



EAST-WEST CENTER
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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Mike Anderson Interview Narrative

9-19-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Please cite as: Mike Anderson, interview by Terese Leber, August 19, 2006, interview narrative, East-West Center Oral History Project Collection, East-West Center, 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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Mike Anderson

9-19-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

I'm from the Midwest, a small town in northern Minnesota called International Falls. A small family, one brother, and my father was the editor of the community newspaper there which was a small-town daily. And then I moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota -- a big city -- where I finished high school. I went to the University of Minnesota, where I got my B.A. in journalism and political science. Was the editor of the student newspaper, which got me interested in journalism.

Then I joined the Peace Corps in 1968 and that was a fabulous experience because it took me from the Midwest out into the big, wide world. First time ever overseas, except to Canada. Spent a challenging three years in Malaysia. I taught English in a small-town school for two years. My students were mainly young Muslim Malays. I then extended for a third year and taught journalism at a regional journalism training institution in Kuala Lumpur and helped start the first mass communications program at a Malaysian university. Mass communications at Universiti Sains Malaysia, in Penang.

Then I went back to the University of Minnesota and got my master's. I taught journalism and was an assistant to the director of the journalism school.

Life at EWC

Applying to EWC Communication Institute, Mid-'70s

By then I had gotten interested in the wider world and clearly Minnesota was too small for me. And I wanted to get my Ph.D. and focus on Southeast Asia studies, so I looked around and found that the East-West Center had a fabulous Communication Institute. A

researcher named Jim Richstad was in the Institute at the time and he had gotten his Ph.D. at Minnesota. So, I applied for a scholarship and I got a Ph.D. degree student grant to come to Hawai'i to the Communication Institute.

Wilbur Schramm was its director, and he was a giant in the field of mass communication.

And the chance to get to know him and study and work at a think tank in Hawai'i was just fabulous. Also, I got interested in Hawai'i because during my Peace Corps training, I received training in Malay language over near Hilo, where I had my Peace Corps training. So that interested me in this special place called Hawai'i.

So all of those factors came together and I found myself in Hawai'i in 1974 as both a Ph.D. student in political science at the University of Hawai'i and a grantee in the Communication Institute. And then I got my Ph.D. here, after doing field study funded by the Center in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. I spent about nine months in those three countries gathering data for my doctoral. I came back, wrote that up, and got a book out of it, which was terrific.

Student Life, Mid-'70s/Favorite Memories

[I was living in] Hale Manoa, yep. I don't think it had changed too much when I was here in the mid-'70s. When I was here, I think there were about 300 grantees, fully funded East-West Center grantees. I was here from '74 to '79.

[My favorite memories were] of course all of the international friendships, that goes without saying. The food co-op in the basement of Jefferson Hall. Living in the dorm. Field study then, which was funded adequately, so you could go to a country, get a cross-cultural experience, and do some substantive data collection.

Mine was Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. I did three country case studies as part of

my doctoral research for UH.

And that was a wonderful bonus for the East-West Center, that a grantee had the opportunity to do field research. The American students usually went to Asia or the Pacific, and the Asians usually went to the U.S. mainland for their field study.

Students had a wonderful chance to spend time overseas doing research. It was all generously funded by the Center. So that was very positive. Nothing really negative.

Inter-Island Program

And another highlight, of course, was the inter-island cultural program. That was wonderful, bringing you in contact with the local community. The Friends of the East-West Center organized it and a group of grantees would go to one neighbor island for a weekend and stay in a small town or a village, I think with a family and it was a wonderful outreach for the East-West Center.

Oh, you did cultural programs, you spoke in schools, you exchanged views -- it was a great community service outreach project that helped, I think, both sides. But it was very popular. I think I was in a group that went to Hana, if I recall. Everybody wanted to go to Hana because we all had heard it was a very special, very Hawaiian place on Maui. But that was a great program, and that, I think, has been cut or eliminated.

It probably got expensive with the airfares and all of that, but it was a wonderful community outreach and a great way to promote the Center outside of Oahu.

Office of Participant Affairs

Another thing was all the evening extracurricular activities. The Center had a terrific Office of Student Affairs under people like Jane Harris and Peter Adler.

It was Office of Participant Affairs -- so I don't know what they have now, but it was

then known as the student affairs office. It helped provide participants with a rich experience in and out of the traditional classroom.

For example, every Tuesday at 7 o'clock, they would show a feature film, and people would pack into Burns Hall. And there was a guy named Joe Hurley who did notes on each film, notes that explained the cultural significance of, say, a film like *Casablanca*. It was a wonderful, extracurricular activity. And then there were lots of evening programs at Hale Manoa – “Tuesday at 7.” Outside speakers would come in, or grantees would make presentations, or researchers would talk about something or there would be reports on field study. There was a whole evening sense of activities.

International Fair

I think the International Fair was started almost from the first year of the Center. That was wonderful in the community. I think it was in Kennedy Theatre. It was like a huge talent show, dominated by Asians, of course. The Americans just kind of said, “I don't have any talent; what can I do?”

But you had the Samoan and Filipino dancers and the Kabuki Theater and the gamelan musicians or the puppeteers from Indonesia. It was a wonderful -- more for the wider community, too. And the Honolulu community would come to those events once a year, and then they had, I think, an international food fair. So it was kind of a big weekend, again, serving the community, reaching out to the community.

Host Family Program

The Host Family program was well run by the Friends [*of East-West Center*]. Are the Friends still going strong as volunteers supporting the goals of the Center?

I think they organized that. The Americans didn't participate too much in that, but it was

a terrific way for the Asians to get into an American home and a lot of those relations, I'm sure, have been sustained over the years. Your host family.

The Americans felt they didn't need it, of course, because they thought they knew Hawai'i. But most American grantees were new to Hawai'i and didn't know the unique multi-cultural local community. So it would have been good if a Caucasian grantee was with a Honolulu Japanese family, say, or Chinese or Filipino or something like that. That mixing of Mainlanders with locals was good. It helped Americans better understand their unique 50th state.

Some of that happened, but it was more for the Asians who, you know, needed or wanted entrée into an American family. So they would be hosted on Thanksgiving or Christmas or on school breaks.

It varied a lot. Some of it was just the one time, come over to dinner, and the relationship stopped, but for others, they would spend the weekend out in the community with their host family or they'd go to, you know -- it varied, but it was another opportunity, again, to get off the insular Manoa campus and out into the wider community.

IMPULSE, Student Magazine

Let me just briefly mention one other extra-curricular activity. A number of grantees from different countries felt that the students needed their own publication to express their views and to contribute to the Center's overall mission. The grantee association funded the start-up of a student-run quarterly magazine called *IMPULSE*. It took on a real life of its own and became an eagerly awaited publication. It stirred up the Center and I'm sure the administration saw it as a thorn in its side. But it provided grantees a real forum, and it was a wonderful example of how press freedom works in the U.S.

Remember, many grantees were from countries that didn't tolerate dissent on campuses or in the media.

Research Institutes, '70s

I consider my time here as really the "golden years of the Center." The '60s alumni always talk about the cultural interaction and all of that, but they never talk about the research, the academic content, which, you know, coming to a university is not just -- eating with people from different countries in the Hale Manoa dining co-ops and all of that inter-culturation. It's learning something, and getting an education, and culture is certainly part of the process. That's why the Center is unique.

But also I like the research component of it because the Center, I think, had a great idea back in those days of the problem-oriented research institutes. There were five of them plus Open Grants. I was in the Communication Institute. And we also had Cultural Learning, Environment, Population, Food, and TDI -- the Technology and Development Institute.

Those were the boom years because -- I think it was quite a brilliant concept. And I think [EWC President] Dr. Kleinjans developed the idea of the problem-focused research institutes, and they were trying, consciously, to plug the students a bit more into researchers' projects -- because there was -- as you know -- it was not just a cultural place. It had to be more than that to justify its existence.

Also, people forget that times have changed and, you know, when the Center started in the early '60s, there were very few Asian universities and relatively few opportunities for scholarships to study and do research in America. Many of those countries were developing, relatively poor, backward, third-world, fourth-world countries. Now, that's

totally changed as the 21st century becomes the Asia-Pacific Century.

The region has totally changed. Take Malaysia, for example. When I was a Peace Corps volunteer there in the late 1960s, the country was an agriculture and mining Third World country. Today, Malaysia is more a rapidly industrialized country emphasizing information technology.

Wilbur Schramm

The Center had a fabulous team of researchers and visiting fellows in nearly all of the problem-oriented institutes. I remember Dr. Schramm knew everybody in the field so all of his old research colleagues and friends would come through Hawaii. Or they would be senior fellows here. Or they would stop here and give a lecture.

Margaret Mead -- I distinctly remember she came and gave a stimulating seminar. And Dan Lerner came from MIT. And Schramm knew everybody and anyone in mass communications and he truly was like the father of mass communications research at Stanford and then he came out to the Center.

[He was] down to earth. But I think his great talent and contribution to the Center was he brought all of these people here because Schramm was like a legend. He was “the” guru. And anyone in mass comm. wanted to meet him. So he had great conferences. And often they would let – student grantees sit in. It was a good way to network and meet the best and brightest. You know, top-notch people all came. Many came as senior fellows and were here *[for a longer period]*. They often were quite accessible to students and younger scholars.

Lerner was here at various times over several years.

Partnerships and Networks

Communication Project with Indonesia on Television Impact

But all these big names produced publications and did conferences, which were very stimulating I thought and relevant to the times. For example, the Communication Institute at the Center had an excellent project on Indonesian television that Dr. Godwin Chu and an Indonesian team led by Dr. Alfian of LEKNAS-LIPI in Jakarta did. The team evaluated the Palapa Indonesian satellite and its impact on television and people in Indonesia. And that was kind of a classic study of the impact of cultural television on an Asian society.

It was very good. Very well done. It was a cooperative thing with the Indonesian team, I remember, distinctly. And it was truly a joint project with East-West Center researchers and foreign scholars working together.

It was very new and exciting and what was new in Indonesia was the fact that TV was now being satellite-delivered. The Indonesian satellite was called Palapa, and it distributed RV across the thousands of islands which comprise Indonesia.

So the Center did, I think it was a before-and-after study. Dr. Godwin Chu was the director of it and he was a social scientist and they really tried to pinpoint what impact, positive, negative, satellite-distributed TV had on the national development of Indonesia, of the culture, more focused on the cultural impact, yeah. And Dr. Schramm, of course – Dr. Schramm had done research on the Indian satellite years earlier, which was a classic, I think, Ford Foundation study, on the impact of educational TV in India, and he also did one, I think, on Samoa.

American Samoa, wasn't it? Which, again, was kind of a classic. So this Indonesian

study kind of built on those studies.

Jefferson Fellowship Program

I also did extra work for the Center -- they kept me on as a research intern in a communication policy and planning project and I helped on the Jefferson Fellows Program one year. I escorted the Asian grantees to the U.S., which was exciting. And I've always worked with the Jefferson Fellows, got to know every group that came through here, and they were always a fabulous group of Asian and American journalists. That's one of the best programs I think this Center ever did, and I'm glad it's continued over the years.

Institutional Transitions

Separation from UH

I was here at the height of the controversy over the incorporation issue of the Center -- '75 right -- when the Center shifted from being legally under the University of Hawai'i and shifted to more of an independent status. That move prompted a huge debate and lively discussions at that time.

[Editor's note: Researchers and staff were concerned about their future and grantees feared that their numbers would shrink if the Center legally moved away from the University of Hawai'i affiliation.] And that's what happened. Budgets and staffs did get cut. Initially. Exactly what happened. That's why the students fought, along with UH, to get into the legal incorporation agreement with the University of Hawai'i, that X number of students would be guaranteed. I think it was 270, because everybody feared the minute the Center became "independent," it would reduce student funding and shift funds over to research.

And that was the evolution of the Center from a cultural, scholarship-giving cultural

exchange or international education program into a more focused think tank or research center. I was here during that crucial time when that was happening so it was interesting to watch the Center evolve.

Life After EWC

Foreign Service

After I got my Ph.D. here, I worked for UNICEF at the UN in New York for two years, and I knew I just had to do something in the international area because I loved to travel and I was fascinated by Asia. And I liked politics and I liked journalism. And so the perfect job was the Foreign Service.

I took the Foreign Service exam while I was with the UN and passed and then have been a diplomat for over 25 years now. Great, perfect job, the Foreign Service.

So, within the State Department, I specialize in what's called “public diplomacy” which is working with press, culture and education and dealing with the publics of a country. So all of my jobs overseas, in embassies, have been either media-related or culture- or education-related, or all three of them.

And all of my postings have been in Asia so the Center was an excellent introduction into Asia and it helped get me interested in a variety of cultures. All of that.

A good match. A good match.

All of my jobs have been in South or Southeast Asia. I was in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, India, Pakistan, Washington, Singapore, Manila -- Philippines, again – and then India again, and now I'm going to Indonesia.

Usually two to three years with an opportunity to stay another year.

I was in the Philippines for both revolutions. I was there during the final turbulent

Marcos years and the “People Power” movement. I was there for Mrs. Aquino’s election, which was a historic, exciting time.

And then I was back for the transition from President Estrada to the current President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The second people power revolution. She visited here once with her father, who was president of the Philippines at that time. She came here as a young kid with him. Her father was Macapagal, president of the Philippines. And then she spoke at the East-West Center alumni conference in Manila when I was there. When would that have been? Like the early '90s. The East-West Center had an alumni conference in Manila and she was invited to speak.

Ties That Last

Alumni Network

I kept in touch with some of those Jefferson Fellows years later, and now that I'm in the Foreign Service, I've been lucky to always serve in countries that have former East-West Center alumni. So it's a nice way to reconnect with alumni and help them overseas keep in touch with the Center and it's nice to know when you go to a country that you have alumni to help introduce that country to you and to develop friendships, or sustain friendships that you made 10, 20 or 30 years ago.

Thirty years ago. Well, over 30 years ago. For example, when I did field study in Jakarta, I stayed with a family who was a Jefferson Fellow here, an Indonesian journalist. And I've stayed in touch with him and his family for 30 years now. In fact, I just talked to him last week. So, I'll be reconnecting with that family when I go to Jakarta this coming week for three years. So, it's a small world out there.

I've been to several alumni conferences. I've been to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo.

We just had a regional one in India in December, which was quite successful.

South Asia regional. And I was in Japan last year. So I've been to three or four of them.

And Hawai'i. I was here for one a couple of years ago. I think it was the 25th or something? No. It would have been the 40th.

The '60s alumni have such strong identification with the Center -- because they were the founders and it was such an intense cultural experience. Studying in America was really unique and special then and the idea of the Center was fresh and exciting.

Outreach to Alumni

I think in the area President Morrison has done two excellent things. One is alumni relations. I think he's really recognized the importance of them and put money into the Office of Alumni Affairs so that office can be more pro-active, properly funded. Or quasi-funded, rather than a half-baked operation.

Of course, it's not easy staying in touch with EWC alumni, especially because they are so mobile and are spread literally around the globe. It's hard work just keeping up the addresses. And East-West Center alumni tend to move constantly and they're very international. Some don't go back home; a lot of them go into international work and move around constantly. They're very mobile. And it takes a lot of work just to maintain mailing lists, computer lists.

So to President Morrison's great credit, I think he's given that office sufficient funds to really do something, and they've done good publications, they've done the association link, conferences they've supported, regional and international.

Outreach to Hawai'i Community

And secondly, I think Charles recognizes the need to cooperate in the Honolulu

community. Although the Center still relies heavily on Congressional funding, the EWC is not a Washington operation. It can't be. It's in a local and a wider Asia-Pacific community and in an academic and multi-cultural setting, so you've got to get cooperation from your neighbors.

I think he appreciates the need for partnership and realizes that the Center can't go it alone. He knows the Center needs to be a good neighbor and there's a lot of synergy to be gained by working with UH, the wider community and the alumni.

And having an office in Washington D.C. to raise the Center's profile with U.S. policymakers is good, provided it doesn't compete with the Honolulu Center and lead to confusion over the Center's identity.

EWC's Impact

Contribution to UH

Hawai'i had a bit of a monopoly for 10 years or so on Asian students in the U.S. But it was changing [*in the '70s*]. Because Asian universities were getting better and Mainland universities were reaching out to Asia. They were discovering Asian students and actively going out and recruiting them with scholarships and wanting to do more with Asia.

The other thing was just the competition, plus Asian universities got better and more independent and expanded and diversified their international ties. They wanted to link up with the big name mainland schools like Harvard and Berkeley. Not just UH.

So UH had a wonderful monopoly and I think the Center made a great contribution to the University of Hawai'i, which got its best students, no question about it, from the East-West Center. So they had a guaranteed stream of bright, talented Asians and Americans

for some years. And again, I don't think UH appreciated that either. They took the Center and its flow of bright graduate students on EWC scholarships for granted. I would say, in general, the state of Hawai'i has not recognized the tremendous contribution that the Center has made -- and can make and should make -- to international education and Hawai'i's development. Time has kind of passed Hawai'i by, I'm sorry to say. A missed opportunity. They had -- and still have -- a wonderful gift of the East-West Center right on their doorstep. And it's worked pretty well. And I think of late, there's been much more of a partnership and cooperation, less competition.

EWC Image in Asia

I would say, generally the Center's image is positive among many scholars and policymakers. People have heard about it vaguely, and I think the East-West Center gets a very positive feeling among select groups which have personal knowledge of the Center. I don't think it's negative at all. I would say in some countries it is more positive because the Center is more involved. It's had either more alumni over the years or active projects that are continuing.

The Center's recruitment has evolved and changed over the years. In South Asia, the Center does almost zero. Almost zero. And I can say that objectively because I have lived in South Asia and know the Center very well. And there's no question about it -- the Center is tilted toward East Asia and Southeast Asia and Pacific Island programs. South Asia -- places like India -- get relatively little attention in terms of both EWC research and participation.

And there is always a sentimental piece for the Pacific Islands. But South Asia? Almost nothing in the past 10 years. And so I think it is incumbent on the Center to really look

at its geographic mandate and decide -- are you serious about all of Asia? Are you actually covering all of Asia, which goes from Afghanistan to the mainland? Or is the EWC more of an East Asia or Asia Pacific Center. South Asia is important. You've got a booming India at 1.2 billion people. How many grantees are currently from India? How many research programs involve India? Almost zero, OK. So that's been a change in the past few years. And so I think the Center needs to either get serious about South Asia or say we're simply unable to cover all of Asia.

[Editor's note: In 2004, the Center began an initiative to reinvigorate its relationship with South Asian alumni and to increase recruitment of South Asian degree fellows.]

Outreach to South Asia

I have been involved *[in recruiting for the Center]* but it depends on the particular country. In India, USEFI *[United States Educational Foundation in India]*, the Fulbright Commission, is the Center's official rep. But my office, from time to time, makes suggestions for possible participants for particular programs.

Young leaders. The Muslim Editors Conference. We've always had people. Jefferson Fellows. We always nominate, and our nominees often get selected. This past year the Jefferson Fellows came to India for the first time. The American and the Asian groups. So I helped set up their program, got them in to see the ambassador, and arranged some briefings and helped them with that. So, I would say that is an issue that the Center needs to address, South Asia, because it is under-represented and how can you ignore India?

It's booming. It's an emerging economic and technological global leader and a strategic partner of the U.S. It's going to be the largest democracy in the world. The second-

largest Muslim country in the world. There are more Indian students in America than from any other country. Way more than China. 80,000 Indian students in America. But not here. They leapfrog Hawai'i, and many go to the top mainland schools -- MIT, Stanford, Berkeley, Boston.

I'm not blaming the Center, but it's a fact.

And if you look at the trends, there is definitely a change because in the early days, the Center did a lot with Asia, including South Asia. And had board members and -- let's see. Have there been institute directors from South Asia?

Tata [*Ratan N. Tata*] was on the board for some years. Right. And there is new board member now. Tarun Das is from India -- he's from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).

But you've got to look -- are those people being used? What have they done for the Center?

Tough question because the Center's resources are limited. You can't do everything. You can't be everywhere. I think the Center needs to decide strategically, that you've got to work with China, you've got to work with India, you've got to work with Indonesia. You know, these are important countries to the U.S. and to international education and research. You can't ignore them. And maybe it's more important that you focus on relations with those countries than some others.

You can't send Dan [*Berman*] to India for two months and then forget about the place. Because then the network falls apart six months later. It needs nurturing and tending and attention, and one way to do that is to get new alumni, new participants. So that the alumni base continues to grow and you get to a younger generation. Otherwise you have

an “aging alumni” problem and a huge generation gap. It's a huge challenge.

EWC's Impact on Career, Perspectives

I'm directly involved in fostering international cultural and educational exchange and promoting mutual understanding. As a diplomat, my job is to explain American policy and values to foreigners. That's what I do for a living.

It's directly influenced by what I did at the Center. What I learned here is directly relevant. Tolerance. Cross-cultural understanding. Curiosity about other cultures.

In the Communication Institute, I was really plugged into a research project so I was given responsibility, and a lot of students did not feel that connected to their institute in those days. It was kind of -- they were busy at UH studying.

But I came here because I wanted the East-West Center research cross-cultural experience. That's why I came here. I didn't come to just get a UH degree or to enjoy life in Hawai'i. That wasn't important to me.

But I did. Yeah. Sure. That was part of it.

But the Center made that possible and it gave me lots of extra -- all of these contacts you make here -- the extra cultural experience, the plugging into the Communication Institute projects and seminars. It was wonderful.

There was lots going on.

I know the value of cultural exchange and international research because I experienced them through the Center. And I was in the Peace Corps. That helped also to introduce me to Asia. But the Center experience was certainly a contributing factor. So I'm comfortable in foreign cultures, and I think it's important that Americans listen to Asia and learn more about Asia and appreciate it. And learn the diversity of the region.

“Asia” doesn't exist. Asia is so diverse. Which part of Asia? What country? What culture? What group? Urban, rural, rich, poor, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu? Whatever. Asia is such a diverse, complex place. So I think that Americans need to appreciate those differences, and I think the Center has fostered that process.

Every American – like every Asian -- who comes here for any length of time is changed for the better, I think. He or she becomes more of a “global citizen” from the Center experience. Definitely. And Asians, I think, come here and people say, well, “Hawai‘i is not America,” but it is a piece of it. America is so diverse, and Asians need to appreciate how multi-cultural the U.S. really is.

Hawai‘i is a good transition between Asia and the U.S. and it fosters respect for immigrants and tolerance of differences and cultural diversity. In many ways, all of America is becoming more Hawaiianized.

It is. It is. I go back to Minneapolis now and I see Somalis and Vietnamese. You never saw such diversity when I was growing up in Minnesota. The population back then was fairly homogeneous – mainly Swedes and others of European origins. They are there now. And diversity. Minnesota is about to have its first Muslim congressman. He just won the election in Minneapolis. And Minnesota has a state senator of Indian origins. So America is changing and becoming more diverse, obviously. So, in many ways, we can learn from Hawai‘i.

The EWC Mission

[In the early days] it was study, training and research. There were student grants. They did a lot of training here. Old fashioned kinds of training. The Center had technical stuff. Family planning and public health and librarians.

Those were all specific skill sets. And the Center's Communication Institute had a good program that brought Asian academics here for kind of a refresher upgrade on what were the issues. That was a great program. Kind of a summer institute. And it would be like university academics here. To exchange views and get updated on what's new in your field. And it was in communication. That was a very good program for several years. It focused on upgrading, not training, but upgrading professionals and fostering exchange of ideas among scholars from throughout the region. Mid-career people.

Pop [*Population*] Institute had AID [*US Agency for International Development*] grants for years to do that. New research methodology in demography, for example.

I think the Center has had a resurgence over the past few years, but it all depends on funding, unfortunately. I think the Center has done a good job in recent years getting more resources after some huge budget cuts.

I never understood that. Never understood how under a Clinton administration, how that was allowed to happen. Why did the poor little Center, with a budget of \$20 million or \$25, how did it get slashed? Who thought it was so important to cut the budget? And why didn't policymakers, the state of Hawai'i, the Center administration, the alumni -- how was that allowed to happen? Baffling, over such a pittance amount of money.

So in recent years, it's tried to rebuild, and it's gotten back resources, and I think it's done a good job readjusting.

Cultural exchange is never out of date. Now the U.S. government is trying to give more attention to exchange problems, like Fulbright. We're trying to do lots more in education and exchange.

So it's a long-term investment, again, in people. There's been somewhat of a resurgence

in that America can't go it alone and we need to do more in the long-term investment in people-to-people contact. And you can promote interchange educationally or culturally or in different ways. And that's what the Center is all about.

So, the Center should be thriving and adjusting to a different world.

I think it has certainly done better of late and is having kind of a resurgence or a second wind. They're not fully funded, but still the current figure [*student enrollment of more than 500*] is impressive, and it means more participants are getting the Center experience.

Uniqueness of the EWC

The Center alumni, the most loyal and active alumni, tend to be students who have been here for degree programs. They are here long enough to really appreciate the place and really benefit from the “aloha spirit” and everything the Center and Hawai‘i have to offer.

If you're here for a conference or for two weeks, or a senior fellow here for a few months, you're not loyal to the institution. It's just another research center.

You take the money and you do your project and then you get out of here. You move on. It doesn't greatly affect your life, your cross-cultural understanding.

I think I'm a good example of an American who knew relatively little about Asia or the world, came to Hawai‘i, and the resulting experience influenced my life. The Center helped develop my interest in Asia and in serving the U.S. as a diplomat focused on public affairs. My job is to help promote mutual understanding and that's done through information, culture and education. A number of U.S. diplomats got their education at the Center.

Let me just say the Center is a great institution, a unique place, I think. And the challenge is how do you keep it going with proper funding and relevant programs and re-energize it. But I don't think cultural exchange and educational exchange is ever going to get out of date. The same goes for cooperative international research.

And I think combining those two is a win-win in a good, a unique institution that factors both of those in. If the Center is only a think tank, it's hard to be competitive, because there are so many think tanks, both in Asia and on the mainland. What's special about the Center is that it always adds that extra cultural exchange component, which makes it unique. Without the people-to-people exchange and the "aloha" element, the Center would probably be just another research institution. Keeping a good part of the Center's mission focused on mutual understanding and on dialogue and exchange is crucial if the Center is to remain relevant in these changing times.