sites and everything else. And there was a great deal of concern at that time about what happens if there’s an accident.

I got interested in the environmental aspects of nuclear power. And then I looked at other energy sources, and I ended up saying, “Oh, they all seem to have some problem or

another, (laughter) so what other energy sources can we use?" So that got me off from doing straight nuclear physics into looking at energy sources and their environmental impacts. And that's where I made a sort of career transition.

It was clear that we all needed energy, and nuclear power had been, let's say, advertised in our youth as a wonderful, new source. That was one of the reasons I did a doctorate in nuclear physics, because I wanted to examine our basic understanding of nuclear reactions. And by that time, by the '70s, it was becoming clear that there were a lot of concerns. Three Mile Island, of course, happened later, but at that time, people were already worrying about possible accidents. We were all doing calculations of what is the likelihood of a major accident.

And so you get into risk analysis, and then you look at the problems of hydropower and coal has several radioactive elements in it, too. Some people don't realize that, that it's all being emitted into the atmosphere in small amounts.

And oil -- when you drill for oil offshore, you can have oil spills, and they kill fisheries, amongst other things, and hurt tourism as well. There was a well-known professor in this field there, Lynton Caldwell, who was the guy who helped write parts of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It was sort of a major piece of legislation in the U.S. And he was the one who introduced the concept of doing environmental impact assessments. We used to co-teach several courses -- because he had a social sciences background, and I had a physical sciences background, and we used to teach courses on environmental science and policy and technology policies.

And so I started working with him. A lot of us in different departments got involved in starting what was probably the first major environmental studies program in a United

States university. This was in 1970. At Indiana University, Bloomington.

It's become now a school of public and environmental affairs, a quite well-known school.

So I moved to that school, then, from physics. And I was one of the first faculty members there. And we developed all the courses ourselves -- there were no books available in those days on the environment. We had to write our own course material as we went along.

So that was a lot of fun, developing two or three courses every year, from scratch.

(laughter)

I was going on the usual academic track. Teaching, research, and so on. And in 1976, I got promoted to associate professor, and in 1977, I got tenure at Indiana University, so I could have spent the rest of my life there.

Life at EWC

Environment and Policy Institute (EAPI), 1977

By '77, they were starting this new institute at the East-West Center called the Environment and Policy Institute.

[Actually] they were starting two new institutes. One was the Resource Systems Institute, which was headed by Harrison Brown, a very famous guy who was secretary of the National Academy of Science, and one with Bill Matthews of the Environment and Policy Institute. Bill used to work with Maurice Strong, who set up the United Nations Environment Programme.

And they were both recruiting for people with knowledge of the subject as well as knowledge of some Asia Pacific countries as well as the United States. At the Environment and Policy Institute, there were about 300 applications for four positions.

And I was one of the lucky ones who got selected. So that tenured position at Indiana, I had to give up.

I was 40 at the time. I didn't want to spend all of my remaining professional years doing the same stuff.

At Indiana, I was not working on Asia. That was one of the attractions, that I would be able to work with different countries, and countries that were in an exciting stage of development.

In the United States, by that time, I think the environmental field had become fairly well established. A lot of universities were opening programs, and we could have -- well, there's still a lot to be done. There's still a lot to be done today. But the East-West Center offered the opportunity to work with all the countries of Asia and the Pacific, which was very attractive. And Hawai'i's a good place to live.

One thing I did miss was the wonderful library we had at Indiana University -- especially in a new field. The UH library had a lot of resources in other areas, but not in the environment field or the energy field. At that time. I came here in '77 -- as a research associate. That was the official title. There were no fellows or senior fellows at that time; everybody was a research associate.

Intellectual Innovations

Environment Programs

So I came here as a research associate, and our main idea was that we would start new environment programs because the Center had no programs in these fields. And we spent the first two or three years identifying the people in the region that we would be working with, and then starting the programs with them.

And I started the program which was called “Environmental Dimensions of Energy Policies.” It was probably the first such program in the region that linked environment and energy very explicitly. Of course, now, it’s become a very popular subject everywhere.

We had a tough time finding our counterparts there because environment itself was a new field, and the few people who were working on environment were usually working on forestry or something like that. They were not really interested in energy. Of course there were a lot of people who knew about energy, that was not a problem. But people who could understand the environmental impacts of different energy sources and what we could do to have energy but at the same time protect the environment were relatively few and far between.

But we were able to identify some, and gradually over time, we worked with them, and we had a number of workshops -- dissemination workshops -- with them. And we actually jointly prepared documents that could be used throughout the region. For example, we prepared environmental guidelines for offshore oil development. John Gilbert from New Zealand worked on those guidelines.

The first thing we did, actually, was to identify -- “environment” could mean almost anything, so we had a research planning workshop in which we invited people from about 12 major Asian countries, and the Pacific: Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia and others, and Canada and the U.S.

Not so much because Canada is officially a part of the EWC, but they had a lot of environmental expertise. We didn’t want to exclude somebody if we could tap into their knowledge. So we identified two or three things we wanted to do, and that were needed

badly right away. One was the fact that at that time, there was a lot of concern about offshore oil exploration, that people were worried about oil spills affecting their beaches and the fisheries.

Producing International Environmental Guidelines

So the first thing we did was produce the guidelines -- it took us about a year to bring these people together and jointly write. It was more difficult than just writing one for, say, the U.S., because we had to talk about it in the cultural context of individual countries.

So we put together this international team and brought them over here for several months and produced the *Environmental Guidelines for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Development*. And then we moved on to preparing guidelines for reducing the environmental effects of coal transportation. Because at that time, coal use was increasing very rapidly in the region.

We had a guy by the name of John Wiebe. He was from Environment Canada at that time. And one of the interesting byproducts -- it might fit in into what, how did you affect other people. When he came here, he saw the East-West Center, he said, "Hey, we should have something like this in Canada." (laughter) So he actually went back and set up something very similar. And he's still there. Asia-Pacific Center of Canada -- or something similar to that.

And then we had Bert Webber, a professor at Western Washington University, in the state of Washington. He was also one of the guys there who came here. And we prepared these coal transportation guidelines. There were two parts: one dealt with over-land transportation of coal and one with the development of coal ports because all the

countries are building huge ports to sell -- either to import coal or export coal.

And people don't realize that it's not just the burning of coal, but even the storing of coal and shipping it has environmental impacts. Because coal has all these radioactive materials in it, quite a few of them, and trace metals and so on, which, when it rains on it and leaches out and could go into the waters and -- affect people. Or even where it's storage places for moving coal. There are millions of tons of coal -- actually in world transport, after oil, coal is the largest commodity that is shipped -- all over the world.

Most people are not aware of it; that's why there hasn't been very much written about it.

So we prepared these environmental guidelines and actually took them to China and India and Indonesia and had training sessions based on those. And since people from those countries were already involved in writing them -- they're all listed as co-authors of these documents.

It was good in terms of acceptability that somebody from those countries was also involved in it. That somebody from that country -- not someone from outside, trying to impose their ideas on them.

Impact of EWC Environmental Work

At that time, for example, in China, they were developing a new terminal for the port of Qinghuangdao, which is a major coal port in China, on the eastern shore. We worked with a team there, and they incorporated all the suggestions -- or most of the suggestions, I should say -- that were written in our coal guidelines into their own planning. So that was very encouraging for us. And I am told that something similar happened in Indonesia and India as well.

With the Chinese, we were involved for quite a while after that, so we met and discussed

many topics, and they sent a group here for a few days, and then I would go and meet them over there. And similarly with the offshore oil guidelines. They were used in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia. Those are three countries I know of, maybe other places as well.

Environmental Work in China

Then we did air quality standards -- because it was already clear, even in the '70s, that air quality in Asian cities was getting terrible. And we were probably the first group to take Chinese people working on air quality to India.

There was a lot of tension between China and India in the early '70s and before because they'd fought a war a few years earlier.

And, of course, there was a lot of tension between China and the United States, so -- we were one of the first groups from the U.S. -- by "we" I mean, about five of us went to China in 1979. Must have been probably the first group to go there, apart from a governmental one -- official -- EPA, I think, had gone there.

But we went at the invitation of Mr. Qu Geping, who was the administrator of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) of China. But at that time -- it's quite interesting -- there were only about two hotels in Beijing. So he was kind enough to put us up in a museum. We stayed in a museum. (laughter) The museum of the minorities -- Chinese minorities. There was a small guest house attached -- within the museum for people from these provinces who might come there. And we established good rapport with them so that they were always involved in the early years in almost everything we did in the environment field. They would find the right ministry for us to work with on a particular topic.

We had representatives from NEPA accompanying us. So Bill Matthews, Dick Carpenter, myself, Roy Stubbs, who you may not have known -- he was Australian -- Maynard Hufschmidt. And Betsy [*Hufschmidt*] and Ulrike also went along on the trip. They have interesting stories to tell, too, but I don't know how relevant it is. Because at that time, they had not seen too many blondes, so -- Ulrike had pretty long hair at that time, and the little ladies would come and touch it and see if it was real. (laughter) Not in Beijing, but you know when we went to some of the smaller places. Bill Matthews had known Mr. Qu Geping from before, when he worked with the U.N. guys. And we gave lectures in different cities. The group split up into two, and some went to one part to give some lectures, and others went to other parts. And we always had very good relations with the National Environment Protection Agency and with other Chinese institutions.

And during the course of my work at EWC, I also worked with about seven or eight different ministries in China. For example, the Coal Ministry, the Transportation Ministry and Environment Agency, of course. And coal transportation came under the Communications Ministry for some mysterious reason. Anyway, they -- and of course, the universities later on became involved. So those were some of the early things that we worked on.

EAPI, 1977-85

One stayed on as a research associate. Assistant director was not a full-time job. You did some additional stuff in -- in addition to your research work, when the director was away, or if there was something special that needed to be done. Then I was in the Environment and Policy Institute from '77 to '85.

Climate Change Research

Kirk Smith was at the Resource Systems Institute at that time. So we had many common interests, obviously -- so we worked informally with each other, but then later on, he left the Resource Systems Institute and came over to the environment institute. And we worked together on some things. By that time, I had finished the work with Victor; I came back to the Environment and Policy Institute.

I came back in '88. And then by that time, Kirk was already involved in this biomass indoor combustion.

And I'd got very interested then in the climate change area. Even at our first meeting -- the one that I described to you, it's a planning meeting for the Environmental Dimensions of Energy Policies project, when we decided on the coal and oil things -- we'd asked the people -- I asked them explicitly, "Do you think it's a good time to start looking at global climate change?" And they said well, it was a little too early. Remember, this was '79. Scientists were aware of it, but public policy people said there would not be enough support. The governments would not be interested at that time, which is probably a fair assessment. The government's concerns were mainly water pollution, forestry, and to some extent, air quality -- it was just beginning to be bad. But climate change, they felt it would be important about 20 years down the road.

About 10 years, at least, down the road. They said, "Talk to us again in 10 years."

So when I came back here in '89, I thought this was time to do so. Climate change was just becoming a public concern. So we organized here the first major workshop on global climate change, in 1989, at the East-West Center. The first one for the region, as far as I know.

Had people all the way from China, India, to the Pacific Islands. And we have this thick proceedings of the conference, which I hope are in the library. It's probably one of the first such documents that exist.

Some people were becoming interested. It was not necessarily scientists, but someone who came for the meeting was Dr. R.K. Pachauri, who would later on head the IPCC [*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*].

He took the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of all of us -- United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. And I'm one of those Nobel prizewinners, too! There must be a couple of thousand right now [*on the IPCC*].

Dr. Pachauri accepted the Nobel Prize on behalf of IPCC. For all of us working on preparing individual chapters of the several reports, it was a labor of love at that time.

There was no payment involved, nor was IPCC at that time as famous as it is today. We devoted our time to write, and to go to the meetings to thrash out every sentence that was in it, since they all had to be approved by the governments of all the participating countries. I was a lead author for one of the chapters, and a reviewer for some chapters in other reports.

Dr. Pachauri came here for this meeting, for our meeting -- and then there were people from China, Mr. Qu Geping, I mentioned to you -- he was the head of the National Environmental Protection Agency. So policymakers had begun to become aware of it, and he came, and several other people who have continued their interest. But it was extremely difficult to get any funding for it, and the East-West Center didn't want to allocate any funding for it, either. So I was just doing it pretty much on my own -- doing some writing on it, and contributing to it in some ways.

So we worked closely on this with Argonne National Laboratory, and it was a good arrangement, and we continued with this arrangement. The Asian Development Bank asked us to do an assessment of what China could do about global climate change. So I was the international team leader for that project and the Argonne people were involved, and about 20 organizations in China were involved. So this was a two-year study.

It was the first internationally sponsored study. I had also worked with the World Bank on this, as a consultant to the World Bank and the GEF -- Global Environment Facility -- to do a smaller study of a different type, also dealing with global climate change. So there were three studies, one by World Bank, one by ADB, and one by UNDP, and I was fortunate to be involved in all three of them on climate change in China. (laughter)

Well, I think those are the first studies that were done, yeah. Right. But we couldn't get support for it within the institution because this was the time when, you know, the Center's funds had been reduced rather than increased.

It was GEF and World Bank -- that's the Global Environment Facility [who provided funds]. The Global Environment Facility is the organization that I was working with, and they are managed by the World Bank, so it works that way.

It's a separate unit that was set up to work specifically on global climate change. It's managed by World Bank, UNDP and UNEP. They all jointly manage the Global Environment Facility.

We finished the study in '94 -- and then I took a year's leave from the East-West Center to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as Regional Advisor on Energy and Environment, in Bangkok.

Institutional Transitions

Revamping Core Seminars

Then at that time, we had finished with the environment and energy project, and I went for two years to work with Victor Li as a Special Assistant to the President. Victor had the idea that the administration should have intellectual links with the research people and used to have people from different institutes come and work with them for a couple of years.

Yeah, I think it was a good idea. So I went there and worked with him for two years. My main assignment there was to revamp the Core Seminar. When all the students would come in every year, they were all, at that time, expected to take something called a Core Seminar, which covered all the topics of interest to the East-West Center, from culture to environment, energy, communications -- telecom.

And I gave some of the lectures. Of course, nobody knows all these topics, so I got people from the university as well as from other institutes to come and give most of these lectures. Maybe twice a week, I think.

We used to have about a hundred students coming in every year. I didn't start the Core Seminars. These had been in existence. Sumi Makey had been running it before. Well, I don't think she was running it directly herself. She had somebody on her staff who was running it.

And I think it was a good idea. But when the research-oriented institutes came in, they wanted somebody to bring in more of the research interests of the program so that students would find it easier after that to decide, "Ah, this is the group I want to work with further." Each student at that time was expected to have some involvement with one

of the institutes.

The idea was that this would help them identify, “Oh yeah, this is the topic at the East-West Center that’s going on, and I can work with these guys.” I think it served a very useful purpose there. It still continues in a different form.

Imin International Center

So that was one of my assignments, and then, of course, there were ad hoc assignments when people came in. And this also happened to be, unfortunately, the time of the Imin conversion. (laughter)

And that took up a lot of my time because a lot of people were very concerned about the loss of identity of Jefferson Hall. And I think all of us felt that we need to keep the Jefferson Hall identity.

The Center actually had no budget available to restore Jefferson Hall. All these buildings were built around 1962, '63, somewhere around there. And it had been 25 years, so a lot of them needed repair, an updating, bringing in new technology for projections, and also serve the function of a good conference center, which the Center did not have at that time.

And there’s nothing in the federal budget, appropriated budget, to enable one to do that.

Victor had some interaction with the Japanese community. They said they would make a donation to enable this restoration to take place. These were the descendants of the people who originally settled from Japan into Hawai‘i, the Imin. And they wanted some way in which the name would -- the idea was they would just convert it and just call it the Imin Building or Imin Center.

And East-West Center staff and students, and all the people who’d worked and lived

there didn't want the name changed -- so there was a lot of negotiation going on about how to do this. And the name change was only one aspect of it, then the design issues came up, and the main hall downstairs was going to be closed -- it had always been open until then. Do you remember the time? You could walk through the just completely open hall. Beautiful architecture inside.

Yeah, a big lobby. And I think the Asia Room and the Pacific Room were not there at the time, so I think they were both redone as part of the Imin redevelopment. So there was opposition to the name, and there was opposition to what might become, and a part of it was that the federal government said, you cannot run that cafeteria there because it is costing us \$10,000 a month. They were losing \$10,000 a month. They were covering the cost. They said they wanted that closed.

It was a nice cafeteria -- it was a beautiful cafeteria. People would come all over from campus. But I think part of it was many of the students had started cooking themselves -- and so they were not using it that much. *[Editor's note: Kitchens were built in the dorms.]*

So the argument was, you are in the education business, you are not in the catering business. (laughter) So they wanted to close that down as part of the same redoing.

Victor appointed me to this unenviable task -- of dealing with all the people involved in this. Well, it was not just the public relations. Also just trying to figure out some way in which it would be manageable.

I would just go and talk to people, and get their ideas, and try to see how we could work out some compromises. And in some cases, change the design somewhat to accommodate them.

Well, I passed on the input to the architects. Or I think most of that was done by other people on the staff. There were technical requirements. So I didn't work directly with the architects, but I passed on the information to Victor: This is what we need to do, and he would then pass it on to architects.

And the name, we compromised -- we worked out that Jefferson Hall would still be called Jefferson Hall. It would be the Hawai'i Imin Center *at* Jefferson Hall -- which is what the legal name is, now.

Some were happy, and some were not. But the realities were that it had to be upgraded and become a useful conference center, and that meant some changes, including -- I think what most people were unhappy about was that the drapes would completely block the view through the main hall, Jefferson Hall. And that's a very valid viewpoint. But security had also started becoming a concern by that time, that you can't leave things open anymore. Especially if you're going to have conferences and important people, you never know what somebody might leave in there. Anyway, I think the controversy at least died down gradually.

RIF, 1995

I was there [*in Bangkok*] -- this was '95 -- when I was told that all these programs are going to be closed, so I don't have to come back.

In fact, I heard about it two days before I was coming back, but you know, I was coming back anyways, so we came back for a while.

I had enough job offers and so on, and I had enough consulting assignments that I did not have to make a great sacrifice. I was sorry that I could no longer contribute directly to achieving the goals of the EWC.

Life After EWC

Global Environment and Energy in the 21st Century (GEE-21)

[*The RIF in 1995*] did affect me indirectly in that since we did want to live in Hawai'i, I set up a non-profit organization, Global Environment and Energy in the 21st Century. It's a nonprofit, registered in Hawai'i. Pretty much a small-scale organization, but we did a few interesting things, and still do.

We did a lot of work on water security in South Asia.

There were enormous water shortages there and water conflicts related to that. And I got people from all [*of*] the four countries affected by these shortages to jointly produce a book on how to deal with these conflicts on dealing with water. It was probably the first time -- usually you get one country's viewpoint -- but this was a team of professionals. It's a two-part book. One is *Water Conflicts in South Asia* and one is *Water Needs in South Asia*.

Consulting Work in the Region

I worked a lot in South Asia at that time. And then I did work for the UNDP in China and for the World Bank in China, for their Global Environment Facility. They were doing an evaluation of GEF, and I was one of the people who were selected to be one of the evaluators of this new organization, and that meant going and talking to people, finding out what the problems were -- in their arrangements with GEF, and how one could overcome those. And then I did project evaluation for UNDP. And also, I was assisting various countries in writing proposals for funding by the World Bank or ADB or UNDP.

My work at ESCAP was not a regular office job. I was going to a different country every month for two years. And I would spend about two weeks there with some government agency, and either help them with evaluation of their program or with writing proposals for funding from the World Bank, UNED and GEF -- when they requested services.

There's a system of UN regional advisors on things like water or energy or environment.

We would go at their request and spend two weeks, roughly, and then write up recommendations for what could be done. Sometimes they implemented it; sometimes it probably got put on the shelf and was never seen again. (laughter)

You never know how that works. But I think some of it got used. It's always good when countries make use of what you have written.

I've worked in most of the larger countries in Asia. And when I was at ESCAP, I worked with all the major countries: China, India, Indonesia, Philippines and some of the more exotic ones, like Iran and Kazakhstan. Iran is part of the East-West Center region, too. People tend to forget that. When I first came here, we had Afghanistan, too. Afghanistan and some from Iran. Kazakhstan did not used to be a part of this because it was part of the Soviet Union. But after the breakup of the Soviet Union, since '87, they have been part of the East-West Center region.

So when the USSR broke up, it is officially part of Asia, really, all the Central Asia republics. So they went with ESCAP. So Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and even the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I went there to start a project with them on global climate change, one of the projects supported by the Global Environment Facility.

That was in 1996. I was a lead consultant for the ADB on this project. It was a 13-

country project, which later came to be known as the ALGAS project. It was Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy -- or something, a huge name. So I was the principal consultant for the ADB on that, and I'd worked up all their plans for it, and one of the countries was North Korea. But not as an American. I was wearing my UN hat.

I couldn't go to either Iran or North Korea as a U.S. citizen. And these scientists had never participated in an international project before. So it took a while to convince them that they could get involved, and they would get assistance, that nobody was trying to get anything out of them that they didn't want [*to give*]. And I accompanied them physically to India. Took a group from North Korea and took them to India.

And we gave them the choice -- would you like to go with the group to China or to India?

Well, China, they can always go to -- it's easier for them -- so they said they'd go to India. So we went and met with the Indians who were working on this project. This was just Delhi. The idea was to meet with the Indian team that was working on the same project and set up a link so they could assist them afterwards in doing the measurements and calculations and so on.

It was a question of measuring emissions of carbon dioxide and estimating the greenhouse gases. So they needed to make an inventory of how much of different types of energy they were using, and how many animals they had of different types which were emitting methane. Cows and horses emit a lot of methane. (laughter)

Just basically inventories, and then afterwards trying to figure out how best one could reduce these emissions -- or reduce the rate at which these emissions are growing because Asian countries are not required to reduce them.

So that was an interesting time, and I could have continued in Bangkok for a long time, but Hawai'i is a much better place to live in, so we came -- Ulrike and I -- came back. In '97, and then set up this institute, GEE-21, Global Environment and Energy in the 21st Century.

Track II Diplomacy Between India/Pakistan

And in the meantime -- this started during my stay in Bangkok but then I've continued for several years after that -- I continued with the Track II diplomacy between India and Pakistan -- because this was a time of enormous tension. They both set off their nuclear weapons, and there was danger of war breaking out -- or people suspected they might, but I never thought that there would be a nuclear war.

There was no direct, official communication between the countries for many years. So we set up a small group of senior people from the Indian government and the Pakistani government -- we would organize the meetings in other countries.

It was started by a group called Balusa, which is a separate group. I was part of a larger group -- I was working on cooperation in the energy and the environment field between these two countries. Other people were working on the defense fields and transportation fields and trade fields. There are a lot of high-level people involved in it, including the current Foreign Minister of Pakistan and former Defense and Oil Ministers of India.

What we tried to do was to get people from the major political parties in Pakistan and India -- not just the one party in power, but also the main opposition parties, because we know the parties keep changing all the time, so you have to have the backing of both parties to get anything done and not have to cancel the project every time a government changed. (laughter)

It was very interesting. My sister was heavily involved in it. She has worked on political issues all her life, so she was handling all of the political aspects, and I was handling all the technical, energy, environment sort of aspects. Yeah, natural gas pipeline. We initiated this discussion of the natural gas pipeline coming from wherever, through Pakistan, to India. And after many years, we finally convinced both governments that it would be in both their interests to do this. Unfortunately, the two places it could have come from, one was Iran, one was Turkmenistan.

Iran, the U.S. did not want anyone getting anything from Iran, so that slowed it down -- all the technical studies have been finished. Hopefully, though, we'll work out some deal with the Iranis sometime, and then we can go ahead and make use of these. And the pipeline from Central Asia would have to go through Afghanistan, which is another place where there's no political stability. Some group could probably go and blow up the pipeline every day if you built one. So we're waiting for the situation there to improve.

EWC Adjunct Fellow, 2004

I've been in Hawai'i all the time, but the first two years, I was setting up this new organization, the GEE-21.

I think I've been back here as an adjunct [*fellow*] since 2004.

Remember, the idea was that when they had this reduction-in-force -- the idea was that the Center was not going to be doing any work on the environment. They said, well, that was the rationale for closing the projects -- both Kirk's project and my project, and a lot of other projects -- that the East-West Center was going to be phased out, and it was going to focus mainly on political and economic issues.

But gradually, I think with the help of Senator Inouye, the budget was brought up. The

environment interest was revived -- [*ZhongXiang*] Zhang was here, and Sumeet [*Saksena*] was here, and probably other people in the energy fields – Kang [*Wu*] is here, and Fereidun [*Fesharaki*] has been here.

So as long as it looked as if there was going to be no environment program here at the Center, it didn't make much sense for me to be involved in it. But when it began to look as if they're going to have some sort of a program, that makes sense to have a two-way interaction going.

Yeah, that's what I do, mainly writing. I'm tired of doing projects now.

SAARC Energy Center

I do individual assignments once in a while.

The last one I did was to help the South Asian countries set up the SAARC Energy Center. It's a governmental organization of all the eight SAARC countries [*South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation*], and it's now based in Islamabad. And I helped them write the first five-year plan for what sort of activities they might wish to undertake. And they're going to have the first meeting next month, and I'm going to be there.

In Islamabad, yeah. Well, officially, it's called the SAARC Energy Center, but what I've suggested to them is that they focus not just on energy but on linking energy with other sectors, health sector, the environment sector, and water sector, and sustainability kind of work.

We're going to have people from all these eight countries. They're all government representatives, nominees. And it's the substance partly -- the idea is also to promote cooperation between these countries. They don't normally have very much cooperation. Not because of any ill will, necessarily, but just because none of them is rich enough to

pay the others.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It's the South Asian counterpart to ASEAN. It plays the same role, but it started much later than ASEAN. And it's different from ASEAN in that there's one huge country, India, and a number of smaller countries around it, whereas in ASEAN -- many of them are of comparable size: Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines.

EWC's Impact

On Career, Perspectives

Well, it certainly had an impact, in terms of changing my career from a regular, straight university academic career to one where you actually work with people from different cultures and backgrounds and interests. So in that sense, I found that very exciting, to work with people from different countries and get their perspectives -- learn a little more about their perspectives and hopefully pass on some of that.

I think I was about 40 when I came here, so people's values are pretty much established by that time. So if you're looking at values, I don't know whether they change very much. But what does change is the experience that one gains. Hopefully one acquires more wisdom and the more interaction you have with people from different backgrounds, the more you would learn about them.

EWC's Impact on Students, Region

I looked at the list of *[interviewee]* questions -- that's probably the most difficult to measure. Most people have impacts, the result of their interaction with hundreds of others, and to say it was meeting you that made the difference -- one particular person -- is very difficult.

The sort of likelihood is greater, in terms of people come here as young students, for example, at the Core Seminar. At that time, I got to meet essentially all the new students who were coming into the Center and maybe some of the things we discussed had some sort of an impact later on. Because when you come as a student, your main focus is on the subject you've signed up to read and get a degree in. And the job of the Center and the Core Seminar was to expose them to the fact that it's not just their subject that they came to study, but their experience and interactions with others around the place that is important.

We, of course, always had students in the institute's program here. Each student would come and work with one other person.

Friends of the East-West Center

My wife was active in the Friends of the East-West Center. That was a different type of experience. We were the host families for many students -- including some from Afghanistan in those early days. And she has been on the Friends of the East-West Center for many years, so we've had a lot of interaction with the students over the years. But in the Core Seminar, you're talking not so much about personal, getting-to-know-you-better sort of interaction, but exposing them to new ideas and new fields which they might pursue. So there's a different type of interaction there. Probably more like a mentor.

EAPI, Global Impact

I think even within the Center, when we first came in, there was not really much of an awareness of why environment is important. Remember, you have to think back to the 1970s. If you're trying to send us clippings in the 1970s from various press things on the

environment, you would not have had much success. So I think we had to convince our colleagues that this was an important field.

And then try to identify ways in which we could benefit from their knowledge and we could provide some input to the work that they were doing.

I think that was probably one way, and the other impression was that environment was something that was going to stop development, or it was an obstacle to development -- that was the perception, you know. It was propagated by the business community, based on their limited experience that the environmentalists are always trying to block projects from taking place.

So it's -- how can you have economic development if somebody is going to come and keep telling you you can't do this, you can't do that. So that's why the institute was not called Environmental Policy Institute, it was called Environment *and* Policy Institute.

Bill Matthews used to have a big emphasis on that, saying we are not talking about environmental policy as opposed to economic policies or other development priorities, but Environment *and* Policy means you can have development, and you can, at the same time, make efforts to improve the quality of the environment.

So I would always be asked, "So what's with this Environment *and* Policy thing?" and I'd have to explain it to them. So those questions of what impact you have is something the Center has always struggled with. We kept getting asked in Congressional testimonies, and whenever Victor or others would sit down, they would have to answer questions like, "How do you think the East-West Center made a difference in the world?" And this is one of the most difficult ones to document because policy-makers get exposed to ideas from us, but they also get exposed to ideas from half a dozen other places, and

which part of it came from the East-West Center and which didn't is very hard to prove unless you have people who graduated here and then went back.

Influence on Alumni Professionally

We had some of our graduate students take up very important positions. Abu Bakar Jaafar came as a graduate student here, and then he went back, and he later became Director General of the Malaysian Environment Ministry or Agency. And John Gilbert was Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Environment in New Zealand.

And if we tracked down where many of our alumni are in a really systematic way, I think we'd find that the environment alumni are in fairly good positions...many of them.

The Mission/EAPI

When we first came here -- I say "we" because there were about five of us that came at the same time, so we had a sort of a small group -- [Dick] Carpenter and [Bill] Matthews and Diane Drigot and Mark Goldstein -- I think it was. And then Mark Valencia came at the same time, roughly -- a couple months later. So the idea we had that it was officially the Center of Cultural and Technical Interchange, and the mission at least for our institute was to try not to work on problems that are common to all the countries, but to work on problems where what America does affects Asia, and what Asia does affects America. Which was a much more tricky thing to do than saying, "Well, we have air pollution problems and you have air pollution problems, so let's try and see what we can do on that."

So that was the interpretation of the Center's mission that Bill wanted to apply, at least in the Environment and Policy Institute. And the issues had to be of mutual concern and consequence that was the phraseology.

The Law of the Sea was one of the projects that we worked on because what the U.S. did or did not do affected other countries. The countries were catching tuna fish, which would affect what the U.S. could do, and so that was one of them. And the emphasis was much more on doing research-type activities in that field.

The Mission/Refocusing on Education

Gradually, especially after the budget reductions in '95, it has become again more of an educational institution. And the emphasis on education has increased.

There is, of course, research still being done, but the relative emphasis has changed.

There is more on journalism seminars, dissemination of information. The research program is much smaller than it used to be. So the education program has become much more visible, and the focus on other countries understanding what the U.S. does and the U.S. people understanding what other countries do has become much more important.

I think that's probably a good evolution because -- in terms of research -- a lot of these countries now have their own research institutions that are very good, and there's no particular incentive for most people to undertake to come here to do research on what affects their countries; they can do it right there.

Unless they want to look at how is this perceived in the U.S.? If you want to do, say, forest management, you can do it right there; you don't have to go to Hawai'i to learn how to manage forests in Cambodia or whatever.

Jeff Fox does do it. I mean, that's good. Training the people -- but it's still an educational function. You provide them with the tools -- and then they go and do their research there. There's no reason for them to come and sit here and do the research.

And similarly, the Population Institute does training of people on how to do the census,

and then they go back and they do it mainly over there; they don't do it over here.

And I think the educational function will probably continue to become important, in terms of the number of students. So I think on the whole, we are on a good track.

Priorities for the years ahead are always determined by what resources we have at the moment. I suppose the priorities are fine.

One thing I think we probably need to do more of is to bring Asian perspectives to the United States. I think we have been doing this a little bit in the last few years, through education programs. We -- like all great powers, the United States still thinks first of itself, of how anything affects us -- and less about how what we do affects other countries.

Climate change is a classic example. We have been the biggest emitter for a long time, and we put pressure on developing countries to cut back on their emissions.

So that's one area. But we promoted the Law of the Sea -- we were one of the initiators - - and then for decades, we did not sign it. We have to get out of this habit of starting international agreements and then refusing to ratify them.

And I think this is partly because -- as Speaker Tip O'Neill used to say, "All politics is local." Somehow, we have to educate the U.S. that we need to be a good citizen -- world citizen -- as well.

Charles is trying to do that. The Washington office does some of that; the education program does it on campuses around the country. The journalism program is designed to do that. So all the -- the components are there, but we need to do more of it. But we need more resources to be able to do more of it. So it's the resource limitation that we have.

I think we have to start with the realization that we have to live on a fairly small and fragile planet and that everything we do affects everybody else on it. And we need to understand these interactions -- how what we do affects others, and how what they do affects us. And I would like to be remembered as having contributed to that process. And it's a modest goal, but I think if enough of us did our little share, the world might be a better place.