Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR KEITH L. WAUCHOPE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is March 8th, 2002. This is an interview with Keith Wauchope. This is done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Keith, let's start kind of at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born?

WAUCHOPE: I was born at Manhattan Hospital in New York City on October 13, 1941. My parents actually lived out on the south shore of Long Island at the time

Q: Okay, tell me a bit about, first of all on your father's side, sort of where the family came from and your father's education and what he was doing.

WAUCHOPE: Okay, well, my father's father came to the United States in the early 1880s. He was a young man in County Cavan, Ireland and was sent by his father down to Trinity College Dublin to study for the ministry, the Presbyterian ministry. He and his older brother Jack, who was also studying at Trinity, decided they didn't want to become ministers, so they quite literally ran away to sea. He and his brother first went off to Australia and this trade between the UK, between England and Australia. After several voyages in the 1870s my grandfather jumped ship and joined the Australian army. I was told and that he stayed in Australia for only about six months or so, and then deserted the army and signed onto another ship to Peru. He joined the Peruvian navy and stayed with them for a while. He earned a naval rating, and then he deserted the Peruvian navy and caught a ship to San Francisco. He came ashore in San Francisco and joined the U.S. Navy.

Q: About when was this?

WAUCHOPE: He would have come to the United States in the early 1880s, I guess. Having joined the United States navy, he became very intrigued with American democracy and political issues. He ended up being the librarian at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Since he never had a college education, he started to educate himself through reading the books in the library. He became persuaded that socialism was the most rational system, so he became a socialist. When he got out of the navy he joined the American Socialist Party and he became a journalist for the socialist party, eventually the editor of the New York Call. Prior to that, he worked for socialist publications in Chicago, Erie, Pennsylvania and eventually in New York. The New York Call was an influential socialist newspaper in New York and because of his stature as the editor and because of his oratorical skills; in 1910 the socialists made him their candidate for mayor of New York on the socialist ticket. I believe that it was at that time he changed his name to Wanhope, W-A-N-H-O-P-E so as to be easier to pronounce for his supporters. In 1912 he was the socialist candidate for governor of New York. He was soundly defeated both times, needless to say. Then in 1917 when the United States entered World War I, Eugene Debs, the leader of the American Socialist Party denounced the war as a creature of the "malefactors of great wealth" and called upon all socialists to refuse to participate. My grandfather said that this position was wrong. He believed that if the Socialist Party worked against the United States participation in the First World War, that the party would in fact be destroyed because the war was a popular cause. As a result, my grandfather was run out of the party. Eugene Debs went to prison and my grandfather lost his job as editor, and, unable to find other jobs in journalism, he went back to sea. I guess he remained at sea until the late '20s or early '30s when he finally was able to retire.

As my father's family never had much money since my grandfather never made more than $25 per week as a newspaper editor, my father ended up going to the New York School Ship, which was the merchant marine academy for the State of New York at that time. It was a two-year course and he received a certificate to sit for the third mate's exam. You had to be 21 to get your certificate as a third mate, which he eventually did. In any event he went on and became a second mate, first mate and in seven years he made a captain. He was a captain for seven years aboard the Farrell Lines ships - well, it was then the American South African Lines - and then it later became the Farrell Lines. Its principal business was with Africa, southern Africa. My father came ashore and married in 1935. He was made the port captain for the company. He met my mother when he was Captain of the S.S. City of New York, a small passenger liner. He had the chief steward make sure that all the attractive, single ladies aboard this flagship vessel were seated at the captain's table and hence he met my mother. We'll talk a little bit about her later.

When the U.S. joined the Second World War, he was called to active duty despite being the father of three children. He had a naval reserve commission as a result of his training at the merchant marine academy. He was brought in as a lieutenant commander and then promoted to commander and captain. He was made the commanding officer of Sheepshead Bay Naval Training Facility in Brooklyn, New York. He worked in that position for about 18 months. He ran afoul of the left-leaning, in some cases communist, labor unions. At their request he was removed, but as he had always wanted a sea command. He commanded an attack transport in the Pacific for a period of about two and a half years and participated in 21 amphibious operations. After VJ Day, he returned to the United States where he rejoined the Farrell Lines. He had opened up its east African trade just before the war, and after the war he was sent out to open its West African trade. He was made the executive vice president and eventually in the 1960s, the president of the company. It was that African connection that got me interested in that region of the world because in 1959 and again in 1960 I took cruises as a deck cadet aboard the Farrell Line ships. The first voyage was to South Africa and the second to West Africa, and I think that sort of gave me a flavor of that part of the world.

Q: Your mother's background?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. Well, she was from Baltimore by origin and her father was an Irish immigrant as well. In point of fact, both of my grandfathers were born in Ireland, one in Northern Ireland, in County Cavan and the other one in Mayo. Her father had come to the United States to be a seminary student, but then chose not to pursue the seminary. He ended up, as far as I understand it, a traveling book salesman. My mother's mother was quite young, a good deal younger than he was and my mother remembers him being gone quite a bit of the time. Nonetheless, she was brought up by her mother in Baltimore. Then when she was about 20 years of age she decided to go to New York. She had already been working by that time for a shipping company; she completed high school, but didn't go to college. In New York she worked as various jobs as a secretary or executive assistant in shipping and later in advertising. She had some interesting experiences in that process. While working for a temporary agency, she worked for Lowell Thomas one evening recording in short hand his interview with Jimmy Doolittle over dinner. Through this agency she ended up working for Osa and Martin Johnson who were called explorers, but were entrepreneurs in filming exotic places.

Q: Oh yes, hell's a popping. Wonderful comedians. I saw them in New York.

WAUCHOPE: Yes. Oh, you're thinking of Olsen and Johnson.

Q: Oh, no, no. This is Osa and Martin Johnson. Oh, yes.

WAUCHOPE: Osa and Martin Johnson. Right. They made adventure movies.

Q: Flying those amphibian planes and all that.

WAUCHOPE: That's right. Exactly. They flew some of the very first amphibians and they flew them over to Africa. In 1933 I believe it was my mother was now their full time secretary back in their apartment in New York while they had a place just outside of Nairobi, which was their base of operations in East Africa, their aircraft flew out of that area as well. My mother was doing their income tax, very few people had to pay income tax at that time, but they made enough money from their movies and lecture tours and books that they did in fact have to pay. My mother sent them a telegram saying it was awfully difficult to do their taxes without being able to talk to them about their expenses. Their records were apparently in something of a shambles. So, they said, "Well, why don't you come out?" By return telegram they said "a ticket is being arranged for you. It's at such and such a location". So, she went out on the S.S. City of New York, which was a ship that my father was the captain of. She met my father and there must have been an attraction. She spent a year in Nairobi from 1933 to '34, and then returned to New York aboard the same ship accompanied by a cheetah and several other animals the Johnsons were sending to zoos in the U.S. Some time shortly thereafter my father and mother married and settled in an apartment in New York. So, they both had their own exposure to Africa in one form or another.

Q: Particularly in an era when this was just really very exotic. I can remember seeing the Martin Johnson films?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, Martin and Osa Johnson. He was the photographer and she was the hunter. She was the one that used to shoot the specimens.

Q: Yes and seeing these movies and all.

WAUCHOPE: Congorilla was one of them. She wrote a book called I Married Adventure that won the National Book Award in 1941. He was killed in a commercial air crash in 1938, I think it was. They were both in the plane, but he was killed and she was severely injured but survived.

Q: Well, were you an only child or did they have other children?

WAUCHOPE: No, I had an older brother and was my sister and myself. My brother was born in '36, my sister in '38 and I was in '41. We grew up in Long Island as I say, my father went to Sheepshead Bay and we moved to the base from our home we just bought on Long Island to live at Sheepshead Bay. When my dad went to sea in the Pacific the family returned to our home in Lloyd Harbor, just north of Huntington, New York on the north shoe of the island. We lived right next door to the elementary school; we went to that school. Then in my own case I went to military school, Stanton Military Academy, for a year and I didn't like it. So, I then went on to the Boston Latin School in Boston, which is a public school, and from there I went to Johns Hopkins University.

Q: Let's talk a little about early education.

WAUCHOPE: Sure.

Q: As a small child or young child, what in elementary school, any subjects kind of appeal to you particularly?

WAUCHOPE: History in particular. History and geography were particularly appealing to me. Something I should have said again in the connection with my father and the Farrell Lines. In April of 1949 my father called my mother from the office and said, "We have some ships being chartered by the American Hawaiian Lines and they're going to be going around the world. Would you like to take the kids on a trip around the world?" My brother was 12, my sister was 10 and I was seven and my mother jumped at the chance and said fine. He said, "Well, you missed the sailing from New York through the Panama Canal, but you're going to go across country by train and meet the ship, the African Planet, in San Francisco." The ship sailed from there to Tokyo, to Vietnam, to Hanoi and then up the river to Saigon and then on to a port for Bangkok, Thailand and then from there the ship reverted to control of the Farrell Lines and went along the East African coast and down to Capetown. We went into the interior of Africa in Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa and rejoined the ship again in Cape Town. So, at age seven, I had some practical exposure to the world, the greater world at that time.

Q: Oh boy.

WAUCHOPE: It was in the period immediately after the war, so that you saw the desolation and economic ruin. My mother had a sister and her husband living in Tokyo. He was with the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission doing studies on the effects of the A-bomb. He had learned Japanese, and he had a MD and a PhD in chemistry. So, we saw the Japanese economy in ruins; there almost no civilian vehicles and every main street had old GI canvas tents along the curbs with people selling all manner of junk like friction cars made out of painted beers cans. I was also impressed going up the Saigon River by all the French and Japanese vessels that had been sunk by both sides. In most cases you could only see the masts and smoke stakes. As a portent of things to come, we also had three Foreign Legionnaires aboard with Bren guns to protect the ship from Viet Minh guerillas who had fired on previous ships going up the river. This is about as exciting as it can get for a seven-year old boy.

Q: Yes, the Saigon River.

WAUCHOPE: There you go.

Q: Sort of at the dinner table, having everybody doing this, was there a lot of talk about the world and all?

WAUCHOPE: Oh, absolutely. My dad made a point, even though he came home until almost 8:00 from commuting from New York, of all sitting down to dinner with the family together. So, in conversations around the dinner table, my father would talk about what was going on in his company and events in the world, and try to draw us in the conversation. He signaled that he valued our opinions and expected us to be aware of what was going on in the world. It was a very stimulating sort of thing I found.

Q: How about reading?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, this was before the days of television, which of course was a great watershed event in kids' education, or lack thereof. We had both an old version of Britannica and the World Book Encyclopedia. I spent a great deal of time I remember as a kid reading the encyclopedia and reading a lot of the history there. I remember that for each country it had sort of a text and picture outline of the major historic events, and so I remember going through all that. I knew about the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 all from reading those books. I read a fair amount and I read mostly nonfiction primarily.

Q: How about when you, any books that may stick in mind, particularly in your earlier years?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I read a great deal about the Civil War. Even to this day is a matter of great interest to me. I don't know that I can cite any particular book, but I did a lot of reading on the Civil War.

Q: The books by, I want to say, Stillness at Appomattox.

WAUCHOPE: Right, I read all the Bruce Catton books.

Q: Bruce Catton books.

WAUCHOPE: That's right, Glory Road, Mr. Lincoln's Army. That's right. Yes, I read all of Bruce Catton's books. They were very readable books.

Q: They were the first readable books that came out after the war. The Douglas Freeman books were a little heavy going.

WAUCHOPE: Heavy going, indeed.

Q: I got those in high schools, but wow.

WAUCHOPE: Lee's Lieutenants and all that, yes, that's true. These were much easier to go through and at that point my brother had gone to military school, the Stanton Military Academy. We used to drive through Virginia on visits to see him. We used to stop and see the battlefields. My mother would take the time to try to give us the chance to see the battlefields. We knew something about the Civil War, so we could talk about it. My brother was always very interested in the military. He attended VMI for almost two years, and then he didn't like it. He literally walked away from it. He joined the Marines as a recruit and did a six month enlistment. He later was able to qualify for a competitive appointment to West Point. He graduated in 1962. Having been in the Marine Corps as a recruit at Parris Island, and having joined the Virginia National Guard at 17 ï¿½, the military was his life. Because of his prior service in the Marines, he was able to obtain a commission in the Marine Corps when he graduated from West Point. He was always spoiling to get into combat, so when he was assigned to Okinawa, he volunteered to go to Vietnam. He won the Bronze Star for an action while he was TDY as an advisor to the Vietnamese rangers. When he returned to Okinawa, his unit had been sent to Chu Lai on the coast of the northern part of South Vietnam. He hadn't been there more than a month when he was killed in June of 1965 along with four other Marines in his unit. He led his detail to secure the rear area of the anvil position in a larger Marine sweep operation. His troops came under sniper fire from VC hidden in tunnels, and he was killed trying to steady his troops and return fire.

Q: Oh boy.

WAUCHOPE: So, I mean he was doing what he wanted to do, but it was very sad and ironic as he had refused to permit his troops to blow up the tunnels in which the VC were hiding behind women and children who were visible at the mouth of the tunnels. His death had a great impact on my family, needless to say.

Q: What attracted you towards, was this the first year of high school that you went to Staunton?

WAUCHOPE: It was, yes. I guess I was very much influenced by brother. I think there is little question about that. When we were kids we didn't play cowboys and Indians. He was such a student of history that we used to play war taking sides like the Russians against the Finns. This was remarkably obscure in history.

Q: The winter war.

WAUCHOPE: That's right, exactly. I always seemed to get stuck being a Russian, which was not a particularly good thing to be at that time, needless to say. We played some rather exotic historical sort of games, and we both had extensive collections of lead soldiers when we were kids. That all had an impact on me, and I wanted to follow in my brother's footsteps, but I very quickly realized that the military was not the life for me.

Q: Then where did you go to school?

WAUCHOPE: I went to Boston Latin School after that. At Staunton, I had done quite well academically, but I just didn't like the military regimen... So, I went up to visit some of the various prep schools in New England. I didn't like those very much, but the Boston Latin School, which is a public school, seemed to have an appeal. My mother had a sister and her husband; the same ones that had been living in Japan, now were living outside of Boston. She and my father were separated at that point and so she said, "Well, look why don't I move up there and you can go to the Boston Latin School?" After three years of struggle, I did graduate from there. It was a much more rigorous school by far.

Q: I was going to say.

WAUCHOPE: Much more rigorous.

Q: It's one of the oldest schools, but also it remains one of the preeminent schools.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. It was founded in 1635, one year before Harvard, and, as they say, Harvard was founded because they needed a place to send the Latin School graduates.

Q: At Boston Latin, what subjects were you taking?

WAUCHOPE: It's very heavy on languages. Of course, you take Latin all the years you're there and it's a six-year school. It goes from the seventh grade to the twelfth, and you must take Latin and you must take two other languages. So, I took French and German, German in lieu of Greek. The other option was classical Greek no less. Then you took mathematics every year, and some science. When Sputnik was launched in 1957, the emphasis began to shift to scientific courses, which at Latin School you usually took only in your senior year. You either took physics or chemistry, and the school began to shift toward the sciences. I got caught up in that and I was good in math in particular and I thought that I wanted to go into engineering. At Latin School, I found the first few months of the school especially tough. I wasn't sure I was going to survive there. The Boston school system is set up in such a manner that there are neighborhood high schools, and then there were six or so city-wide specialized schools. Latin is considered the top, then there's English, Trade and Commerce. I don't know what the others were. They drew from the entire Boston school district and the requirements to get into Boston Latin School were and are very rigorous indeed. At the seventh grade level, what was called the sixth forum, there were as many as 750 kids. When I graduated in 1959, there were 278 in my class. This shows the degree of attrition there was through the six-year process.

Q: Do you remember any of the teachers that particularly struck you?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I remember the English teacher, Mr. Mark Russo, who was a particularly demanding individual, was also my homeroom teacher one year. His particular problem was that he was a graduate of English High School, which was then right across the street from Boston Latin School. He kept taunting us by saying, "You know, you're supposed to be the cream of the cream, and look at you." We used to have to do recitations and memorize from Shakespeare and the poets. I remember committing to memory The Ancient Mariner. It was just part of the rote process Boston Latin. There were eight marking periods a year as well. Once every month your academic performance was recorded as well as you conduct, tardiness and attendance.

Q: As you got towards the end of this, whither?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I was kind of torn at this stage. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I applied to a variety of colleges and I thought I wanted to study engineering, particularly mechanical engineering, and my father encouraged me in that regard. I was accepted by Johns Hopkins and, of course, they have a great engineering school. So, I thought that was certainly a tremendous opportunity. I'll be happy to go there. I didn't know Baltimore very well, but that was fine.

Q: Your mother was from there?

WAUCHOPE: She was by origin, and she had a sister who had lived there for some years. I had seen the Hopkins campus when I visited my aunt, but by then this aunt had moved elsewhere. So, it was kind of a new experience to me, but that's part of the process. My parents had always told me that one of the best things in life is that as you become older and more responsible, you do move out and you go out on your own. You make your own life, as they had both done. My father, whose father was a socialist, ironically became very much the capitalist, and eventually ended up being the president of his maritime shipping company. He rejected his father's ideology and he went off on his own. My mother left Baltimore and went to New York to make her way in the world. So, they instilled in us the idea that you are expected to launch on your own. It's one of the great experiences of life. I thought, fine, this attitude sounds good to me.

Q: Well, tell me, you went to Johns Hopkins from when to when?

WAUCHOPE: '59 to '63, and after a year and a half of engineering it became evident to me the mysteries of calculus, first differential, which I could barely fathom, and then integral calculus, about which I didn't have a clue, that I was not going to make it as an engineer if I couldn't handle the math. So, I returned home at Thanksgiving vacation my sophomore year and I said to my father, "This is not working. I'm not going to make it in engineering." I said, "Maybe I should go into the military for a couple of years or something like that." He was very adamantly opposed to that. He said, "Well, what would you like to study?" I said, "History." He said, "Well, that's fine, except what do you do with history?" He was a very pragmatic individual. I said, "Well, I'm not sure, but you asked me what I'd like to study and I've told you." So, he said, "Fair enough." He had a friend who was a professor at the Hopkins graduate school, Professor McKay. He said, "Well, have lunch with this guy and find out from him what he thinks you could do with a history degree." So, I did and McKay said, "Well, it's limited, of course you could teach, you could research, you could work for the history department of a U.S. government agency among other options." None of that sounds particularly appealing to me, but I wanted to learn more about history. So, I returned to Hopkins, changed my classes around and became a liberal arts major, a B.A. generalist candidate with what they called a concentration in history. I took courses in Russian, German, and English history and economics, political science, subjects I found very intriguing. I did a great deal better at that because it was something that I really enjoyed.

Q: Well, during this '59 to '63 period, one of the things that's, I won't say watershed, but it certainly stirred up the youth of America was the arrival of President Kennedy on the scene. Did that hit both the campus and you at all?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, it did. I remember from my personal recollection the great impact the 1962 Cuban missile crisis had on us. By this time my brother was an officer in the Marine Corps. He was still in training even having graduated from West Point. They required commissioned officers in the Marines to do another six months of training and then advanced officers training. He was mobilized during the crisis, and I didn't know where he was. He was with a unit that was supposed to be in the reserve for the invasion of Cuba. I can remember the tense moments when Kennedy spoke on television to the nation. We watched him at the Student Rec Center in the dorms where there was one of the few televisions. In those days, that was about the only place on campus where you could go to watch television. When Kennedy spoke, I remember how silent the room became where ordinarily it was chaos with the kids bellying up to get a sub sandwich or coke. All of a sudden the students understood that this was serious, serious business. We were all on the edge of our seats for quite some time over that crisis, concerned as were most Americans about a possible nuclear exchange.

I was involved in a related event regarding the U.S. embargo on Cuba. There was to be a demonstration protesting the embargo in Washington. Madeleine O'Hare Murray, the well-known atheist, lived in Baltimore, and she was organizing a protest at the White House one Saturday morning. She wanted to rally the Baltimore contingent at the Hopkins campus, and then head down to Washington from there. There was a counter demonstration group, which felt that it was inappropriate for her to muster her forces at the Hopkins campus. It wanted to block the rally and disassociate Hopkins from the effort. I participated in the counter demonstration. I was very supportive of the concept of using restrained force in dealing with Cuba. There was a confrontation that lasted an hour or so. Finally the police were invited onto the campus and Murray was escorted off. We just wanted to make the point that she wouldn't represent Johns Hopkins in her Washington demonstration.

The other great issue of the time, of course, was civil rights. Civil rights demonstrations were ongoing, and some Hopkins students were involved in them. I remember at the time I was surprised that in the entire university, which had 1200 undergraduates at that time, there were only six black students, and this in a city that was predominantly black. There were demonstrations in Baltimore and in Washington, and I had friends who participated. While I did not participate, I was aware that the civil rights issue was obviously an issue of great national importance. Orval Faubus was governor of Arkansas and his resistance to integration was much discussed. I had no use for the racists, but in retrospect, I was having too good a time in college to become seriously involved. The Kennedy appeal for Americans to ask not what the country could do for them, but what you could do for the country had a great impact on our generation. When I was in Army ROTC, we were being instructed on non-conventional warfare, which was the flavor of the month, if you will, in the military at that time. We were studying Sun Tzu and Mao Zedong's writings such as how the fish, the insurgent, swims in the friendly waters, the peasantry. Counter insurgency was to figure out ways to counter Maoist doctrine, and Vietnam and Laos were key areas in this conflict. In the summer of '62 Hopkins ROTC juniors went to summer camp at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania along with ROTC from schools all over the eastern half of the United States. We did exercises in ambush and patrolling, with the focus being on Southeast Asia. Again the idea was that you had to answer the call to confront communism, which was making inroads around the world, which was a threat to democracy and to our way of life. We had an obligation to try to halt that and to understand what motivated them. We rejected their philosophy, but had to try to understand their methodology.

Q: Were you as you moved into history looking for something, you know, what to do with it?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, but being in the ROTC, I knew that I had a two-year obligation in the military. I was called; I love this terminology, an "obligated volunteer," so I knew what I would be doing for at least two years. I thought about what I would do after that, but I really didn't have a great concern. I thought well, maybe the military is the career for me; or maybe I could find something else. The military school experience hadn't been a positive one, but at that rate, maybe if we're broadening our perspective as the military seemed to be in their view of global issues, maybe there is a place for me in that organization. I was a distinguished military graduate in ROTC and as such, I was allowed to chose my branch of the army, I chose army intelligence. I thought, well, who knows, this might be the thing for me. So, I kept an open mind about it without any strong sense of what I would do after the two years in the Army.

Q: So, in '63 you went right into the army.

WAUCHOPE: I did. I graduated in June and I reported for duty in Fort Benning in August. All the intelligence officers had to go through infantry officer basic at Fort Benning. August was a hellish time of year to be down in Georgia. I was commissioned upon graduation. I then took some time to see a bit of the country before I headed to Georgia. I completed nine weeks at infantry officer school. Then I was assigned to the Intelligence School at Fort Holabird, which is now a minimum-security prison where John Dean spent six months for his part in Watergate. I did the basic counterintelligence course there. During my training there, John Kennedy was assassinated. We were all deeply shocked. I had friends in Washington and went down on Saturday morning to witness the transfer of Kennedy's casket from the White House to the Capitol to be on public display. The scene was memorable; tens of thousands of spectators and yet absolute silence. There was only the sound of the horses' hooves on the pavement as they drew the caisson up Pennsylvania Avenue.

As my four-month counter-intelligence training was winding up, I had to explore assignment opportunities. I could do a tour in Europe, but tours there are all a full two years, which meant I would have to extend your obligation by a year. There was Korea, which was a 13-month tour, and then there was Vietnam, which was only a 12-month tour. Korea sounded like yesterday's news and Vietnam sounded like where things were getting interesting. So, I asked to go to a counter-intelligence unit in Vietnam. I was told there were no openings, at that time. This was March of 1964 and so I said, well, okay, I'd wait for an opening. They said there would be openings in October of '64, which was fine with me. They had to find things for me to do until October. They sent me to some advanced training. I took Vietnamese language training under the Berlitz method, and I took some other courses, which I guess they still teach in the army. One was called Defense Against Mechanical Entry, or DAME. Theoretically, it teaches you basic physical security, but in reality it was about how to pick locks and to surreptitiously break into a facility. All these things had to be done in such a manner so that the other side wouldn't know you're stealing their secrets. They used to show us how you could expand a doorframe and so, if there was a sliding lock or a bolt, you could expand the frame to bypass the bolt, and the enemy would never know you had gotten in. Theoretically it was our job to figure out how to stop our enemies from doing these things to us. We learned how to get a slide chain off a chain-looked door and slip in. One of the useful things that I learned in the Army. I used to show my friends at Hopkins, about the great things I learned in the Army. I also took an investigative photography course that gave me a real interest in that medium. An opening in Vietnam did come up in October and I was assigned to the 704th Intelligence Corps detachment based just outside of Saigon in Gia Dinh Province. Our responsibility was as the counterintelligence advisors to the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam or MACV. I was the section chief of a unit that investigated terrorist acts and tried to pick up intelligence information on terrorists and provide reporting on it. We also did background investigations and followed leads on U.S. personnel. I had a lot of exotic experiences in Vietnam.

Q: Well, I'd like to talk a little about this. Were you were there when there were a couple of sensational attacks? There was one on the floating restaurant and another.

WAUCHOPE: The Mekong Restaurant bombing, yes?

Q: Were you there when that happened?

WAUCHOPE: Actually the Mekong bombing occurred while I was on R&R, but I was there for the bombing of the Brinks Hotel which was just before Christmas in 1964. It occurred just before Bob Hope made his first visit to Vietnam with his troupe. He made a joke about it. Something to the effect "I looked out the window of my hotel and saw another hotel going by on fire." We investigated the scene of that bombing, and then I was there for the American Embassy bombing in March of 1965. I actually made it to the scene when the building was still in flames. I saw a fire truck pull up and run over the body of a women, some hapless Vietnamese that had been killed on the sidewalk. The building next door was on fire. I got my agents out and started collecting what information they could. We knew the Embassy security people pretty well. I was just about to get out of the car myself and somebody came supporting an Embassy official who had been peppered with glass from head to toe and was bleeding all over the front of his clothes. The escort said, "Here's an American. I'll put you in his car; he'll take you to the hospital." I thought, well this isn't really what I'm supposed to do, but how can you not do it? I said, okay, fine, put him in. He was bleeding pretty profusely, but nothing gushing at least. So, I headed out into traffic. Of course, the explosion had caused all the traffic to be diverted and I immediately got into a God awful traffic jam. I'm leaning on the horn and making all kinds of crazy maneuvers, but the guy in the back was very calm. He said, "That's all right. Take it easy. I'm okay; I'll make it to the hospital." So, he cooled me down a bit, and I eventually got to the hospital which was in chaos as well. I got to the entranceway and the MPs were excited, but, if you're an American you could come in. So, I said I've got this wounded guy. They immediately took him and put him in the emergency and rolled him in and said, "Now get out of here." So, I got out and eventually made my way back and picked up the information I needed. It was a horrible event.

Q: Were you able, I mean, what was your impression of were we sort of cleaning up after the terrorist attack or were we able to stop things at all?

WAUCHOPE: Well, that was the concept. If we could figure out how they did it, we could try to prevent the VC from using the same technique again... A good example was the Brinks Hotel bombing. The Viet Cong dressed up as a Vietnamese army major and by virtue of his rank, he was able to intimidate the gate guards to drive his vehicle in and park it underneath the building. He set the fuse and then he slipped out. That's an obvious route that's had to be cut off. I mean any Vietnamese officer has got to be checked, or you've got to replace all the guards with Americans. So that was the concept, to prevent repetition, to find out what actually did happen. The chaos after an event like that is staggering - sorting out what really happened versus what people think they saw. I will have to say about the Viet Cong, as much as I was personally committed to the U.S. effort there, it was very evident that the VC were a dedicated and formidable enemy. I talked an American advisor who had come up from the Fourth Corps, and I remember this particular individual saying, "I wish I was advising the other side." The VC are really disciplined and professional. He said, the people I'm working with go out on patrols with their transistor radios blaring, obviously trying to chase off anybody that might be out there so they don't have to engage in combat with them. He said the other side never makes the same mistake twice. If we ever do catch them off guard, they almost instantaneously disseminate what went wrong and make certain that they won't do it again. So that, for example, they frequently would attack a fixed target, and the relief force would come out, and the real object of the exercise was to ambush the relief force. The South Vietnamese army fell for that over and over and over again. There was a certain sense of futility, which led to U.S. troops saying that all we needed was two American divisions and we could clear this insurgency up in no time. I was skeptical about that because the issue, of course, was how do you tell the good guys and from the bad guys. You never really knew. Our unit was assigned specific cases to investigate, for example, outside the U.S. air force base in Tan Son Nhut, a GI bought the equivalent of a hot dog outside the gate, and found it was wrapped in a classified air force maintenance manual. Where did the vendor get that? So, we checked it out, and some Vietnamese had found the manual in the trash and had picked it up. Another time, after an operation took place and U.S. troops found, among other captured documents, the carbon copies of a computer printout of the complete staffing pattern of MACV, their grades , all their data, the I.D. numbers and all of the rest of it. So, we had to try to find out what happened in that instance. We came to learn that the VC had so many stolen documents that their biggest problem was finding the time to analyze it in real time; for real OB, order of battle, information. They were virtually carting it away by the truckload largely because the South Vietnamese were selling it to the VC, as host government had no serious document security.

Another mission of our unit, in which I participated to a limited degree, was the recovery of American prisoners of war. At the time I joined the unit, I think there were some 29 American who were believed to be alive and in the hands of the Viet Cong. By the time I left the number was closer to 120. Our job was to track them from intelligence information, and particularly from informants. The Vietnamese quickly figured out that the informant business was a very lucrative. They'd come up with all kinds of tales. They would tell us, they saw an American at such and such a location and then we would ask them what the American looked like and try to get them to provide a physical description. We knew what every POW looked like, so we'd check it out. The intelligence peddling was such that one time we had a fellow that came in and claimed to have a certain amount of information. We quickly dismissed it as bogus because about three weeks later we were told we were to go to downtown Saigon and set up a discrete defensive perimeter around a downtown office building by driving our cars around it. We were all to be armed with both our side arms and with weapons in the car because OSI, the Air Force intel group, had an informant who was so valuable and so knowledgeable that they didn't want anybody to come in and blow him away. OSI had a safe house in an office and everything to debrief the guy, so we moved in and out between mobile patrols. We traded off going inside the outer office and then patrolling the corridor. In that process, we were sitting in the antechamber and the door opened a crack and we looked in to see that the OSI informant was the same guy we'd had dismissed three weeks earlier. The OSI thought they had the real thing. There were an awful lot of different intel groups tripping over each other in Saigon, as you can imagine.

Q: No, I must say that the people giving this type of information talk to people who were in Thailand 30 years later and people peddling fake dog tags. I mean the whole thing is still going on...

WAUCHOPE: There also was a hierarchy in the intel community in Saigon. We were near bottom of the food chain in that regard because we were authorized to pay only up to $10,000 for an informant. The CIA, by contrast, had the authority to sign up to a million dollars for prisoner recovery. We knew some of the CIA people and they were real cowboys, boots and all. I mean this mission was a high priority, obviously. We did launch recovery operations while I was there, but we had to use Vietnamese troops with U.S. advisors. These were supposed to be elite troops. We had really solid information which we'd more or less confirmed with overhead photography, but when they got there the Americans, of which there were two had been moved out about 15 minutes before the Vietnamese troops arrived. The advisers figured that, despite not telling tell the Vietnamese exactly where they were going, somehow they got the word and they passed it to the Viet Cong in time. They recovered 72 Vietnamese officers in this raid, but the Americans were gone. Our focus was obviously on the Americans.

Q: Did we get any?

WAUCHOPE: No. In the time I was there we never got one we could take credit for. One escaped. He was Sgt. Camacho, a Special Forces sergeant, one tough character. A member of my team went to Okinawa to debrief this guy because we needed to find out what he could tell us about how they treated our prisoners and where they were moved to. That was the only one that got out, but he got out on his own. Several others died in captivity and we learned about that, and the circumstances. Essentially American prisoners of war were badly mistreated and exploited politically. The peace movement in the United States didn't want to hear any of this. The Jane Fonda crowd was used as propaganda tools. The prisoners were moved around constantly, with ropes around their necks and their hands tied and they were moved from one village to another to show this is the great imperialist captured and defeated. The VC mistreated them pretty severely. I mean, it wasn't the repetitive torture and this nonsense in The Deer Hunter, all that kind of stuff is overdone, but they were not treated viciously.

Q: How would you say your group, your colleagues felt about whither Vietnam?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I think at that stage, and this again is October '64 to October of '65 were still committed to the U.S. effort. The other significant event during my time in Vietnam was the arrival of Americans combat units.

Q: Now this is after the, what was it, the attack on the airport?

WAUCHOPE: At Ben Hoa Airport, exactly. I was there when Ben Hoa was hit and we were all pretty stunned that they could pull that off. They later rocketed and attacked the Da Nang Airport with satchel charges and had a remarkable degree of success. Of course we also started to bomb after the Gulf of Tonkin in August of '64, but then we shifted our aircraft to Da Nang which was a much more efficient operation to do it from a fixed platform like an air base in the northern part of South Vietnam. Then of course we needed to bring in the Hawk missiles to protect it from potential retaliation by North Vietnamese air force, and then you had to bring in the marines to protect the Hawk missile batteries. I was there when the Marines came into I CORPS in the North and when the first infantry division landed, when the Koreans came. We had picked up information about a VC effort against the Koreans, which we found kind of amusing. The Viet Cong heard that the Koreans were coming, and there was a fair amount of fanfare about it and they were going to be debarking in Saigon. They were going to come up the river in LSTs and be landed and there would be a parade and a ceremony. The Viet Cong though it could quickly create a schism between the Vietnamese people and the Koreans by having somebody dressed in a Korean uniform throw a grenade into a bar or something like that, and everybody will know that it was the Koreans who did it. When the VC saw the Koreans and these guys were squat and muscular, they gave up the plan. The Koreans were select troops, and they were tough.

Q: Tough and stocky.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. We didn't think they were going to find anyone that looked like a Korean. So, they gave up on the idea.

Q: The Koreans, I mean nobody messed with the Koreans.

WAUCHOPE: No, they didn't.

Q: I mean they kind of got to that place near Da Nang sort of were rather static, but within their area nobody.

WAUCHOPE: From the perspective of the Viet Cong, and later the North Vietnamese, it simply wasn't worth taking on the Koreans and they were absolutely no-nonsense. The U.S. operated with certain constraints in the way we fought the war. The Koreans had no such constraints, and they said of themselves, we know this enemy; we fought this enemy before at home. The VC are brutal people, and we will be brutal as well. In their areas there was almost no activity because they were tested early on. A Korean platoon was out beyond its perimeter on a reconnaissance in force and a Viet Cong battalion attacked them. The Koreans damn near destroyed the Viet Cong battalion and while the Koreans got mauled, by comparison the casualties they inflicted were just unbelievable. We heard from American advisors operating with Vietnamese troops about what the Korean areas were like; the VC were terrified of them. Their hand-to-hand combat skills were legend; the VC didn't stand a chance man-to-man against the Koreans. Because they were select troops; there was an army division and a marine division. They accepted only volunteers and they took them on the basis of their performance record and their abilities, and they were paid extra, I think it was triple.

Q: They each came back with the equivalent to a large container full of PX goods.

WAUCHOPE: That was something of a scandal. . I thought, fine, if these guys were willing to take it on all comers, let them have the privileges. There were up to 50,000 Koreans there and they were worth their weight in gold. While I was there some other units came in, the Australians came in country while I was there. They were a rowdy crowd, but relatively effective. The Australians said, well, we've fought this war before in the Emergency in Malaysia, and we know all about it. You have to be willing to wade up to your neck in the water along a footpath used by the enemy for as long as three days, and then you could spring your ambush. Well, the greatest success they had was down on the Vung Tau peninsula which is at the mouth of the Saigon River. The Viet Cong were probing their positions and a heavy rainstorm began. They were able to maneuver their APCs behind the Viet Cong as they were moving on their position. The Viet Cong didn't hear them because of the rain. The Australians mowed the VC down with heavy machine guns. This was really the antithesis of what they said you had to do to be successful. They quickly realized that it was going to be a long difficult struggle as well. Their most fun was when they went into Saigon for a day's R&R. They were transported in by truck. They were told okay, you had all day here and will be picked up at 6:00 in the afternoon to return to base before dark. By 6:00 they were so drunk it was unbelievable. They seemed to feel that they had a sort of a reputation to maintain. Many of the Aussies were so drunk they had to be thrown up onto the truck. Many of them had been picked up by their own MPs or ours, and been hauled back to the square and thrown up onto their trucks.

Q: Did you have any contact with the American Embassy other than picking up the wounded?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, we did. Louis Gaffney was the security officer, RSO, a real nice guy and we used to see him on a periodic basis to talk about physical security and to exchange information. We had document security case in which we were investigating about the alleged leak of highly sensitive information and we were called upon to interview all the U.S. officials with that clearance. We went to the embassy building, the one that was later blown up. I met John Burke who was a political officer there. I ended up working for John Burke years late in ARA/CAR. We didn't have much contact with the political section per se, but mostly with the security side. I took the Foreign Service exam at the embassy. I had taken the Foreign Service exam in December while I was still in training at Fort Holabird. I had a fraternity brother living in Washington who said he was talking the Foreign Service exam and would I be interested in taking it. I said, what's the Foreign Service exam. He said, well, you know, the people who staff embassies and consulates. So I signed up on a lark and I took the exam in one of these huge high schools in Northwest Washington. I didn't pass it, but I got a 65. They sent me a letter saying I was close enough that I ought to take it again. So, I began to think maybe this was a good option, especially as my stateside experience in the military reaffirmed to me that I didn't like the military life. This business of saluting people, or being saluted; neither one appealed to me. The whole regimented process and the hierarchy was unappealing. It was a time when the military was so gung ho that criticism of such things injustices or racism was not well received. I remember being in the officers' club in Fort Holabird and a captain was drunk and obnoxious. There was an enlisted man working as bartender. This captain was profane and abusive. A friend of mine from Hopkins and our dates were there. This captain came over to our table and he said offensive things to the girls. I thought to myself, you know, this is what's wrong with this system. There's no way a person, just because he's a captain, should be able to get away with this sort of nonsense. So, I determined that I wouldn't stay in. When I got the notice saying that I should take it again, I arranged to take the exam at the American Embassy in Saigon. At that time the consular section was on the compound where they later built the new embassy. It was on the other side of town from the old embassy. I took the exam with perhaps 30 others, and this time I passed.

Q: Was the consular section where they built the new embassy?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, it was. The office of the RSO was there as well and you had that long fence along that main very dramatic boulevard and there were these two low-lying buildings. One was consular and the other security...

Q: I was later consul general in Saigon.

WAUCHOPE: Really?

Q: '69 to '70, about 18 months. I think we had that's where the consular section was.

WAUCHOPE: Is that right?

Q: We were outside the security perimeter, you know. All the political officers were in this high rise building and we were, we noticed that we were the, their line of defense was beyond us. I mean, we were expendable.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, well, that's kind of how it was. I guess they thought that they wanted to have it apart because they had so many locals applying there. That reminds me of Robert Apple, the correspondent, I guess he's still at the Washington Post, married the vice consul there. That was another contact we would occasionally have, we would deal with her on issues of military personnel issues. GIs who had security clearances got into trouble with the law in Saigon, and that would come to their attention. Her name was Smith I think, but she was one tough lady. These characters would come in, these American GIs, and they'd want to marry these bargirls that they had just met. In most cases, it was the first time they'd ever had sex, and they were enchanted with the Vietnamese women. They'd come in and she'd size up the situation right away because in many instances she'd seen these women in there before. She'd ask the couple a few questions and then she'd ask the girl to step outside. She'd close the door and then she would read the kid the riot act. "I've seen this woman in there x number of times. She's just another Goddamn prostitute." Anyway, I admired her. I thought she is one tough officer, a good sensible person. She was slightly injured in the March 1963 bombing from glass fragments.

Q: Well, you passed the second time around?

WAUCHOPE: I passed the second time, yes and that gave me an option. I thought well, maybe I better to learn more about this organization, now that I had some practical experience.

Q: Well, were you talking to people saying what is this Foreign Service thing?

WAUCHOPE: A little bit. I'll tell you what, my father said after I took the exam the first time and I got the letter saying I should take it again. He said he had a friend who was in the Foreign Service. In fact he knew several Foreign Service people. Of course, being in the West African shipping business he knew Alex Davitt who had been the desk officer for Liberia and as it turned out Alex Davitt ran the A-100 course when I came in. But, he knew a fellow by the name of Paul Cleveland whose name is pretty well known.

Q: Paul and I served in Korea together.

WAUCHOPE: Is that right?

Q: Yes.

WAUCHOPE: I called him and introduced myself and we talked a bit about the Service He told me about passing the exam, what you needed to know to pass the exam. For example, for the orals in particular, I asked what's the best way to prepare yourself?" He said, "Read the New York Times everyday." As simple as that. He said, "You've got to be up on events, you've got to show the ability to understand the news." He gave me some idea of what you're likely to be confronted with at that time, and of how the oral panel was structured and what you could expect, which was helpful, I must say.

Q: You got your discharge from the army?

WAUCHOPE: I did. After my brother was killed in June 1965, I escorted his body back to the United States. A friend of my father's, who had a contact in Vice President Humphrey's office, explored the options for not going back to Vietnam since I was a sole surviving son. I declined the offer. I explained that I was not really in a combat situation. I want to complete my time, and I have my men in the section whom I was very close to. I'm still close to some of them today. I said, "No, I want to finish out my tour." So, I went back and I then departed in October of '65. I came back on a plane with men of the First Cavalry Division. This movie that's just come out titled "We Were Soldiers Once and Young" is about the battle they had just been involved in. It was actually a sequence of engagements and the guys on the plane were those whose enlistments were up. I came back to Oakland and we all knew about the demonstrations. The demonstrators were blocking the gates to Oakland Army Terminal where we were to be discharged. There was a fair amount of unhappiness about this among those of us who just wanted to process out of the Army. We were out there risking our lives and there were people back in the United States berating us as baby killers and this kind of stuff. I thought, I don't agree with them, but I'm not going to make a big issue out of it. Generally speaking it was not considered advisable to wear your uniform when you were back in the States, especially in San Francisco.

Q: Where did you go? You got out it would be '65?

WAUCHOPE: October of '65, right. I took my oral exam in December here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute in Rosslyn. I came back to my parents' home and stayed there for a couple of months. I took the oral exam and passed it.

Q: Do you recall how the exam went?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. There were four examiners. Four males; I remember they were all fairly senior people. There was one fellow who was off to one side. He was a labor attachï¿½, in the labor reporting function. They asked me a sequence of questions and I had been told by talking to several people what to expect. In fact, I had a friend who had been with me in Vietnam and he'd gone through the process, and later joined the service. He said, "It's not just a factual exercise. You are being tested to see how you react. They will probe to a point where you don't know anything about what they're asking. Then the question is how well you handle the fact that you don't have the answer. If you try to B.S. it you're going to just work yourself into a hole, and you want to try to avoid that." So, I was at least forewarned about that. Most of the questions were straightforward, and I remember for example, they asked me about the significance of the Treaty of Rome. I said to them, "My knowledge of that is fairly limited." And they gave me a break. My father had also told me he had had a friend who'd been in the Foreign Service as well, and he said that when he went for his oral examination they asked him what he knew about Zanzibar? He said, "All I know about Zanzibar is that they grow cloves, and when I've been drinking they have a little bowl of cloves in the bar and you bite into them to cover the smell of alcohol on your breath." They thought that was a fine answer. I mean, again the question of how you handle yourself is more important than the precision or accuracy of your answers. So, in any event, that went fine, but this fellow from the labor function said to me, "Well, I see this experience you've had as a deck cadet on a Farrell Lines ship to Africa. How much could you really have gotten out of that? Since you're the president of the company's son, I'm sure they treated you with kid gloves." In other words, his job was trying to provoke me. I said, "Well, that may be your perception, but the reality was that I had to get up early to shoot the stars at dawn. I'd get up at 4:30 in the morning. Deck officer had to know how to navigate by the stars, so I'd come up to the bridge and shoot the stars just before sunrise. I had to chip paint, and do other things like other members of the deck crew to learn their jobs. My father told the captains of the ships that they were not to give me any preferential treatment."

Q: Well, you never mentioned this, what was this deck cadet thing?

WAUCHOPE: The deck cadet position was a requirement of; the merchant marine administration for all American-flag shippers, and Farrell Lines was one of the 13 at that time, had to create these positions. Every U.S.-flag ship had two berths for deck cadets and two berths for engine cadets. Theoretically these slots were for juniors or seniors from the New York State Merchant Marine Academy, the Massachusetts Marine Merchant Academy, the Maine Marine Merchant Academy and the United States Marine Merchant Academy. So, you had to have these slots and forecastles had to be provided. In point of fact, there were no other cadets, either deck or engine cadets, when I went out on the two voyages I made to Africa. Cadets had a small forecastle with four bunks. My first voyage was in 1959. I went out on the last voyage of the S.S. African Enterprise, a small 80-passenger ship, the last remaining passenger ship of the Farrell Lines. Obviously travel on passenger ships was no longer viable and they were losing about a million dollars a year on these ships. The principal liability was it carried only about 8,000 tons of cargo, where the general cargo ships carried about 10,000 tons. The difference was enough to make these ships unprofitable, and they had to hire almost as many people to take care of the passengers as the passengers it carried. So, I went to South Africa and up the coast to Lourenï¿½o Marques and Beira, Mozambique. Then the ship turned around and sailed to Capetown via Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London. I made that complete voyage. In '60 I went out again. I had to go to summer school at Hopkins for differential calculus, and so I could only make a truncated voyage. I went out on one ship, the African Dawn and returned on another Farrell ship. I went only as far as Monrovia, Liberia, which was ironic, because I ended up being the DCM and Chargï¿½ in Liberia. I went to see the American Vice Consul to the old embassy building and I was transferred from the ship's crew list from the one ship to the other ship in front of the vice consul, as was required. I was paid $111 a month. It was a nominal fee and you were to learn the skills of a deck officer. Every watch of the deck crew included two ordinary seamen, one able bodied seaman and a boson. There is a carpenter, a carpenter's assistant and a Deck Officer had to know something about each of those functions. Then you had to learn about stowing cargo and ship operations. While the ship had the Loran system, cadets still had to learn about navigation, shooting the stars and taking noon sun lines and calculating the ship's position. We depended on Loran, but the ship's officers also backstopped it by doing star sights with sextants. They made me go through the entire course that would have been required of a cadet at the merchant marine academy.

Q: At any time were you thinking of a merchant marine career?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I'll tell you, my father and I did not always see eye to eye on a variety of things, but somehow I felt that if I went into the merchant marine business, I would be dwarfed by my father's achievements in that arena. While it appealed to me to a certain extent, it did not have that extra dimension that I thought government service would provide which is to say representing the United States of America as opposed to the financial interests of a company and a group of investors. That really was a factor for me. I felt it would be very honorable and rewarding to serve the United States.

Q: Did you get any feel that the American merchant marine was almost a dying entity?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, well, there were a whole other series of issues that relate to that. The American unions were so powerful and politically active; every American-flag ship had four different unions aboard. These were the Masters, Mates and Pilots, the marine engineers union, the radio operators union and then for the sailors, the Seafarers International or the National Maritime Union. They all had to be satisfied and when their contracts came up for renewal, any one of them could prevent a ship from sailing. On top of that you had the demands of the longshoremen. For example, after we came back from West Africa in the African Dawn, we had 375 tons of cargo to discharge in Boston. This is very modest amount of cargo, and it should have taken half a day with a sufficient longshoremen. The first day, we tied up alongside about 10:00 a.m., so we could have had it done by the end of the day if they had been cooperative. The Farrell Lines representative said the longshoremen weren't going to work that afternoon. So we just laid alongside. The next day they showed up but they worked for only about an hour or so, and then they heard there was another ship discharging a hazardous cargo or a cargo for which they would be paid more to handle. So they walked off the ship. They had discharged a couple hundred tons by that time. Then they said they might come back, but they didn't. The next morning they came and it was raining. They said we'd have to rig tarps over the holds for them. The captain called the Farrell headquarters in New York and said, this is crazy, we're wasting money. A 10,000-ton ship in those days cost about $2,000 a day to operate, and we kept having to change the sailing board. Changing the sailing board meant that all members of the crew had to report two hours before the sailing time posted on the board at the gangway. We had to keep paying both the crew and the longshoremen. In the end, the ship carried the remaining cargo to New York and shipped it to Boston by train. It became so uneconomical that later the Farrell Lines didn't call in Boston anymore because the longshoremen were so corrupt and so unwilling to cooperate. So, that was a key element in the decay of the American merchant marine industry. It was both the onboard unions and the longshoremen, as well as cheap foreign competition that crippled the industry. The maritime administration tried to keep the merchant marine as a vital defense industry by subsidizing construction, and operating costs, and it would make up operating losses. When it came to the crew demands, the government would simply let the crew dictate what the shippers had to do. For the operator, there was a point at which the business was no longer profitable. Oftentimes companies would sail under a foreign flag, and then they could hire crews of any nationality. They might or might not have American captains. It was said at that time in the early '60s that the cost of operating an American ship was twice as much as the next most expensive ship, which was the British. Shippers were forced to hire redundant crew members. For example, a C3 cargo vessel sailing to West Africa carrying almost 11,000 tons of cargo had to have 52 men aboard. A ship of that size shouldn't need more than about 24 men, but you had to have all the union-required positions filled.

Q: This sounds like American railroads.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, essentially it was. They were very much similar in regard to subsidies. The industry was under constant fire, and only when special circumstances would arise such as the Vietnam War, did they make a profit. When there was a requirement for American bottoms to carry cargos such as AID cargos, they did well. This sector became increasingly important part of Farrell's business because of AID's activities in Africa. Over the long term, the prospects never seemed very good. The more so if it had to keep this bloated personnel structure and try to keep it operating. I remember for example, the day before we arrived at New York, we had to ship the booms from their stored position at sea and raise them so they can discharge cargo. According to the agreement between the unions and the shippers, you've got to turn out the entire deck crew to ship the booms, and you have to pay them two hours overtime. It takes about 20 minutes to complete the job. The First Mate did not turn out the entire deck crew, instead he had the watch do it. So, the union steward aboard the ship came to the first officer whose job required him to deal with union issues. The steward said he was going to protest this when we get back to the pier in Brooklyn. The first officer explained himself, and the union rep said, I don't care, we're going to protest. The mate said, all right fine. I talked to the first officer after the representative left and he said, well, this is small potatoes. We'll let this go, we'll pay it off and we won't make an issue out of it because it's better to concede something small than to have the shop steward find some other issue like the food or some procedure that would have to be changed.. He said, it's better to have something small like this.

Q: I know as consul general in Saigon, we had these ships and of course we had the normal, more than the normal province because many of the people applying there were difficult. The old China coasters and the whole thing. The way we dealt with this was when the ship arrived, my office, the consul general's office had a coast guard officer assigned there and had a union representative, the master's mates, Pat Kelly was the man. But they would board the ship and so all of a sudden they would be faced with one, the coast guard, two, and a union representatives and with the consular people behind them. That stopped an awful lot of crap.

WAUCHOPE: Well, that's a good move.

Q: Well, back to the Foreign Service exam, after the union guy needling you and all this, any other things coming up?

WAUCHOPE: No, as I said, there were a couple of other subjects on which they went beyond my knowledge. I must admit I took refuge in the fact that I had been in Vietnam, and I hadn't been able to track so issues as well as I might have. They seemed to buy that explanation. I recall the session lasting just shy of three hours and my recollection is that we did have a very short break.

Q: Because when I was doing it in the '70s, we'd limit ourselves to about an hour.

WAUCHOPE: Is that right? Well, this was a fairly grueling process and you were told to expect it to be up to three hours and that they would let you know immediately after the session. You'd have to wait about 20 minutes or a half an hour it find out the outcome.

Q: Yes, it's a long 20 minutes.

WAUCHOPE: I felt I had done reasonably well in presenting myself. I realized I was on, that this was "show time." I guess I succeeded.

Q: Well, then what happened?

WAUCHOPE: Well, let's see, that was in December and then I got married to my first wife at the end of that year. We were married on the 30th of December. Then I waited for an appointment, and nothing came and nothing came. Then finally the department advised me on relatively short notice, can you report to the A-100 class starting on March 31st?

Q: This would be '66?

WAUCHOPE: 1966, right. I said, well, I wasn't doing anything else; I didn't have any other career plans at that time. We'd rented an apartment, but I sure was anxious to have some hard information. In retrospect, that was a pretty quick turn around. They had talked about maybe the summer, but all of a sudden a training position apparently came open at that time. So, I reported for the first day and I remember my expectations versus the reality when they assembled the A-100 class. I'm trying to remember what the class number was A-57. There were 37 people in our class. There was one female and 36 males. They were all white and the fact that there was only one female was noted by the class. There were three lawyers, there were about half with masters degrees, but most of us were just a bachelors degree. More than half had military experience. Contrast that to today, or even 20 years ago. It's really quite extraordinary in terms of advanced degrees and military service. I had a vague sense of what kind of people is this organization was likely to attract. I must say I was favorably impressed. The people were all articulate and reasonably friendly and gregarious; probably the average officer was more gregarious than I was inclined to be. Some of them were overly self-important, which always happens in a group like that. Alex Davitt, our Coordinator took quick control of the group. We were sworn in the next day which had turned out to be April Fools' Day. That became a standing joke, was this for real since it was April Fools' Day. The A-100 class was six weeks at that time.

Q: That sounds about right.

WAUCHOPE: I will say this about it; the A-100 class had a standing or stature that was such that the group had access to the highest levels of government. I remember we visited Congress. We had a session with Congressman Derwinski from Chicago and Congressman Gallagher from New Jersey. Gallagher later went to jail for his connections with organized crime.

Q: Derwinski almost did, didn't he?

WAUCHOPE: Derwinski got into trouble too, but for other reasons. Derwinski later became the Counselor of the Department of State. At that time he felt compelled to berate us all for being less than "true Americans" because any red-blooded boy from Chicago would never even contemplate going into the Foreign Service, which "true Americans" all knew to be a very effete group of individuals, that did nothing more than attend cocktail parties. We took that on board and that became part of the lore of the A-100 class as well. We also met with Secretary Rusk and the session made a lasting impression on us all. Vietnam was still very much the hot item, and we looked forward to hearing his position on it. We were actually brought into the Secretary's suite and seated in a small reception room. We were encouraged to ask questions after he made a brief presentation. Questions were rather tentatively asked about Vietnam, and I remember particularly one about the French role there because there had been some recent French initiative about the neutralization of Vietnam, as they had advocated when I was there. What the French were trying to do was to preserve their economic interests and their regional influence. Secretary Rusk responded in the manner he did in the public; very soft spoken, but firm, and non-demonstrative. He said, "The last time I saw De Gaulle I said to him, 'You don't have a voice in this matter if you don't have any chips on the table." I thought, very impressive. Certainly more backbone than the public perceived. Everyone appreciated that we got to see the Secretary, and were able to ask him unscripted questions. He was a very gentile man, I had occasion to deal with him on the phone at a later stage of my career, and he really was a true Southern gentleman. I think we all felt that we were people entering an elite organization, and that we could call in these kinds of tickets and talk to senior level officials.

Q: You mentioned one thing you got married? Just to get a feel, what was the background of your wife, how did you meet her?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. We dated when I was at Fort Holabird in Baltimore. Actually I first dated one of her very best friends and I met her and decided to date her instead. We began dating steadily. I went off to Vietnam in October of 1964, and we corresponded faithfully. In fact she came out to Hong Kong with my Mom as chaperone, when I was on R&R. When I returned from Vietnam, we got engaged. We made arrangements to marry shortly thereafter. The Foreign Service thing it seemed to intrigue her. Her Dad was a road inspector for the State of Maryland and her Mom was of Polish origin and a homemaker. Her Dad was Irish. She hadn't had much foreign exposure, but it sounded pretty intriguing to her. She was a very bright woman, graduated from the University of Maryland as an English major. When we went to our first post, Hong Kong, it became much less attractive to her than she thought it would be. That and other things were of at the core of our marriage coming apart.

The Hong Kong assignment was a fluke. As we got close to the end of the A-100 class, the list of available jobs was provided and you bid on the ones that appealed to you. I had focused on Singapore and when the assignments were given out at the end of the course, I was told that I was going to go to Singapore. I thought that was great. I had to take the Asian area studies course and I was on probation in French. I had studied French in high school and college, so I decided to take French. Taking French training and being assigned to Singapore was a bit bizarre. I completed my French training but fell shy of the required 3/3. I received a 2+/2+ and, in those days you just did the prescribed term of training, four months in this case, and that was it. If you didn't get your 3/3, too bad for you. Off to Singapore, even though you knew you weren't going to be speaking French in the normal course of things. We had to vacate our apartment, our household effects were to be shipped out on Wednesday and we were to vacate on Friday. On Monday of that week, personnel called to say you were not going to Singapore. There had been an undertaking by the Singapore government to limit the size of the Soviet embassy in Singapore, and in order to limit their size, they also have to limit the size of the American embassy. So, the junior officer slot that I was to be filling has been eliminated. I thought, oh great. They said I had a couple of options. You can either go to Taiwan or to Hong Kong. We'll keep you in the East Asian area. I asked when they were going to tell me which post I'm going to. I'm packing out Wednesday. What post are we supposed to put on the packing crates? They said, they would et me know by Wednesday. Sure enough they called on Wednesday and they said it looks like you're going to go to Hong Kong. I said, okay, when will you know for sure because I've given up our apartment. They said, we'll let you know. Sure enough on Friday they called and said you're going to Hong Kong, and the orders will be cut. So, I gave up the apartment and we went to my parents' place and we had a bit of leave before heading off to Hong Kong. It was a rather bizarre way to do business because since the end of the A-100 we had been focusing on Singapore, its laws, culture, history and political situation and all that. Now we're told at the last minute we're going to Hong Kong instead.

Q: So, you went out to Hong Kong? One other question, I keep going back, but, how did you fit within your family with politics? You mentioned your grandfather was a socialist and your father moved up into the capitalist ranks. Where did you fall?

WAUCHOPE: I don't know, sort of between the two, but leaning more toward my father's side. People have asked me, did the fact that your grandfather was a prominent socialist, and was actually the socialist candidate for Mayor and Governor of New York, ever adversely affect your security clearance. It frankly never came up. I never made any effort to conceal it. The Department must have felt it was far enough distant that it was no longer an issue. The fact that my father was a businessman, and therefore a capitalist, was probably a factor. I remember once listening to an interview with my father recorded on a record disk. The interviewer introduced him on a show as a "shipping magnate". My father said, "I'm not a shipping magnate. That always meant to me the person who owns the ships. I just operate the ships. You can't really call me a magnate." He was viewed as being a great supporter of capitalism, which he was. I used to talk to him a bit about it. He loved to sail and he owned first a 36-foot cutter and later a 41-foot yawl. We used to sail on weekends during the summer, almost constantly. It gave me the opportunity to talk with him about his life and his experiences, which someday I hope to write. I asked my Dad "what about your father, was he the sort of socialist who really felt the pain of the people and was concerned about their welfare and well-being, or was his approach more theoretical?" He said, "It was more the latter than the former." He said that he felt that the workingman was getting the short end of things in dealing with management and industry. My grandfather was a great orator. He used to travel all over the East Coast to give speeches to socialist gatherings. He spoke at Madison Square Garden on a number of occasions with tens of thousands of people coming out to hear him. I remember my father's saying that his father was more captured by the theory of Marxism, and how it could correct the social inequities. In fact, even after he was run out of the American socialist party and lost his job as editor of the New York Call, he remained a Marxist. When the communists came to power in the Soviet Union, he visited the Soviet Union. When he came back, he had found it less enchanting than he thought it would be. He was troubled by the absence of individual rights, but overall he thought it was a great experiment, something well worth doing. As for myself, I have remained an independent. I was not as pro-business as my father, who saw the unions as a scourge. Of course the maritime unions were pretty rough characters. There's no question of that, but I never saw it in those terms. I felt that there was a lot to be said for the rights of the workers and they need their position represented.

Q: Okay, well you were in Hong Kong from when to when?

WAUCHOPE: From October of '66 to '68, and that turned out to be a very interesting time. That was when the Great Cultural Revolution spread into Macau and Hong Kong. I was in a traditional rotational position. I started out in the NIV office of the consular section. I did six months there and then I was told that I was doing six months in the China mainland section. Then I would do six months in the Hong Kong-Macau section and then six months in the commercial section. In any event, I did the six months in the NIV section, which was damned interesting in its own right. The NIV was the best part of consular work in Hong Kong.

Q: I was wondering whether your time looking at people in Vietnam, I mean your investigatory juices must have been flowing.

WAUCHOPE: Well, to a certain extent that's right. As you know as a consul general who served in that region, fraud was endemic. We had all those great stories about how if every Chinese female claim of their children were legitimate, then every Chinese women who lived in San Francisco prior to the 1906 earthquake and fire would have had to give birth to 80 male children.

Q: This was before the fire destroyed all the records.

WAUCHOPE: Right. Then there was "baby Wong." At least seven people immigrated to the United States claiming to be baby Wong, a child born in Hawaii of a Chinese couple who were returning to China. Because they had not named the child yet, the birth certificate said "baby Wong", Wong being the most common name in the world. They returned to China and seven people successfully immigrated to the U.S. using that name. The great bulk of the applicants in the NIV section were student visas. They had all kinds of stories. We had a fraud investigation unit. It probably still exists today, and it had two officers and as many as a dozen investigators. They were finding things like visa schools where they were taught how to answer questions posed to a visa applicant. They learned the questions in a certain order, and they would know the answers in that order. So, you were encouraged to change the order of the questions occasionally. So, you'd say, where do you go to school? They'd say 1947 or something like that. They didn't really understand English at all. In fact, 92% of the successful applicants for student visas adjusted status in the United States; most of them were able to do so by virtue of their education and skills they had learned in American universities. They had skill levels so high that they could only be contributors to the American society. In addition, the University of Hong Kong at that time had openings for about 2,500 people, and every year they had 25,000 applicants. So you knew anybody who went to the University of Hong Kong was an extraordinarily competitive student. The visa applicants would show you their ordinaries, their advanced level exams, their A levels, and you'd go over all this documentation to have a general sense of their eligibility. There were people applying who'd come from mainland China. Our locals, FSNs, were cracker jack, the best I've ever had, would identify anybody who recently arrived from the mainland; they'd put a little red star, very subtle, on the corner of the cover sheet of the application. That alerted you that, at a given point, after you've done your visa interview, you were to contact the agency section there and . . .

Q: You're talking about the CIA?

WAUCHOPE: Exactly; to come down and they'd conduct their interview. They were very interested in finding out what they could. The agency rep would say, thanks very much, we'll send somebody down and we'll meet you in the stairwell. Just tell the applicant that you want another consular officer to talk to him. I thought, well fine, this is really great. They took themselves quite seriously, but they would interview the applicants in a broom closet or in the corridor. They seemed to be most interested in conditions in the mainland. I never sat in on the interview; we were not encouraged to do so. You made your decision about whether the person was qualified or not for the visa before you brought the agency people down to talk with them. That was a continuing practice and apparently it was a fairly significant source of the information because the mainland in those days was virtually completely closed to us.

Q: Well, this is as you say the cultural revolution was really hitting this place big and hard. How did that reflect where you were?

WAUCHOPE: Well, the spillover started in Macau, which had only a marginal impact on us directly, but it did serve as a model for the Maoists in Hong Kong. We used to go over to Macau on a hydrofoil. It was a quaint backward little city, which had some decent third-rate hotels and guest houses, and you could get a very nice meal. You could go for a day or occasionally overnight.

It started as a labor confrontation and, of course, the influence of the communists in Macau was much stronger than it was in Hong Kong. The Portuguese obviously didn't have the ability to protect Macau if it were ever threatened militarily by mainland forces. The communists made these non-negotiable demands for reforms that would have essentially transferred power to them. The Portuguese said they could not afford to make the reforms, so the communists would start humiliating the administration and shutting down industry and transportation. They would strong-arm other unions not to cooperate with the Portuguese. The Portuguese kept giving in and by the end of the confrontation that went on for three or four months, the Portuguese had essentially turned over the decision-making to the communists. The communists had control not only through the unions, they also controlled most influential businessmen who were either communists themselves or were paying off the communists in order to continue to prosper. They then were able to ensure that they could continue to do business. It was more useful to them to have the Portuguese as the titular power there rather than to be absorbed into the mainland and lose all identity and influence, and especially a window on the world. So, they allowed the Portuguese to remain. Remarkably, Macau didn't really change very much. I recall in the very beginning of the confrontation there was a clash between the small Portuguese military garrison and the communist provocateurs. The military opened fire and killed nine people. That incident tore the fabric of civility between the two sides. As a result of that confrontation, the communists always harked back to the martyrs and how brutal the Portuguese were. When things finally quieted down and the communists effectively ran the colony, the consulate discouraged us from visiting Macau. .

I did visit once and saw evidence of demonstrations and slogans spray-painted on the walls. You could still get a decent Portuguese meal. Most of the transport was rickshaws. We had been told that it was not a good idea to be seen in a rickshaw lest we look like "imperialist." It was still a very quiet and lovely place to go. Subsequently Macau was developed by the Japanese with casinos, hotels and prostitutes. Gambling was legal there, but the casinos were pretty Spartan. The Hong Kong Chinese were told by the authorities not to go over there to gamble. Likewise, the Portuguese authorities told the local people they would not to be allowed into those casinos because that would be one more grievance against the government. They were already impoverished and gambling would be one more problem to deal with. Foreigners were welcomed and casinos offered all kinds of games of chance. The communists were very encouraged by what they had been able to achieve politically in Macau, and had every reason to assume that they could apply it in Hong Kong. It really is quite an extraordinary story how that process unfolded and how badly the communists miscalculated in Hong Kong.

Q: This was during the time you were there?

WAUCHOPE: That's correct. The communist agitation started in early 1967 and it revolved around a strike at a cement factory, Green Island Cement, I believe. That confrontation spread to the bus union in Kowloon. The communists had a long-standing practice of gaining control of transportation unions, not unlike the problem that my father confronted with the maritime unions at Sheepshead Bay Merchant Marine training center. The unions at that time were in the hands of communists or communist sympathizers. In Hong Kong the communist had a strong hold on the transportation unions that operated the buses, the trams and the ferry. So, when they started with the bus company and they shut down the bus routes that resulted in a tremendous disruption to the industrial system. This was years before the subway came into existence. The economy immediately began to feel the impact. The British company that ran the bus system fired all the strikers. The communists responded, "See how the imperialists treat our people." The communists put the strikers on their dole, giving everybody a 40-kilo bag of rice every month. Likewise, the workers fired from the cement plant were supported by the communists. Then the cement company hired replacements from the infinite labor pool. One of the great attractions of Hong Kong is the availability of cheap labor, some of which was fairly skilled labor. The communists decided to push the confrontation further. They then took on the Star Ferry, which was the principal connection between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. When they went on strike there, the British military immediately took control of the service. This link is absolutely essential. The ferry company again fired the strikers and hired a new group when it was turned back over to civilian control.

The British were very methodical and very intelligent in handling the confrontation with the communists. The Chinese communist party existed quietly in Hong Kong, as did the Bank of China and a number of communist or mainland-owned department stores. There were other communist banking institutions and they all threw their weight behind the local communists. They started the process of disruption in the downtown area, the Central District. They received permission to march up past the consulate to the Governor General's Office, across from a large park. They would go everyday in orderly groups representing different organizations; groups of maybe 100 to 200 people. They carried placards denouncing British actions and they would march in front of the governor's palace for the prescribed time, perhaps two minutes to protest, and then they had to move on. The British had available about 15,000 police, maybe 20,000 police auxiliaries and 15,000 army troops including Gurkhas. They had three battalions of Gurkhas, and, I think, three battalions of British troops as well. The Hong Kong regiment was a unit of Chinese, Chinese-Caucasian mix and Caucasian. The Hong Kong regiment dates back to before World War II. The British were prepared to mobilize this entire array to ensure order. They would avoid the confrontation that the Portuguese had experienced. The march on the Governor's Office went on for days. We'd look out the windows of the consular section as they marched up Garden Road past the consulate. They didn't seem to focus on the fact that we were there. They would all be waving their books of Mao's teachings and chanting in unison. The communist officials would stack up the different groups while the police watched them through the whole process.

Then the word was that the communist was not getting what they wanted out of this process. They were not getting the hoped for support of the local people, and the British were not making any concessions. The communist decided they had to have a confrontation. The most logical way to do that was to create an incident in front of the governor's palace. They decided to have one group refuse to move on after its two minutes was up. The British had penetrated the communist leadership with Chinese members of their police, and they knew the communists plan. They knew the day, the time and the group that would act. So they positioned thousands of police concealed in this park across from the governor's. Sure enough when the time came, and the protestors refused to move on and the police descended on them with overwhelming force. Having broken the rules made by the British, the marchers were forced to disperse. Then the governor issued an order that the demonstrations in front of his palace were now forbidden. "We had an understanding; you broke the understanding, the deal is off." The communists responded, "You cannot stop us, we are the people, we will do what we want to do." So, they massed again the next day in the Central District and they started the march in large groups, carrying Mao's Little Red Book. The British were waiting for them in their thousands. The confrontation occurred just below our consulate at the end of the Peak tramway. There was a big parking area at the end of the line. I have a picture of it; the car park is full of police trucks ready to haul away the protesters. Again, thousands of police backed up this time by the military. They wanted to keep out of sight and were very discreet about it. The protesters came up to this point where the police were blocking the road, and confronted them. The police were six feet deep with shields, helmets and tear gas guns. A senior police official told the demonstrators "You had an agreement, you broke the agreement, and now you're not allowed to pass through this point." The communists looked over the crowd which was many thousands and replied, "You can't stop us." Well the British did stop them. When they failed to disperse, the police fired tear gas and the groups fled.

They formed up the next day and conducted the same kind of confrontation. The more rowdy the groups became, the police picked them out and hauled them off. The governor decreed a state of emergency and the British used preventive detention, and they hauled these people off in vast numbers. They were detained in Kowloon and at a large stone prison at Stanley on the south of Hong Kong Island. The Stanley prison was right above a popular beach at Stanley. At a later stage when there were thousands of protesters in this prison, you would walk past the prison on a Sunday afternoon to go to the beach and these communists were all singing the song "Mao is the Great Helmsman" and the "East is Red." To hear this singing in unison was impressive, and a bit intimidating. The detention center set up in Kowloon was in open area and over the months of confrontation, there were thousands there. The British made clear they weren't going to take anymore nonsense.

The reality was that a majority of Hong Kong residents who did not support the communists and a small percentage backed the regime in Taiwan. While many of the pro-Taiwan groups would just as soon not have to show their colors, as this confrontation unfolded and the communists overplayed their hand, the little blue and red flags of Taiwan appeared. We estimated that about 10% of Hong Kong's population sided with the mainland in virtually anything the communists proposed, except for actually taking over the colony. About 5% were probably with the Nationalist Chinese, and they assumed that this confrontation would eventually go away. Most Chinese came to Hong Kong to do business, and for a better life.

We believed that the majority of the people were undecided and they were very uncomfortable with the events. The confrontations continued for months. The British held firm. The consulate had contacts with the Hong Kong police because of immigration and welfare and whereabouts issues. We also had FBI, INS and Treasury representation. The Hong Kong police set up a procedure by which every time a protester led the chant, hold up the Little Red Book up, they photograph them. They then figured out from their mug books, who they were and would then arrested them in 3:00 am and haul them off to a detention center. Over time they undermined the communist leadership in this way, and they did so methodically. Finally the British decided that marching up to this blockade point right by the Hong Kong Hilton Hotel was no longer acceptable. The communists believed that the British couldn't possibly force them to break up. So, then the communists decided to shift their approach and they started having ad hoc demonstrations in various parts of the city. They'd start with several hundred people convened in a given area and they'd create some kind of a disturbance that stopped traffic. In Hong Kong even in those days, all you had to do was to stop traffic for five or ten minutes and the place went into complete gridlock. They did, and the British formed flying squads of police to confront them. The police were using tear gas and then began using the rubber bullets as well. They'd bounce them off the pavement into these crowds. They had a fair amount of success in breaking up the gatherings and they arrested a large of people. Then the communists decided that they would begin a postering campaign. They would put up posters throughout the entire colony with denunciations of British rule. This effort, of course, had its origins in the poster denunciations in Beijing which was part of the Great Cultural Revolution there. The local leaders were trying to reflect the true Maoist spirit and thereby enhance their own credentials. .

As observers we did not have the sense of the divisions that existed in China also existed among the groups that confronted the British. There seemed to be a fair amount of unanimity. There weren't the factions favoring Mao Zedong or Liao Shau Chi, who was later discovered to be a traitor and died under mysterious circumstances. In any event, the British simply weren't cowed for the communists' poster campaign. The British passed an ordinance declaring postering to be illegal. Anybody caught postering would be arrested and detained, and if they try to flee, you can use force to detain them, or fire their weapon if they flee. The communists were convinced that the British could not possibly prevent postering. The British then mobilized every military policeman and auxiliary police and military reservists in the entire colony. In one night they took down or painted over virtually every poster and painted over every slogan they could find. The next morning the communists and the rest of the town just couldn't believe the British success. The communists believed they represented the people and no one could stop them from carrying out their campaign. So, the British started detaining the offenders. postering on the spot, and if they fled, the police did fired at them. They wounded some and they killed some. The postering campaign went on, but at a much lower level of intensity after the British had proved they had the will to try to stop it.

The next phase of the communist campaign was bombings. The communists began by wrapping bombs in containers and they put slogans on them. The object of the exercise was to show their ability to place bombs anywhere they wanted in the colony, like in the heart of the central or financial district. Very early in the process the British seized all the explosives at all the construction sites, and all the firecracker factories were shut down. They took the explosives because they figured bombing campaign could be a real problem. Again, the Chinese communists thought they could do whatever we wanted. The had increasing problems getting the explosives. I think they place something on the order of 12,000 "explosive devices" over the next six to eight months. Of these 12,000 devices only about 1,200 contained explosives. The British organized flying squads and the leading demolition expert was a fellow they called "Bomber" Harris, named after the Head of Bomber Command in the Second World War. He would go to the scene, sandbag the device and blow it up. Despite the British efforts, a number of the bombs did blow up. Some people were killed, mostly innocent bystanders. By the time the whole campaign was at the end, I think about 90 people died in the bombing campaign including a few of the bomb disposal people. In the most egregious case, they planted a bomb near a child's elementary school, and when the kids came out to play it exploded. Two children were killed. That proved to be a watershed event, when, combined with other atrocities, that the majority of the Hong Kong Chinese found unacceptable, like the disruption to business and tourism, the majority progressively turned against the communists. During the height of the Cultural Revolution, Hong Kong fishermen were snagging bodies in their nets that had floated down the Pearl River. These were victims of one faction attacking another in Kwangtung Province. Of course that was the worst josh in the world to pull in a dead body. I mean they would have to bring the body in and turn it over to the authorities, and then they'd lay the boat up for the next three weeks while they went to the temple and lit incense to try to get rid of the bad josh off. This was happening with some degree of regularity, and some days there would be as many as four bodies discovered, some headless and the arms bound. The people in Hong Kong rejected this kind of mayhem. They did not need factional fighting in Hong Kong that leads to people being slaughtered and bodies washing up on the beaches.

As a result of the bombing campaign and the extremism, the communists increasingly lost the support of the people. It wasn't just that they didn't turn out for the demonstrations, they began to avoid shopping in communist stores and patronizing their banks. Consulate personnel were not allowed to go into any communist enterprise because of the foreign asset control laws, but we used to monitor them. In fact, I did visit a department store, but found that there was nothing worth buying. It really was an eye opener how backward the mainland industry was in so many ways. While buying goods in such a store was a violation of the law, in reality, the Consulate didn't want you to be seen in these stores. In any event, they lost business. While they were losing revenue, they still had hundreds if not thousands of people whom they had promised to give a 40-kilo bag of rice every month, and they were going bankrupt. Finally this financial reality dawned on them. Meanwhile, the situation in China quieting down to some extent, and the local communist realized that their efforts were not going the way it was planned as the people weren't really behind them. Slowly, quietly, they kind of ratcheted down the confrontation. The postering campaign wound down and the people detained were being released a few at a time. Without any overt agreement, the whole thing just sort of quieted down and went away. Business in Hong Kong is business, and they just went back to business. This is remarkable; I hope the Brits get the credit they deserve for their handling of the events, particularly the restraint they exercised. Yes, people were killed and the rubber bullets did occasionally glance on the pavement and hit people in the head and that would be the end of them. I would estimate that the number killed by the security force was probably in the order of 30 or 40, and maybe about 90 people killed by the bombs. One other thing I should say, the British intelligence network was so good that they knew composition and location of the various cells of communists who were planning demonstrations apparently instruction Beijing. The Brits would attack a target apartment at 3:00 in the morning, first from the street and later from helicopter on the roof. Their SWAT teams would grab the suspects before they knew what was happening. They'd seize all the documents and get the lists of people who were involved including donors. With this initial success, the Chinese responded by setting up a warning system, and then they installed steel doors to prevent the SWAT teams entry. So the teams brought steel cutting equipment and torches to break in. When they began landing on top of the buildings by helicopter and repelling down, the Brits would descend on them before they could slam the steel doors. They really kept the communists off balance. It took a lot of organizational ability and a lot of solid intelligence and restraint to bring this whole thing off. They were able to control the colony for some 30 years more as a result of these actions. We used to say, if Mao Zedong wants Hong Kong all he has to do is make a phone call. This implied that he could order an uprising that the British would quickly recognize was an unwinnable situation. Well, he never made the phone call, apparently because as we're finding out today, it's more valuable to him to have an opening to the West than to make it just one more coastal city of mainland China. So, they really didn't want to take over. What they wanted was the Macau situation where the Brits would have titular control of the colony, but otherwise it was business as usual, with the communists dictating political and social issues. In the end, the communists realized their struggle was falling apart; they didn't have the revenues to sustain it any longer. The mainland was so disrupted by this point that they couldn't afford to subsidize the process any longer and eventually they gave up. They stopped providing the rice to these strikers. By this time these people were themselves looking for opportunities in different areas. They got other jobs. The entire exercise did knock the communists out of the transportation unions. They lost their advantage through this process. Once they surfaced and showed their true colors, the Brits made sure that this didn't happen again.

Q: Who was the consul general while you were there?

WAUCHOPE: Edwin Rice. It was an interesting time. I learned of the turmoil in China, which I followed when I next rotated to the mainland China section. It was a very talented collection of individuals. It was divided into three sections. There was an economic unit, an international unit, China's relations with the rest of the world, and there was an internal political unit. There was a large percentage o this section who later became ambassadors. They included Charlie Hill, Curt Kamman, Nick Platt, and Herb Horowitz, who became an ambassador to The Gambia. This group was very meticulous and very methodical in culling through all the overt traffic that was picked up on China's regional and provincial radio stations. We had all manner of sources and we were tasked not only to follow domestic internal events from the Cultural Revolution, but also to assess the effect of this turmoil on Chinese support for North Vietnam as that was the hot issue in that region of the world. We did get information indicating that certain factions would intercept Soviet arms shipments coming by train and by truck, and seize the weapons and use them in their own struggle. I worked with the international unit. Al Harding was the head of that operation and I would hope you can get him to give his oral history

Q: What's his name?

WAUCHOPE: Al Harding. H-A-R-D-I-N-G. He joined the OSS during the war and served in Yenan. He actually met Mao. He spoke both Mandarin and Cantonese. He came into the Service as a clerk in the late '40s and by this time he was I guess he was an FSO-4 or 3 at that point. He later interpreted for Ambassador Gronouski who was our official interlocutor with the Chinese in the Poland. Al was really quite a guy. Anyway, we worked together, and the section used to do a weekly report on events in China. He always managed to find snappy little things to say about what's was happening, using bad puns and clever nonsense that would peak interest in our issues. We used to monitor very carefully how the Chinese characterized every event that occurred. In Vietnam, for example, some U.S. escalation like widening the range of our bombing would incite a rhetorical riposte. We would analyze how the Chinese would respond and what sets of adjectives they would use and then how they strung those adjectives together to determine how seriously they were taking this escalation. They would say that they were "As close to Vietnam as the teeth are to the lips," and "We are the great rear area for Vietnam. I remember Al doing this cartoon and showing somebody with this tremendous behind and with teeth stuck to their lips. This analysis was also used to monitor what was going on internally. One of the sources we had available was letters from the mainland which were intercepted, translated and then provided back to us. They were a good source on conditions in various parts of China. We would be able to monitor conditions on a province by province basis. In addition, and this is hard to believe in these days of computers, we maintained vast card files. They were in the corridors of the third floor of the consulate near the political section. These card files, of which there were millions of cards, were mostly name card files. They went for the entire length of that wall on both sides. These cards were the originals, and there were carbons made of them for individual files. The names would be transliterated into English and would also have the original characters and so as names were cited, we could check the names out in these files. It was crude, but it was methodically done. We had a whole staff of people who did that kind of work.

Q: I mean I take it you were really looking at chaos, weren't you?

WAUCHOPE: Pretty much. We were trying to figure out what was going on, what is the object of this exercise. When you examined China, you have to go back to the period of the Great Leap Forward. We used to ask you about this period when I was a consular officer. Chinese applicants were asked what it was like in this time. They replied that they were all required to go out and make pig iron in the backyard. Food was in very short supply, but they said, as bad as it was, everybody got something; everybody got just enough to eat despite the extreme shortages. The Chinese government made a heroic effort to make sure that there was a relatively equitable distribution of what food that there was and thereby kept the loyalty of the people. Then came the "Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom," campaign which encouraged people to speak their mind. Then they then clamped down on people who spoke out. Not right away, they let it go for a while, and then they arrested people that were too outspoken. There was a sense that Cultural Revolution was another such exercise. Was Mao orchestrating what seems to us to be a very chaotic effort which is really a very carefully orchestrated effort to root out his opponents at the top levels and the middle levels, and even at the lower levels. If that were the case, then things were not as chaotic as they appeared. We were following issues like whether China was going to escalate its support for Vietnam, or whether it's still capable of making a threat somewhere else given this apparent chaos? We were not persuaded that the situation was as chaotic as it appeared, but it was very difficult to be certain. We had few reliable sources on the ground at that time. Symbolically, we used to go out to the border and look across at this forbidden land to try to have a sense of the mystery of China. We had people coming out of China, we had intercepted letters, we had access to overt broadcasts and some other intercepted information as well. It was hard to figure out who were the genuine cast of characters because the people often believe they were doing Mao's will. For example, they seized the Foreign Minister, Le Peng and humiliated him. They put a dunce hat on him and dragged him through the streets. If Mao had wanted to protect these officials, he could have protected them. They were disgraced and then they were usually forced out of their jobs. In some cases they committed suicide, and some were probably executed. We really can't put our arms around this whole cultural revolution, because they had the capability to orchestrate this process, while the real object of the exercise was to purge the leadership and not to allow the chaos to go uncontrolled yet demonstrating that the revolutionary fervor is strong in the country. Eventually Liu Shau Chi was found to be the "Great Traitor." A lot of people that were potential threats to Mao were driven out as part of the cultural revolution, and in the process, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people died as a result.

Q: Were you at this point feeling that gee, I better learn Chinese or were you tempted to be a China hand?

WAUCHOPE: Well, you that's an interesting point because in reality the people that were China hands were so steeped in the Chinese culture and language, and the Chinese language was the key. Chinese was a three-year undertaking; you did a year of study in the U.S. and then you did two years at the school in Taiwan. It was a high hurdle; you really had to be immersed in China, its history and its culture, and you had to be prepared to spend the rest of your career dealing with China. I wasn't willing to make that commitment. I wanted to get back to Africa, and, in point of fact, I was still on language probation. In those days you could not get promoted more than one grade unless you were off language probation. I was taking French with a French military attachï¿½ who was studying Chinese. He provided French lessons on a tutorial basis three times a week and so I was still working on the expectation that I would end up going back to Africa. I was daunted by the degree of commitment that I would have to undertake, particularly the three years of language training. You only had to get a 2/2 in Chinese to get a promotion, but even so, I was just not prepared to do that. I was very impressed with the people who had. I thought they were very talented people and that we were in good hands with that group. They were extraordinary scholars. They were a kind of microcosm of how the Foreign Service was changing, as well. As our Consul General Ed Rice said when I was invited to his home as an escort officer for a visiting Ambassador, Cecil Lyon. Cecil Lyon is our ambassador in Ceylon.

Q: Ceylon.

WAUCHOPE: Yes. He was passing through and I was his control officer. He and Rice had served together in China in the '30s. There was then a division among the China hands. Rice had all his hotshot political analysts working on Mainland China, but none of whom had set foot on the forbidden territory of China. Here are these two old guys, and they're amusing themselves by telling stories; "Oh, you remember how it was in the summers in Peking . . ." and this and that. Cecil Lyon was a much more self-deprecating individual than Ed Rice. I mean Ed Rice was okay, but you could go back and look at his history at the time when they were purging our China watchers in the McCarthy era. He was able to dodge that bullet effectively, but not much to his credit.

Q: Well, Cecil Lyon I think was married to Ambassador Grew's daughter or something like that. He was of the, he was to the manor born.

WAUCHOPE: He was indeed. He acted that way, but he was also very appealing to the younger officers because, in response to Rice trying to play this game at this elaborate dinner of excluding these officers from the conversation of the good old days. Lyon was at the far end of the table and he's fiddling with this brass lantern and Rice was getting agitated that Lyon was focusing on this lantern instead of listening to his conversation in which he's trying to put his subordinates in their place. So, Cecil Lyon says, "Geez, I can barely remember that, it was so long ago." Wrong answer! It was clearly not what Rice wanted to hear. He kept on about it, and Lyon dodged the conversation every time. He was a very fine man I must say, a really nice guy.

Q: So, by the time you left there, you left there in '68 then?

WAUCHOPE: I left in '68 and by that time I had bid on jobs in Africa and I was quite intent about it. I should say that after the China mainland section, I was then assigned to the commercial section as the last part of my rotation. While I was in the commercial section the procedure of rotation of junior officers came to a close. So, everybody was frozen in place. I did my last 11 months in the commercial section. It was fine. I learned a great deal about commercial reporting and a lot about the business. Even in those days you could get trade figures that were off early versions of computers, so economic analysis was relatively easy to do by contrast to what I found in my African assignments.

Q: Hong Kong was playing a major role in the Vietnam War, wasn't it?

WAUCHOPE: It was. It played a role in several different ways. We had major R&R activities in Hong Kong. At any given moment there were over 2,000 American GIs in Hong Kong. We had a procedure that was agreed upon with DOD's R&R people based in Hong Kong, the defense attachï¿½s and the Coast Guard people. The operative rule was that anybody who came to Hong Kong, and most came in by charter air, whoever breaks any of the laws or rules or regulations in this colony would be sent out on the next plane returning to Vietnam. We had as many as four planes arriving and departing a day, although some marines would fly their own C130s. As a result, they were the most well behaved group of soldiers you could imagine, and the perception of both the British authorities and the Chinese was these guys are so much better behaved than the British soldiers that were based in Hong Kong. The Chinese were happy to have them; certainly they were happy to have their money. However, there were limits. The U.S. aircraft carries would come up from Dixie station and?

Q: Yankee station.

WAUCHOPE: Yankee station. Right. The British felt that if an American aircraft carrier were to sail into the inner harbor it would be a provocation to the Communists. So, they insisted that they anchor instead off Lantau Island and the sailors, over 5000, would come to Hong Kong by launch. They figured that every aircraft carrier would put a million dollars a day into the local economy and they didn't want to turn their backs on that. So, they let them come, but they kept them at a distance, but fortunately the American sailors and GIs handled themselves well. I remember one instance, where some military type on R&R brought a gun with him. He was detained and returned to Vietnam on the next flight. He lost his R&R after waiting for months to qualify. Of course, they came for the liquor, women and a hot shower, which represented the civilized world. The colony was well set up for that sort of thing. Overall, I would say we came out very well with the British authorities at the time. There was another factor on the economic side, the U.S. bought a lot of goods in Hong Kong to support our troops in Vietnam and that was good business. American naval and supply ships were going to Vietnam via Hong Kong in support of our effort. The British wanted to avoid provoking the communists at this delicate time by having too high a profile of American military activity. Basically the Chinese residents thought, well, yes, there's a risk, but there's also the reward in the amount of money these guys spend.

Q: Well, then you left there?

WAUCHOPE: Right. I again bid on jobs in Africa. This was back in the days of the "Star Chamber" when you had no idea what jobs were available, or how the assignment process was done. I received a message saying that I was to be assigned to Khorramshahr. I asked the personnel officer, where? He said, Khorramshahr; apparently it's in Iran. Even he didn't know where it was. I wondered how the hell did they come up with that? I was very unhappy about it, but I did find out more about the post. It's the dry cargo port for Tehran and they speak Farsi. I was on language probation for French and I was not going to have any chance to get off language probation, as French was not used there. I thought this is insane. Here I am putting myself up for posts in Francophone Africa and they're going to send me to Iran. I thought this really is indicative of a system that doesn't take into account an individual's preferences or abilities. So, I thought I ought to make a stink about this assignment. I told the admin counselor, that I was unhappy with this assignment. He said, "You know, you are just coming out of Hong Kong, one of the great posts of the world. Nobody is going to listen to you if you say you don't like your onward assignment." I thought this doesn't make any sense. They haven't even thought about this assignment. He didn't know anymore about the assignment process than anyone else did. Then I talked to Dwight Scarborough who is the head of what they called the Hong Kong-Macau section, which is basically the economic section. He was a very decent guy and a senior officer. I said to him, "What would you do under these circumstances?" He said, "Well, here's what I would do. I'd draft a letter very carefully and explain to them how you're more than willing to serve wherever they send you, but there seems to be an inherent illogic in this assignment. Mention the French language issue in some detail. Point that out to them the irrationality of the assignment without being confrontational. Make clear that this is very important to you, that if they cannot see it in their hearts to reconsider this assignment that you're going to have to look into other options." So, I drafted a letter very thoughtfully, and showed it to him. He made some suggestions, I finished it up and I launched it. I sent it off in the pouch figuring, are they are going to reconsider or are they going to pull the rug out from under me. I headed off for the U.S. My wife and I were separating after anguishing about it for some time. She went home directly via the West Coast, and I decided that, since this may be my last go round in the Foreign Service, I'd go the other way around the world, the old Pan Am One flight that stopped in Bangkok, Rangoon, Calcutta, Bombay, Tehran, Beirut and then through to Europe. I'll stop in Istanbul, Vienna, Paris and London just to see those places at least once. I headed off not knowing whether I was going to be in the Foreign Service or not by the time I got home. I send my itinerary to Personnel if they wanted to get in contact me they could do so through the personnel office in the embassies in any of these cities. But I only made the effort of checking in Vienna and they said they didn't have anything for me. So, I went to Paris and London and back home. I returned to the United States and I called Personnel to talk to somebody about my letter. I was given an appointment with a fellow who did assignments for junior officers. Personnel was structured differently in those days. Peter Spicer was the responsible officer.

Q: Yes, Peter, I knew Peter in personnel at that time. Yes.

WAUCHOPE: Right. I had an appointment on a given day, and I showed up at the office. I gave my name and the secretary says to me, "Oh, yes, you're the one they're reassigning." I said, "Oh?" She said, "Oh, you didn't know?" I said, "No, I didn't." She said, "Well, would you feign surprise when you go in?" I said, "Not to worry." I went in and Spicer said, "Obviously, they weren't paying attention when they made your assignment, it doesn't make any sense at all." He said, "There are several options." He said that there was one in a slot in Abidjan and then there was one in Fort Lamy, Chad. He said, that our ambassador to Chad, Sheldon Vance, was at the UN at this time for UNGA and he'd like to talk with candidates to see if you'd be the right person for his small post. It was basically the ambassador, DCM and political officer and I'd be the consular/economic/commercial officer. I said I'd like to meet with the ambassador. So, I went to see Sheldon Vance, a very fine gentleman. He thought I would do fine, and so the deal was cut. I headed off to Africa.

Q: So, you went to where?

WAUCHOPE: Fort Lamy.

Q: Okay, we'll pick this up after that.

WAUCHOPE: Okay, good.

Q: This is the 22nd of March, 2002. Keith, you want to talk a little more and go back to Hong Kong?

WAUCHOPE: If I could, yes, I would like to say something about our sense of what was behind the efforts by the communists to try to take over effective control of Hong Kong as a part of the Great Cultural Revolution. First of all, in terms of our sense of the conflict, we really didn't feel terribly concerned about our personal safety other than being in the wrong place when a bomb went off. We had a strong sense that the communists, in employing its most extreme efforts such as the bombing campaign, were primarily trying to attract attention to their cause. They were trying to push the British into retaliatory actions that would provoke a backlash and thereby sway a larger number of the uncommitted population Hong Kong to their side. But the reality was that they were not very successful in that, and even their bombing campaign which included some 10,000 explosive devices, worked against them. Of these 10,000, probably not more than a thousand actually contained had any explosives. There were very few casualties given the number of devices. No one really felt that they would try to bomb the consulate. By contrast to today, for example, where we are vibrating over the "War on Terror," there was nothing of that sort at that time. There was no sense that we would be car bombed or anything of that sort. All the bombs were small containers, usually bottles wrapped in red paper and they'd have a slogan on the side, "Down with the Imperialists and all their running dogs," slogans that they'd taken from Mao's teachings. So, on the personal side, we really didn't feel that threatened by the conflict. It was disruptive to our lives, and the one thing I forgot to mention was that during this confrontation, the Chinese Mainland cut off the water supply to Hong Kong. Hong Kong's catchment areas provided enough water for more than a half a year to provide for the water needs of the population in a normal year. The reservoirs usually would fill up through the monsoon season and then in the summer, the dry period, the British turned to the Chinese to provide water through large pipes that ran along the rail line from China. Well, at this juncture, the Chinese were very coy about providing the water. The modalities were that every year an application was made by the Hong Kong government to the Province of Guangdong, the provincial authorities, to ask them to turn on the pipeline for the summer months. This time the governor of Guangdong refused to answer the British request. They decided they weren't going to acknowledge the legitimacy of the British control of Hong Kong. So, the water did not flow. Well, the British started water rationing. At first, we had 12 hours of water a day, and then we had eight hours a day, then eight hours every other day and eventually at its peak, or nadir, we were down to four hours every fourth day. The British handled it remarkably effectively. They divided the entire colony into A, B, C and D sectors. Where we lived, for example, up on Coombe Road, we were in B sector, and across the street was D sector. We had friends living in apartments across the road. We would store water when it was running in jury-rigged 50-gallon containers in the bathroom. So, we would oftentimes, when they had water, our friends would come to our place with their towels and in bath attire. In turn we would go down to their place and take a shower no matter what their social activities were going at that time. Whether they were having people to dinner or cocktails, you'd come in your bathrobes and have a shower and you'd go on back home. By this method we were all able to get by. Then the monsoon season came early, and then a typhoon that passed over the colony. That was the first time that the eye of the typhoon had passed over in over 60 years. It refilled the catchment areas very rapidly and then the British didn't need the water from the mainland. At that point the government of Guangdong decided to respond to the British request. "Oh, by the way, regarding your request made some four or five months ago, we will now agree to provide water." The British paid about a million pounds sterling for the water, which was nothing to be sneezed at that particular time. In any event the British said thanks, but no thanks.

Q: We're talking about the French conspiracy theory. Ours is that there's a vacuum and we've got to do something about it and this is almost reflex of action putting this in and doing this without any real overall plan outside of we've got to cover all these countries?

WAUCHOPE: I would say that's not inaccurate. I think that it certainly started from a reactive approach to the communist countries' presence. Why did we need to monitor all these small African countries? Now, we did have a small agency presence there as well and, beyond our efforts to influence attitudes of the host government vis-ï¿½-vis to support our positions in the international organizations, we also hoped to pick up possible defectors from the Soviet bloc countries. Agency presence in Africa was, in their minds, fairly clear. There were opportunities that might not exist, and probably didn't exist in Europe, where the Soviets and bloc types were much more closely monitored. We were also caught up in the concepts of development means stability; we viewed ourselves as engaged in fighting on the frontiers of freedom. That development was the key to economic security, and from that, you would see changes in their political structure. This would lead to a more representative government, once you have economic security, then you have the incentive and the time to start thinking about your political structure. After the wave of independence in the early 1960s, AID, in its wisdom, decided to target just one of a group of ten countries, and, as you know AID's strategy toward Africa shifted over time. It began by trying to have a presence everywhere, and assist in specific areas health, education and rural development. Then AID realized that certain of these tasks should be done by the host government and it decided to concentrate in the most promising countries. There were ten focus countries, the tenth being Nigeria. Nigeria, with its oil wealth decided that they didn't want to accept the strictures that Americans attach to assistance, so it opted out. Of course Chad wasn't one of the remaining nine. AID had a marginal program, but it arranged for a beefed up special self-help fund and we were able to do a fair amount of useful projects with that. I was the self-help officer. One of the better projects was to assist an Israeli lieutenant colonel with the Israeli Mission there. Chad had diplomatic ties with Israel despite the Muslim influence in the north. The Israelis were also very selective in its assistance, specializing in security and reforestation. This lieutenant colonel had a background in reforestation as he had been sent by his government to the southeastern part of Israel and told, "Here are 60,000 acres. find something productive to do with it." He decided to start a forestry industry. As I understand it, the area is a center of forestry to this day. He was certain he could do the same in Chad which was losing its forest at a shocking rate annually. He asked for some assistance from us as well as from several U.N. agencies. He asked that we provide him a small bulldozer, a CAT D6 I think it was? We made the arrangements which seemed to take forever. I got to know this guy, Lt Col Hatuel, and to see how he did business. He was a real operator. He was given a small plot of land near the airport and he set up a nursery. The first year he put in 60,000 seedlings. He was able to do so because he had a food for work program with the United Nations. The U.N. was always late in its deliveries, and he would sign his name for food from U.N. other projects to be repaid when his food arrived. He signed for everything with the Chadian government and aid agencies, and he got away with it. From 60,000 seedlings the first year, he had 300,000 seedlings the second year. He had found an old fuel tank from an old airplane to water the seedlings in the nursery. He later found a tank truck. cleaned it out and put it up on pilings then used it to water the plants. He was just unstoppable. I was very, very impressed with what he accomplished. He got his bulldozer eventually.

The problem with all development is follow-through. There's got to be sustainability built into the projects. While Hatuel got his 300,000 seedlings started, and then distributed them, it became a matter of keeping the goats from eating them. It was at this phase that things began to fall apart. In fact one of my favorite AID stories was about a German aid project in the southwestern part of Chad which we visited, Ambassador Todman and I visited. The idea was to set up a hog growing operation by teaching animal husbandry. They required the Prefect of that region to provide candidates for the training. They would arrive with their wives and families. This was a two-year training "stage," and they were assigned housing and would grow their own crops to sustain themselves. They'd learn the science of breeding and raising pigs. If they were successful, and there was a substantial dropout rate. At the end of the training, the trainees would be given a sow and a boar, the payoff for their efforts, and went back to their home village where they would raise their pigs. Given that they were not Muslims, they were more than happy to have the pigs; they loved pork as a meal. The Germans completed the cycle and eventually they learned what happened. Well, what do Africans do when you've been away for two years? They have a party. And what do you serve at the party? They served the two pigs that were supposed to start their herd. The Germans finally figured this out. They'd been there about five years when we visited their facilities. There were stainless steel counters in the most backward part of the boonies in Chad, and here was this fantastic facility they'd built. They had decided to pull the plug on the project because, despite their best efforts, this cycle was happening over and over again. There was no dissemination of knowledge for this industry at all. They were very dispirited, but this is how you learn your lessons in development.

Q: I'm wondering talking about the Peace Corps. Were we asking ourselves why are we teaching in Francophone area, why don't we teach you people English?

WAUCHOPE: Right. Well, it's a fair question. We felt, with some justice, that there was an interest in learning more about the United States, and English was a mechanism to help them do that and also offered the possibility that they could study in the U. S. There were some scholarships and scholarship assistance available to them. We'd help them contact colleges and universities. We just generally thought that that was the wave of the future and they would be better off having a knowledge of English.

Q: Well, of course, this being even at that time was rapidly English was becoming sort of the commercial, the international language much to the dismay of the French.

WAUCHOPE: Right. Absolutely. Because the French language is the foundation of Francophonie, the French essence, the French mindset, if you will. There was a fair amount of intellectual debate at that time, and Senghor's concepts of negritude were actively debated. The French were perpetuating this debate. They would organize these conferences; this is the days when de Gaulle was agitating in Quebec.

Q: Well, we're talking about the influence of France and you're talking about, what did they call these, the young?

WAUCHOPE: Cooperantes, not unlike our Peace Corps.

Q: Cooperantes. We're talking about you got there in '69. The May and June of '68 were the great period for particularly this class of people. I mean these are the young students, the student revolt and they essentially knocked de Gaulle out. I mean it took a little while, but I mean was that spirit of it was in a way their Vietnam. It was part of the '60s of what was going on. Was that hitting them or did it have anything to do with it?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. Right. Well, it did. As I say, they were very sophisticated, quite cynical people and I sensed that they took some pride in the fact that they were able to bring down de Gaulle, but they also felt that, very quickly thereafter, politics returned to the way they were. There was a transition and they felt that the waves have just swept back over what they had done. Pompidou did not have the stature de Gaulle had, but the young leftists felt they were back where we started. That's why they were disinclined to discuss their own country's problems because they felt that France had again fallen under the control of the rightist coalition. They weren't really full of fire. My sense was that their commitment to Chad and the Third World was pretty uneven. I had a sense that they were just doing their time. This was the same period that Vietnam was going hot and heavy. The Tet Offensive had taken place and the U.S. had a substantial number of forces still engaged in Vietnam. So Peace Corps volunteers were looking at their options, and several were re-enlisting for a third year in Chad. I visited the volunteers in eastern Chad and it was pretty rough. I'd been in Vietnam and their circumstances were much worse than Vietnam would have been. Granted they wouldn't have to shoot anybody or be shot at, I suppose, but in terms of what they went through in order to avoid the possibility of the draft. This seemed was pretty extraordinary to me.

One of the most successful Peace Corps programs we had a program of well drilling, and I think this ought to be recorded. We had teams of well drillers who were supported by the government of Chad and also by certain international organizations. I think the U.N. had some input as well. Theses teams did extraordinary work and they left something valuable behind. The need for potable water is paramount, and the world is always in deficit which was certainly the case in Chad. They would go in with their trucks, drills and pipe, and they would put in a well with no fanfare. The pumps were simple to operate and maintain. Sometimes they would do open-faced wells and they'd line them with cinder block. Some of the young men, and I think it was only all men, went on to positions of great responsibility in the U.S. government after that experience.

Q: Talking about wells, I've heard that one problem was as you began to develop these well areas and all this it began to change the migratory pattern of herders which was an unfortunate problem. It means that they all gather and they're not moving from one spot to another and all sorts of bad things happened.

WAUCHOPE: Yes. This happens. It didn't really happen in this project because we were doing these wells in the south where the sedentary peoples were. So, it didn't change the patterns. The watering stations that we set up with Self Help funds along the main cattle route had marginal success to be candid about it, but the cattle were channeled the terminus in Fort Lamy where they were slaughtered for local consumption and export. I know of the case in Mauritania where USAID became involved in exploiting and expanding the traditional watering holes. Of course, they immediately attracted more herders with their herds and they soon used them up and the watering holes became useless. Then the herders had to move again, and now you had more people in movement depending on fewer and fewer watering holes. That's true; it does tend to change things in that Saharan or upper Sahelian region. In the sedentary areas, wells were a more permanent improvement.

Q: While you were there, this is before the Sahelian drought came during the '70s wasn't it?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, '73 to '75.

Q: Were you hearing the people on our side or anyone else saying, you know, this whole thing is [inaudible] and you know, we better watch out. What happens on the next thing? I mean were people looking ahead towards that or not?

WAUCHOPE: Not really. Everybody knew how important the rains were and in Sahelian Africa. I later served in Mali as well, and these people live and die by the rainfall. They gauge the "petites pluies" that start in March in those cases and they gauge how long they last and how heavy they are. Then, from that they hypothesize what the main rainy season is going to be like, and based on that, they make their decisions. The sedentary people make planting decisions, and herders make decisions about moving their cattle to new pasture lands based on those brief rains. The Sahelian people are more knowledgeable than others about rain prediction. Our development people viewed this as a permanent problem and realized that there were constraints on what donors could do about it. Not only because they could not control the rain, but they realized that were limits as to where the government can allow the herders to move their cattle without provoking major ethnic conflicts. If the herders enter farmers' lands, their cattle will soon spread out and there will be clashes, as occurred from time to time when I served in both Chad and Mali. Thank God, neither group was very heavily armed, so it didn't lead to many people losing their lives. Another constraint on the movement of herds was that below the 13th parallel the cattle would become infected tsetse flies and would die and their meat was putrefied. In view of these constraints, donors looked for reliable sources of water like the Niger River to the west of Chad and Lake Chad. Unfortunately Chad's water resources are mostly on the westernmost border and in the southern half of the country.

Q: How did you in your dealings of one of your many hats, how did you find dealing with the Chadian government? I mean, was it one of these things where you'd go and then there would be, was it Le Blanc or somebody, the Frenchman sitting off on one side. I heard one of the expressions that people who dealt with these governments at that time, parlay Le Blanc, in other words, let me talk to the guy in charge, really. Was this the case there or not?

WAUCHOPE: Well, there was an effort to conceal the role of the French advisor because, as I was saying about negritude, there was an increasing sense that the African leaders of the former colonies had to assert themselves, distinguish themselves from the French. Be that as it may, the functioning of government was really in the hands of the "conseilliers." These are the seconded French functionaries who are assigned there for two or four years or more. They liked the neo-colonial life; the life was reasonably good and they did make things work. Generally, we didn't cultivate them because there was an understanding, as represented both a donor nation and they were host government representatives, this would be inappropriate. If there were a Frenchman in the ministry, we would deal with the Chadian officials and you didn't deal with a Frenchman. Some of our AID people wanted to deal with the advisers, but we would discourage that. We wanted to give the Chadians the full measure of sovereignty. Yet we made errors in doing that because we received commitments from the government which it didn't have the wherewithal to implement. We had a program that seemed extraordinary promising on the northern coast of Lake Chad, a lake increases and decreases in size by a full three times annually. In the dry season, as the water recedes it leaves behind low-lying areas that are called polders. They can be farmed successfully because of the rich sedentary soils. Further, there are few insects or pests to attack the plants, and the fields didn't need fertilizer. So, we sent six Peace Corps volunteers there as a pilot program with promises of support from the government. The Peace Corps deserves tremendous credit for their effort. The volunteers flew to Mao on the Lake and then were taken by truck and then the last leg by camel. The only thing that distinguished them from the local people was that they were given this little kerosene-fired refrigerator to keep their beer cool, should they ever see one. Other than that, they lived just like the Chadians there. It was a great concept, and the production was excellent. They produced potatoes, and a variety of agricultural products on a serious scale, but when it came to marketing, the roads weren't available. If the volunteers came in by camel, how did you food get out? This became the choke point, and the Chadian government didn't come through with the promised roads.

There were six volunteers in this program and we went up to visit them. They talked about what the great prospects the project had. Within less than a year this whole project had collapsed because, along with all the hardships, the volunteers had to plow under the excess crops because they couldn't get them out to market. The produce was rotting in the fields. Eventually, all six of them abandoned the project. Some of them had a very rough time of it; some were reassigned, and some just quit. One had to be psycho-vac'd out, and another one came through my office. I must say, I'd had never seen an American quite that filthy before, he wore in a pair of shorts, period. His legs were filthy up to his knees, his hair was wild and he smelled. He told me he wanted to go to Cameroon and he wanted his passport, he had a Peace Corps passport. So, we issued it to him because he was entitled to it, but about six weeks later the Cameroonians expelled him. They said they didn't want this fellow here. But I mean they were all demoralized from the way in which this project had been undertaken and we much share some of the blame because we bought their promises that they'd be able to do these things. Now, if you went to the French and you said, will you work with us? First of all, they're probably not inclined to help you and I know they sidetracked a number of our proposals that they just put to one side and they never came to anything. The Chadians were not prepared to take the French on again. Again, one thing I think the Americans have to appreciate about French influence in Francophone Africa is that a leader of a Francophone African country can get on the phone, assuming the phone lines work, to the President of France and have a conversation. He can talk to him about his concerns and problems, and has a reasonable expectation that the president will be responsive and provide him what he needs. On the few rare occasions that I'm aware of where African leaders tried to call the American President, they'd get blocked at the White House switchboard. So, they said, well, we hear all these great things about America, but what's important to us is to talk to your leader, as this is the way in which Africans work among themselves. If the American leader doesn't know who the hell I am, well, I've just been diminished in my peoples' eyes. The French President always took the phone calls. Sure, the leaders were whining for this or wanted that, but that's how things were. The French involvement and influence in Africa really turned on these kinds of favors, it was the fact that they could talk to the chief. Chief of State and receive a sympathetic hearing. I know in 1980s there was an acute crime problem in Abidjan and so Houphouet called, I guess it was Giscard at the time, and said he needed urgent help. Within days the French airlifted a dozen new patrol cars and provided French police advisors and weapons, etc. That's the kind of response the leader is looking for. If you asked the Americans to do that, we'd have to study the issue, negotiate an agreement and arrange procurement and shipment. We're talking a couple or three years and he had to deal with the problem right then. There's no substitute for that. You have to have that willingness to be responsive and the French did and we couldn't handle that. So, our ability to influence events was obviously very limited as a result.

Q: What about turning to foreign affairs, I mean I realize you were pretty close to the bottom of the totem pole, but what about Libya and Sudan? I mean these were difficult countries.

WAUCHOPE: They were, and both of them were active at that time. As I say, the key political event in the foreign affairs of Chad at the time was the overthrow of King Idriss and the ascent of Muammar Qadhafi who quickly assumed the role as a magnet for Arab radicals. He viewed his southern flank as vulnerable to his pan-Arab activities. There was an ongoing concern about him and, of course, he soon became something of a demon in the American hierarchy of demons, albeit that Libya was distant from the U.S. and not likely to be much threat to immediate American interests. We felt that the French strategy of having Chad serve as a buffer was probably overdrawn, and we were skeptical about Qadhafi's actual ability to immobilize the Islamic minority in Chad. They were a very decided minority in Chad, Niger and Mali, but he was testing the waters in these countries. Ironically, ultimately, he had some success. It wasn't necessarily Qadhafi, but the Islamic peoples of the north did eventually get control of the government in Chad, and yet all the profitable former colonies on the coast are under no more threat than they ever were. Ultimately, whoever runs the show in these coastal states has got to think about their own domestic problems rather than worry about regional threats.

Now, in Sudan the issues were similar, yet different. There was a north-south conflict, really a civil war between the Islamic north and the animist and Christian south. We'd occasionally see refugees from the south come through Fort Lamy, the capital, and we would try to get some sense of what was going on. We realized we didn't have much influence in that region. Ironically, I later became the desk officer for Sudan, and by that time Nimeiri had hammered out a peace with the south, and essentially shoved it down the throats of the Islamic north. This effort eventually brought the civil war to a close, at least for awhile. Again, the Chadians' concern was that this conflict would ebb and flow across the border because, as elsewhere in Africa, the people who live along these borders are usually the same group. They know nothing about the importance of these national frontiers, and they moved back and forth without concern. So, these armed elements were always a matter of concern in this area of Chad. When Chad's Islamic dissidents in eastern Chad would trade food for arms with these people, it unnerved both the Chadians and the French. I remember going into the southeastern part of the country, the provincial capital of Am Timan. We flew in on a rainy day. You see we had this 1946 DC3 that was based in Fort Lamy, and the DAO had regional responsibilities all the way from Niger to Gabon, and Cameroon and Mali. So, our Ambassador could use it quite a bit. When we arrived, the security forces were people going around in ponchos, with sub-machineguns and even grenades in their hands. We thought, what in the devil is this all about? Of course, it was because of the instability in that province about which we heard nothing in the Capital. And that was in the southeastern part of Chad, not the northern regions which was in open revolt out side of the provincial capitals.

Q: Looking at it from today when we're concerned about Islamic fundamentalism, was this a concern of ours at all?

WAUCHOPE: Well, not so much fundamentalism, but the concepts of Arab nationalism and the degree to which it was opposed Western culture, Western concepts of democracy and representative government. Nasser had mobilized the Islamic world, and his successors and other Arab leaders were still agitating. You had the alliances between Libya, Egypt and Yemen. There was a concern that these activities would be an obstacle to Western access to resources of the Arab world. This nationalism was then rather low key, and we recognized that it was played up to enhance the legitimacy of otherwise shaky regimes. In the Arab world you had military governments, you had the Baathists, you had the conservative kingdoms and they were in conflict with one another despite that Arab nationalism. The Israelis were active in Chad in order to keep a foothold in this area to keep an eye on Qadhafi and his activities. They had a small military assistance mission to provide training for bodyguards and small arms, and some economic activities, very focused and directed activities.

Q: Did you get any visits from Washington at that time?

WAUCHOPE: We had of all things we had a congressional delegation of five congressmen from the House Agriculture Committee. Chad had never hosted five congressmen during its entire nine years of independence, and we had them all at one time. They came up from Cameroon by air and we took them across the Chari River to Cameroon by pirogue. You think of cultures sort of gliding past one another in the night, the way in which this whole visit worked out was a version of that. The sultan of Khoussary on the Cameroonian side had been briefed on the visit by through his general factotum. The congressmen were ushered into this big whitewashed mud chamber, and were seated on a straight-back banquet against one wall, and the sultan sat on a throne facing them. After a long silent hiatus, the sultan says to his assistant, his vizier or whatever, "Who are these people?" The Americans were saying the same thing, who is this guy, why does he get to sit on the throne and we on this hard bench? After an exchange of formal greetings and some desultory remarks, the ceremony came to an end and the two cultures went their own ways. It was such a logistical headache to get the CODEL back and forth across the river because there was just the one ferry that crossed the river every hour; it was an unbelievable effort for the meager return. The CODEL's alleged purpose was to assess our modest AID program. You can hardly call it a boondoggle, as coming to Chad was no treat. Of course, what they really were looking for were prospects for selling American agriculture products. We did provide a fair amount of PL-480 wheat to Chad, and these wheat sales were a big issue in West Africa. The French had a monopoly on wheat imports; it was essentially dumping, I suppose, it was mostly subsidized aid donations. The French were resentful of PL-480, and, once again, considered it a part of a larger American conspiracy; we were providing Africa agricultural products to displace French influence. In reality, they were simply looking for markets for U.S. agricultural products in exotic locations.

Q: Well, then you left there in 1971? Were there any coups or anything?

WAUCHOPE: Right. Yes, there were several events that shook the government. The President was Francois Tombalbaye. There was evidence that Libya was supporting the northern insurgents, and this pressure combined with the failing economy drove Tombalbaye to embrace the philosophical concept that was dominating in the Francophone Bantu areas. He decided he had to rediscover his roots. He was influenced by people like Mobutu Sese Sekou and like Mobutu, he dropped his first name Francois and replaced it with Ngarta Tombalbaye. Further, his official photographs, which had been air-brushed after independence to remove his tribal scars, where restored to show the scars. He was a very handsome man. He had three scars on each. This was the beginning of a larger political purge.

Q: We used to call it a member of the 111 club.

WAUCHOPE: After I left, Tombalbaye began to test the loyalty of his subordinates by their willingness to undergo traditional initiation ceremonies called Yondo. This purge started then, but it was developing during my time. It reflected the fact that Tombalbaye was concerned about his legitimacy and his ability to retain power, not so much from the north, so much as his own people because they were becoming more educated, and more demanding of the rewards of independence. Development was stagnant and the single party state was suffocating. His objective was to rally his people behind him as the Chief of State. Also, there were charismatic leader like Bokassa from the CAR to the south. He was a popular beyond his borders for his anti-French statements, and I remember when he came to visit for an OCAM meeting. The crowd reaction to him was stunning.

Q: Was he the emperor at that time?

WAUCHOPE: He was not the emperor, at that point. He was just the chief of state, which was bad enough given his brutal rule. He was a real rabble-rouser; there's no question of that. He was well regarded and well received by most of the southern Chadians. They seemed to be attracted to him because he put his finger in the French eye. He came to Fort Lamy for this meeting of Francophone heads of state in Central Africa and he was, by far, the biggest attraction. When he drove down the main avenue through the crowds in a procession with other chiefs of state came; everybody cheered and surged forward to see Bokassa. That evening there was a reception at the presidential palace along the river; the former French governor's residence. The Diplomats and the senior officials were all waiting there at our various tables as the invited African leaders arrived. This wait went on for more than an hour. We waited for two hours and most of the chiefs of state had arrived. Finally Bokassa was the only one who had not arrived. Chadian radio had a live broadcast from the Presidential Palace, and reporter was on the grounds talking to arriving guests. Noting the delay in the leaders coming out of the Palace to begin the dinner, he made reference to the fact that everyone was waiting for Bokassa. All of a sudden, the gates swing open and Bokassa and all his escort vehicles come roaring in across the lawn. Bokassa jumps out and gets a hold of the commentator and says, "By God, I'm glad you told me that I was the only person missing. I didn't know what time this thing started." He charges into the building, while we're all out on the lawn assembled at the tables. After the form al dinner, Bokassa was reported to be partying in the quartier dancing until dawn. He has invited Tombalbaye to join him, but the Chadian was a much more conservative individual. He was concerned that Bokassa had a tremendous amount of influence in the southern part of the country and Tombalbaye had to find ways to counter that. That's one of the reasons why he returned to these traditional ceremonies of Yondo.

Q: Did Nigeria being an Anglophone country, but with a significant border, I mean small, but a significant border, which was the main commercial outlet, play an important role?

WAUCHOPE: All commerce had to go across the neck of northern Cameroon and then down through Nigeria. At this time, Nigeria was in the grip of the Biafra civil war at this time, and their primary concern was about any of their neighbors helping the Biafrans. We had perhaps 20,000 Ibos mostly running businesses in Chad. There were in Fort Lamy and other major towns; they were very adept commercial people. They were undoubtedly sending money back for the Biafran cause.

Q: Also, the French were messing around in Biafra weren't they?

WAUCHOPE: They were. We never knew exactly how significantly, but they were concerned about Nigeria's size and potential influence in their realm in francophone Africa. They were also interested in Biafra's oil resources which the Biafrans thought a significant nation. On the other side of the coin, the Hausa in northern Nigeria are closely linked to the Islamic groups in Mali, Niger and Chad. The French had to play this game very carefully, but their interests in the region required that they keep a hand in. In fact, I had to pick up my car, a Jeep, in June 1969. I flew to Lagos on the WACASC plane and I drove it to Fort Lamy over five days from Lagos. That was a particularly tense time during the war and I was stopped multiple times at military and police checkpoints. I was advised not to drive after dark because the guards at the checkpoints start drinking about that time, and they were likely to open fire if they see a car after dark. Several Americans had been fired upon. These were the conditions I had to make my way through. Just north of Ibadan, I picked up a policeman in uniform. Every time we'd come to a checkpoint he'd put on his hat and tell me to go to the front of the line. This worked great. After I dropped him off, I picked up a military policeman who had a submachine gun, a Sten gun, and we made it through all the checkpoints without any problem. I was a bit unnerved when we initially took off from the checkpoint and he said "Stop, I forgot something." I backed up, he ran out and returned with his Sten gun which he then laid across his knees. I wondered if he forgot his weapon would he also forget to put on the safety.

By comparison with CAR and Chad, Nigeria had a good road network. Chad had only a few hundred miles of paved road. It's a country that is three times the size of California.

Q: You left Chad in 1971? So, as you leave a country, whither Chad?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I felt that Chad's prospects were very clouded; that the government was really fumbling around trying to figure out what direction it wanted to pursue. It was overly dependent on the French, and this was a problem because the French would go with whatever regime it thought would serves its best interest. Tombalbaye was increasingly caught up in his struggle for legitimacy, depending increasingly on coercion rather than his personality and persuasion. So, my sense was that Chad was headed for trouble. On the resource side, cotton and livestock were very vulnerable to drought because of the weak infrastructure. There was exploration for oil, but with little success in that time. Subsequently, they found oil in fairly substantial amounts. There are certain inherent constraints as well. Chad is landlocked; some 900 miles from the sea. This will always be a problem. It seemed that Chad was always going to be viewed as a buffer state and not much more than that.

Q: Speaking of which I think I interviewed somebody who was saying we were concerned and sent a special delegation down to Chad and other places to get support on whaling. They said, oh yes, we'll support you on this whaling thing, but tell me what is a whale?

WAUCHOPE: That's fair, yes. I remember making demarches on the law of the sea. The Chadians responded, "The sea, what possible relevance does that have for us?" It was kind of bizarre.

Q: Was there a feeling I mean here you are essentially in the southern capital, a feeling about as you left there the menace from the north?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, there was. It was our general perception was the Islamic insurgents chances of succeeding was extremely remote because they were few in number, they did not represent the majority of the people. They didn't seem to show any inclination to broaden their base by offering a multiethnic society. While there wasn't a great fear of the insurgency, there was a sense of large murky force in the north. It related to the extent to which the North African Arab and Islamic countries provided support to the northern insurgents and the extent to which this would create a serious threat to the government.

I had occasion to return to Chad some 16 years later. I don't generally go back to my former posts, but I had a friend who was the Chargï¿½ in Cameroon at the time. We made a trip to N'djamena by road, and I found that it had changed markedly; almost unrecognizable. It was now very much an Arab capital and some of the differences were the result of drought, of which there had been two. This trip was in 1987. All the green spaces that I remembered were now pretty much gone. The population of the capital had more than doubled through the civil war, the droughts and the migrations of refuges. It was now so overpopulated that virtually all the trees had been cut down and used for firewood. Where there had been nice villas that had been built for foreign businessmen and diplomats as well as the Chadian elites had green lawns and open fences that let you see the lawns. That was all gone. Now there were masonry walls that were eight feet tall along all these streets in those neighborhoods. The streets were dusty, and in the gloom there were men with AK47s in turbans lounging against the walls and at the street corners. The city had really changed and it seemed a different capital altogether. Of course, it was a reflection of how the country had evolved historically as well.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop, I think. I think it makes it easier. But in 1971, whither?

WAUCHOPE: I was in negotiation with Personnel about my onward assignment. I wanted to serve in the AF bureau. It was the logical thing to do. I thought I had found a home there and I wanted to compete for the job as the Chad desk officer, which would make eminent sense. Desk officer jobs were then much sought after, even AF jobs Instead; I was reassigned to cultural affairs for Africa CU/AF. I thought, good Lord, what is that all about. I found out later that it was because CU Assistant Secretary Richardson was very intent on attracting people from the Foreign Service into the CU Bureau which was a mix of civil servants and Foreign Service officers. So, I tried very hard to find a way around this assignment, but with no success. I later found out that a person who I knew, and who was in the Department, corralled the job, having manipulated the process in her favor.

Q: This is the Chad one?

WAUCHOPE: The Chad desk job, yes, which made good sense for the AF Bureau. I'd come to know a certain number of the Africa hands and figured I'd have a pretty good shot at this assignment, but it didn't work out. I figured all right, I'll give this cultural affairs thing a shot. It was a different experience.

Q: Okay. So, we'll pick this up, let me put it down here in 1971 when you're back to Washington in cultural affairs for Africa and we'll find out about African culture.

WAUCHOPE: All right. Such as it is. Good.

Q: Today is the 26th of April, 2002, Keith, you came '71 you were in the cultural affairs office, what was it called?

WAUCHOPE: It was CU/AF, Cultural Affairs for Africa or the Office of African Programs.

Q: You were there from '71 to when?

WAUCHOPE: '73. You did a full two-year tour there?

Q: Okay, let's talk about it. When you got there what was your impression I mean sometimes cultural affairs isn't the right on the action and all that. When you look at it it's sort of like an exchange program, would have been far more effective than all the political reporting we've done you know, because these usually have gotten to be leaders, anyway.

WAUCHOPE: I felt I was being assigned outside of the mainstream of Foreign Service work, and certainly out of my regional bureau, which I had long since determined would be Africa. But, I figured its African cultural affairs; maybe there are some useful linkages. There were a number of other Foreign Service officers who had been tagged to serve in this bureau as well. John Richardson was the Assistant Secretary, a very intelligent, dynamic sort of individual, and he had said to the Director General; "I want more Foreign Service people in this bureau. We have civil service, they're all well and good, but I want people who've got the overseas perspective." So, he made a concerted effort to bring FSOs into CU. At a later phase in this assignment he hosted brown bag lunches with his Foreign Service people to get their insights. They told him, "Look the work is okay, but we really are out of the mainstream. We feel that, from a career perspective, this assignment is not doing us much credit in the service." He said, "Well, what can we do to make it more attractive to FSOs?" I said, "For one thing, you've got to ensure that we get good onward assignments back in the mainstream bureaus and that there be some effort that the evaluations reflect the role that the cultural affairs plays in support of our foreign policy goals in the regions in which we are serving." He took that onboard, and there was some effort to follow up. We thought it was important to let him know how a CU assignment was viewed by the rest of the Service. In fact, we got some tremendous mileage out of the CU programs.

This was a particularly interesting time, '71 to '73, as a number of countries were emerging from the colonial experience. We had a lot of students from Angola and Mozambique which we judged would become independent in the near future. They were exiles and were brought to the United States for educational training. We had a program called SASP, the Southern African Student Program, under which some 500 students were brought to the U.S. The concept was that when majority rule occurs in Portuguese colonies and in South Africa, we would like to have a group of people who have studied in the United States, who understand the U. S. and have a level of education to make a real contribution to their own countries. That was the concept; the reality was that this program had started in the middle '60s in an effort to compete with the Soviets who were doing the same sort of thing with the same intent. When the program began our Public Affairs officers throughout the southern African region began selecting anybody who could reasonably qualify. As a result, we got some people who didn't have the academic wherewithal to study in the U.S. They didn't' have either the preparation or the intelligence necessary to carry through on a full four-year program in the United States. So, we lowered the threshold and brought them into SASP at the high school level. By the time I was involved in the program, it was already something of a shambles. The SASP participants were getting in trouble with the law, and they were not able to stay in college. They would then fade into the society, and then there were issues about their visa status. It became a constant headache to try to deal with these administrative problems. Some had mental problems, as disoriented refugees. In some cases they and their families had been the object of great brutality and repression. One fellow had been savagely beaten by the Portuguese.

Q: You say he had to be institutionalized? I can't imagine that we were having some problems giving Angola and Mozambique people who were out of the Portuguese orbit. I mean, you know, Portuguese control. Visas, these programs because wouldn't the Portuguese be screaming bloody murder?

WAUCHOPE: Well, we shut our ears to Portuguese concerns because we felt that history was passing the Portuguese by, and Salazar was the last gasp of dictatorship. South Africans likewise were unhappy about our educating these people who were in opposition to the white regime there. This program does reflect the intense competition that existed in that cold war period in the '60s and into the '70s. The Soviets and Chinese, and the Cubans, to a lesser extent, but primarily the Soviets, were training exiles. There were about 540 participants by the time I became involved in SASP. We did mostly the administrative work to see to it that these people stayed in school and to keep them out of jail, and that when they got in trouble, ensure they received proper treatment. There was a fair number that had done well; completing their education. The expectation at the beginning of SASP was that by the time they completed university there would be majority rule in the Portuguese colonies. That was not the case, so they were sitting on their hands, and we had to try, to the extent possible, to regularize their visa status so they could stay and do productive work. I think some did return home eventually, but overall, I'm not sure we got very much in return on this investment.

Q: Well, the problem is that if they couldn't go right back, I mean our society being so absorptive, you know, they just.

WAUCHOPE: Right, exactly, and they'd marry and they'd find jobs and then the appeal of returning home wasn't great, but SASP reflects that the U.S. had to "Keep up with the Joneses", that is to say the Soviets. Conceptually, I guess it made sense, but the key to success was the individuals we selected, they were not of the sort that we were really looking for, because the pressure to compete caused us to lower our qualifications.

Q: Well, I think the Soviets had the same problem.

WAUCHOPE: They did.

Q: Because I got a whiff of this back in the '60s when there was a revolt of the African students who'd gone to Sofia and I was in Belgrade, the consular officer there and I had all sorts of people coming through. They didn't like being called black monkeys by their Bulgarian counterparts. I heard that this was duplicated in the Soviet Union, too. I mean in the United States, at least there is a kind of a fit. In the Soviet Union and the bloc there was just no fit at all.

WAUCHOPE: Yes and the Russians really didn't know what to make of these exile students, and there was a racist strain in Bloc nations as there is in the United States, and that came back to bite the Bloc countries as well. Yes, we were competing against those who really weren't doing any better than we were in this process. But that's just one dimension of this. What we tried to do in our cultural programs for Africa was to bring potential leaders with the international visitor program which is designed to give grantees some exposure to the U.S. The grants were for 30-days, and USIS would tell us in advance through the PAO what the IVs wanted to do in the United States, and we would then set up the program. We had three programming agencies we worked with and they arranged the specific programs for them. We would talk to the agencies before they arrived, and when they arrived we would go with the grantees for the programming session, which usually lasted three hours or so. The agencies were very efficient in arranging the programs. The visits were a multi-stop tour across the country, and they would have cooperative organizations that would host the visitors in major cities. The IVs could pretty much write their own ticket; if they wanted among to see Disneyland, no problem. Primarily, we wanted them to meet their counterparts in whatever their specialty was. If they were attorneys, we'd meet with other attorneys, judges etc. If they were a judge, we'd meet with U.S. courts at a fairly high level. The programs almost always started in Washington and ended in New York, and the visits were usually coast-to-coast. This gave them a sense of the expanse and diversity of the United States, which is a very useful thing. When we had the occasion, we would debrief them when they returned to the East Coast. They were just ecstatic about what they'd seen and the experiences they'd had. I thought that the Fulbright program, which was about $50 million a year, was probably the best bang for our buck in our foreign policy arsenal. I'm comparing that to my experience in Africa where the aid programs did not get the same mileage for the dollar. We knew that when the Soviets ran a similar program, but it had escorts that took visitors around on a closely supervised program. We had escort-interpreters, but primarily to interpret for those with limited English, and to guide them through our complex society. Whereas the Soviets escorts were there for security purposes, as well as trying to put on the best face of the Soviet Union for the visiting dignitary. About 60% of our IVs would have escort- interpreters; the other 40% were sufficiently sophisticated and had the linguistic skills to get around on their own. In one notable case a Mozambican who had occasion to travel to Texas and on the plane he ended up being seated next to a Supreme Court justice for the State of Texas. They got in a conversation and he explained where he was from and what he was doing here and the Supreme Court justice found it very interesting. The Justice invited the visitor to come home for dinner that night. He went home and had dinner with this Supreme Court justice and met his family and saw where and how he lived. Now, that's something you couldn't stage. The visitor realized that this would never have happened in the Soviet Union, I think we can say with some assurance. That made a lasting impression on this individual. So, I felt that to that extent these programs were very valuable, and we had to carefully select grantees. We didn't have a large number of grants in Africa because it wasn't a particularly focused area, but we had a lot of success with what we had.

The other side of the coin was sending distinguished Americans to Africa. We had the STAG program, the Short Term American Grantee, and it could last for anywhere from a couple of weeks to as much as a month or so. We would also send various groups out. Now, traditionally they had sent out groups in the entertainment business, musical and athletic groups. . In addition, we sent Kareem Jabbar out with an understanding with his team, the Hawks, that he not to play basketball with anybody because he was too valuable an asset to be allowed to play in some scrum game and get injured. When you get to these African countries, he traveled with a college team from Ohio, and there was a good deal of unhappiness about his not being able to play. There was a sense that with entertainment and sports groups we could make certain inroads, but that was not it solely. There may have been an element of condescension I suppose in that approach, but we also sent out educators and intellectuals as well. I think the thrust was to demonstrate to Africans that black Americans in particular, had succeeded in the United States and had positions of responsibility. The intriguing thing was that our STAGs gained at least as much from these visits as did those they contacted in Africa. I remember we sent two educators named Dr. Engs and Dr. Williams. They were from New Jersey as I recall, and they were sort of scholar/radicals, in the early '70s, and they wanted to visit Mother Africa. We sent them out to southern and eastern Africa. When we debriefed them we learned they had had quite a revelation. They said they described to African audiences in Mozambique racism in America which they compared to South Africa. The audience then asked why American Blacks didn't rise up and wipe out the Whites? Of course, the Africans were thinking about South Africa where the blacks are the majority, whereas they didn't realize that it was different in the United States. The Africans thought since they said it was the same as South Africa, they figured the numbers and the demographics were the same. Engs and Williams kind of looked at one another and said, well, maybe we have a misunderstanding here. That realization kind of took the steam out of the event for them, but it shows that we gave them full range to say what they wanted to say.

Q: Because in later periods, particularly during the Reagan times I think there was a rather heavy hand on some of this. I mean there was a blacklist or something, but you didn't?

WAUCHOPE: No, we didn't see any of that. We felt that our nation was strong enough to go out and have Americans criticize us, and we had an obligation to let the Africans listen to different perspectives and points of view.

We had another fellow named John Kinnard; he ran a community museum under the Smithsonian over in Anacostia, a very decent guy. He ran this museum that did exhibitions on such things as rats. Well, rats in the inner city are commonplace, so he did a whole exhibit on their origins and their habits. He thought that's what the people ought to understand, so he used the community museum for that purpose. We arranged for him to go to Africa and meet with the museum people there and see what they have to think. He had a good and rewarding trip there for about 30 days. He had some eye-opening experiences. He said when he was in Uganda and he was told that people are still eating people in Uganda. I said I didn't think that happened, but I couldn't dissuade him. But he had a very productive tour and he did meet with museum folks and got many good ideas. They talked about museum sciences and how you get people to come to the museum and what they should learn when they're there, and how you make a museum a development or a nation-building tool as well. We felt that was a very useful exercise. We also sent Jessie Owens out to Africa.

Q: The famous, well, he was the star of the 1936 Olympics.

WAUCHOPE: The '36 Olympics, yes. He was a very nice man, very gentle, soft-spoken fellow, very decent. He was happy to go back to Africa and talk to people about his life. We also had a program in Somalia and Kenya as well to train athletes. There are a lot of superb athletes in Africa; you see them particularly in running events. But they didn't have the training or the equipment. We sent Americans out to do this training on both short-term grants and longer-term grants. CU had one such trainer, Mal Whitfield, a black American, who spent several years in East Africa and did great things especially in terms of identifying Olympic quality performers. He put them into local programs, and then arranged to get them into programs in the States or in Europe where they could develop their talents. I thought this was very valuable to get some recognition for Africa by bringing their athletes, these world class athletes to the attention of the world. CU managed a number of useful programs and frankly, it did not demand a great deal of time or intellectual effort. Two other officers and I would do what CU/AF required, but we had plenty of time for long lunches and to visit museums and local art galleries. We thought, well we're in cultural affairs, we should keep current on the cultural side of Washington.

Q: I think the interesting thing though sort of from the bureaucratic perspective is that this is the Nixon Kissinger regime.

WAUCHOPE: Right.

Q: Which is you know, supposed to be sort of repressive and all that. Yet we were able to carry on this program including letting the centers go out and talk and all that and from what I gather you didn't feel the cold hand of somebody saying, sort of the handlers or the spinners?

WAUCHOPE: No, that's a good point. There was one instance where CU sent a group, called Chicago to Europe in the early '70s. Chicago used a lot of four-letter words, and Congressman Gross, a Department nemesis, learned of it and he cut the CU budget severely.

Q: He was from Iowa.

WAUCHOPE: Iowa, yes. Congressman Gross, but he was on the House Appropriation Committee for State, and the story of his cutting the CU budget for cultural presentation by half or two-thirds of sending this group to Europe. It was a cautionary tale, not to offend the Congress because it had control of our funding. We had our defenders as well, who thought this was a worthwhile program, but we really didn't have a sense of restraint in our programs. The director of CU/AF was Bill Edmondson, who went on to be ambassador in South Africa, and Owen Roberts was the deputy, who also became ambassador in AF. We had a commitment to showing the American society for what it was, and not trying to just show its best face.

Q: Just curious about how some of these things are set up. Were you more or less just managing or would you sit around on these long lunches and look up at the ceiling and say, you know, I was reading in the paper and they've got something going on in Montana or something. I mean?

WAUCHOPE: There was certain repetitiousness to the work, but we would brainstorm who we might try to get to do a tour of Africa. Most of the creativity and programming concepts, however, came from the field. They would ask for someone to talk about a free press or journalism, someone who had experience at the national level and we would then try to find somebody that fit that bill. We had a range of resources to tap into; associations and organizations that worked in those fields and they'd see if they could identify somebody who would be willing to make such a trip. We also ran the Fulbright program, sending American professors for a full academic year in Africa. We put a lot of effort to explain the problems they would confront during their year in Africa. I think this was one of the reasons Richardson wanted more Foreign Service officers in CU to give a flavor for the foreign environment. There were several of fairly well-known universities in Africa like Makerere University in Uganda and Cape Coast College in Ghana. There were then very credible institutions. In Ethiopia there was the Haile Selassie University. We wanted to maintain and expand these relationships with these universities. Regrettably, most of those institutions have fallen into decline. Cape Coast College is still functioning but Makrere was closed for many years as was Haile Selassie in Addis, which became a national university and a hot bed of radicals. Ironically these relationships, which we hoped would bring a degree of political stability and economic improvement didn't occur. It was unfortunate, but I think again, our heads were in the right place in trying to establish those relationships.

Q: Well, after this time it's really you know, I mean it was, had to be interesting and probably long on productive. '73, whither?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, well, when the tour was winding down, we prevailed on our Assistant Secretary, John Richardson, to try to get us decent onward assignments. They did put a word in for me to serve again in AF, but once again I was deflected and I ended up going to Caribbean Affairs. I was to take over the desk for Haiti and the Bahamas. The concept was sold to me, as "Well, it's very much like Africa." Well, it isn't like Africa at all, and that was the first thing that I learned about it. I accepted the assignment as it was at least a desk officer position. This was in the days of Nixon, I was there in '73 to '74 and this influenced our policy in the region. I was given these two portfolios and they were both pretty active. First, the Bahamas was scheduled to become independent on July 1st, 1973 and I arrived in the midst of the preparations. Haiti was a constant headache for us from a variety of reasons. It was an interesting job. It was very dynamic; no more long lunches. One thing you could say about Caribbean Affairs; there are no specialists in Caribbean region. It's an office staffed by officers who are passing through to some other area. In many cases Latin America, but not exclusively.

Q: It's sort of an in-between assignment?

WAUCHOPE: Exactly. A collection of cats and dogs. In ARA/CAR there were the former Spanish-speaking colonies, the English-speaking former colonies, the French-speaking, and even the Dutch-speaking. So there was no linguistic specialization to serve in the office. Likewise, we had an eclectic group of people on the desk as well. John Burke was the office director, later to become the ambassador in Guyana. Unfortunately for him, it was at the time the Jonestown mass suicide, and that was the end of his career. He was a very intense, serious individual, and he took all the responsibility very seriously as well. This was a challenge given all the insane issues that we had to deal with. The second thing about the Caribbean was its proximity to the United States which changed everything. Not only does it change the menu of issues, but just by its proximity to the U.S. changes attitudes of the government. There was continuing reference to the Bahamas being only 50 miles from Florida. Bimini is the closest island. So, issues like law of the sea and Soviet submarine activities in that area were considered important. The flip side was that all the elements of American society at one time or another seemed to have a presence or an interest in the Caribbean. Organized crime was active there; Robert Vesco, the fugitive financier pitched up in the Bahamas. Howard Hughes had three floors of a hotel on Paradise Island in the Bahamas. There were all manner of money laundering activities, and there was narcotics smuggling. There was a flow of illegal immigrants and refugees arriving from that region. All these activities loomed much larger because of the region's proximity to the U.S. U.S. programs and policies were much more intensive than almost anything we were doing in Africa. We had to adjust to that reality, and we used the proximity rational to engender support for our efforts in the Caribbean.

At the time I was on the Haiti desk, Baby Doc was running the president and was all of 23 years of age. He was a totally incompetent and not really in control of what was going on. His mother, Papa Doc's widow, retained a great deal of influence and ruled the country along with the Minister of Interior. They were the power behind the throne if you will, and they were completely unscrupulous, as you can imagine. We had a lot of economic dealings with Haiti because they did a lot of assembly work for the U.S. market. They do a lot of clothing piecework. Virtually all the baseballs used in the United States are sewn in Haiti. Tourism was an important source of revenue. There was constant political instability of a government that really didn't know what it was doing. While the Tonton Macoutes had largely been suppressed, they had not gone away. Yet they posed no real opposition to the Duvalier rule during this time, but there were issues and situations that would make for an interesting tour. Just one was the immigration issue. There was an unending wave of boatloads of Haitians pitching up on Florida beaches. If they did not make it to Florida, when they spotted a Coast Guard cutter or any boat, they would stove in the bottom of their boat and then start screaming in distress. There would often be 50+ people on a 26-foot boat. Maritime law requires a vessel to rescue those people in peril of death, and land them on the first landfall and, of course, that would be Florida. They would be rounded up and take to the INS court for an exclusionary hearing. The court would formally exclude them despite their claims that they were political refugees fleeing persecution if they were sent back. In reality, they were economic refugees, but they had been coached to make the claim. There were Haitian organizations in Florida which would send an attorney to the INS court. They would ask for a 30-day continuance and in that 30, days they would all disappear into American society. We estimated in the early 70s that there were 250,000 illegal Haitians in greater New York area alone. They had their own radio stations, their own newspapers, and their own soccer leagues. Virtually all Haitians in the U.S. were illegals. They all claimed to be political exiles, but they were just peasants or small businessmen. Remarkably, there was a great debate as to why the U.S. was so hard on Haitian refugees as opposed to the Cuban refugees. The allegation was that Cubans are white, and Haitians are blacks. It is nowhere near that simple, needless to say. We identified Castro and his regime as a communist regime, and the law gave them the possibility to be considered refugees, whereas there was no such provision for the Haitians.

Q: Wasn't there also the domestic political pressure exception, I mean you just didn't mess with the Cubans?

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely, no question of that. In response to our critics we would make that case. I mean these people were fleeing a communist dictatorship whereas Baby Doc was considered a benign bumbler, as opposed to a repressive dictator.

Q: Didn't they have their Tonton Macoutes

WAUCHOPE: These thugs were somewhat subdued by this time, but they were still there. The stories in the files were just spectacular about things that Papa Doc had done in his heyday. He was not only a ruthless individual, but he personally he murdered people with great abandon. His son didn't have those tendencies. His son was a fat, not very bright individual who just liked to live the good life and he was glad to be able to do that. He sort of presided, but did not control things. There were also a lot of commercial disputes with Haiti. Haitians would fail to pay U.S. companies for goods or services, or they would expropriate American firms. The aggrieved Americans would come to the Department to try to make their complaint into a sovereign claim against the government of Haiti. We would dodge and weave and try to avoid accepting the claims because the American firms were often pretty sleazy. One example was Hemo Caribbean which bought for $4 a pint, and sold it in the U.S. for $12 to $15 a pint.

In another instance, I was awakened about 3:00 in the morning by the OP Center which said that they had just received a flash message from the American ambassador in Port Au Prince that there was a fire at the presidential palace in Port Au Prince. The Haitian president had asked the Ambassador for American fire fighters and fire engines to fly to Haiti to put out the fire for him. So, I went into the OP Center and we started looking at the issue. Sure enough, a fire had started in the palace basement about midnight. This proved to be a classic third world scenario. As it turns out, the fire started in the magazine in the armory which located under the palace, and the president, being paranoid, probably with good reason, had most of the ammunition stored in the presidential basement to keep it out of the hands of his. As the fire progressed, the ammunition started firing off. There was the gunfire all over the capital. The militia who were supposed to defend the president, at least in theory, heard this and grabbed their empty weapons and went racing to the presidential palace to see what was going on. Their expectation was that somebody has risen up against the president and there would be looting the palace, and they wanted to get in on it. So, when they arrived there and they found out that it was just a fire and not a coup, they immediately they turned around and claimed they had come to protect the president. The fire burned on through the night and our Ambassador is contacted by the Haitians to send firefighters and equipment. The Joint Chiefs Office said it could get fire fighting teams Port au Prince, but not in any useful time frame. We told the ambassador help could not arrive in time. The fire meanwhile is burning itself out. It pretty much burned the palace down, and, in the process, it destroyed all the ammunition in the armory. That morning at about 9:00, the president went on the radio to reassure his people, saying to his people, "Your beloved president and his family are well. There was a fire and it's now under control, and there's no longer any need for concern." He explained that the explosions they heard was the ammunition stored at the palace, and now all the ammunition was expended, and there is no further danger. He thought. My God, I've just told the whole world I have no ammunition to defend the regime. Haitian exiles were based throughout the region, the Dominican Republic and Cuba and parts of the United States. And here Baby Doc has just signaled them he has no munitions. He thinks about this for about an hour, and we get another flash message from the embassy with a preliminary list of the munitions that Haiti will need. They wanted four million rounds of small arms ammunition; they wanted mortar rounds, grenades and all many of other munitions. So, we take a look at this list, and I think to myself, wow, this gives us incredible leverage with this guy. I then got a call from the Joint Chief's office which had also gotten this flash message. They had started to staff this problem, and OJC figures DOD can get these munitions together and have them down there in 36 hours. I said, not so fast. First of all, this is Baby Doc. Second of all, if the Haitians want something from us, we should be getting something from them. So, I went to the office director about this idea. He had come to the Office of Caribbean Affairs from having been the DCM in Port Au Prince, and he knew the scene pretty well. I said this looks like an excellent opportunity. We had about nine or ten major issues with Haiti we wanted to resolve. I said, "Why don't we start going through our list of what we want before we give them these weapons?" He said, oh, no. He didn't think that was the right thing to do. I thought that this was the essence of diplomacy; you've got something that they want, so let's get something in return. No, no, he said, we can't do that. He said, "We have a security interest in seeing to it that the situation in Haiti remains stable." We had concerns about the Dominican Republic, which had been in turmoil in the mid-'60s, and where the Cubans were looking for an opportunity to move in, so we couldn't chance such instability. We therefore have an interest in sending these weapons. He simply would not consider a quid pro quo. Sure enough, DOD, in a fullness of time, starting within a week to provide some small arms ammunition, and Baby Doc was back on top. The exiles were so disorganized that they couldn't take advantage of this opportunity. It showed you the kind of the wit that this president had to even get himself in that situation.

This proved the first test that raised the Director's concern as to whether I was qualified to be Haiti desk officer. The second, and the defining one, was my dealing with a Haitian request to buy four Cadillac Gage armored cars. They were $900,000 apiece, and the export control office had sent us an application for our determination. I thought, Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere; the last thing in the world they need was to buy these million dollar armored cars. The Haitians said, "You needn't worry, because we're not buying the weaponry for them." These machines had six massive tires and they carried out six or eight machine guns, but we are not asking us to sell them the machine guns. The Belgians would take care of that. The Cadillac Gage people came in and explained that this was a fine deal. I had the presence of mind go back and to research a military survey done by the Untied States army about two years before. This report said explicitly the United States should not provide armored vehicles to Haiti. Haiti is about 90% mountainous and armored vehicles have no beneficial use in terms of counter insurgency, but would be used to suppress their own people, which is exactly what Baby Doc wanted. I presented my case to the office director showing him these passages from the military survey. It that point, he didn't have much choice but to agree. He grumbled, but we turned down the application for four armored cars. About four or five weeks later the Haitian military attachï¿½, a brigadier general, came to the office and met with the deputy office director, George High. The General wanted to resubmit a new application, this time for six armored cars. I noticed he was wearing a gold armored car tie clip. Inevitably, he was in the league with the supplier; I could only speculate what the arrangement might have been. In any event, he wanted to go to a higher level to make this application and make his appeal. Now the general claimed that four of the armored cars were for the presidential guard, and two for a battalion called the Leopards. This was a special reaction force that was beloved by the Duvaliers. Haiti put forward this application, and this time it went to the office director, the former DCM. He decides that this request makes good sense. The Haitians would have four with the Presidential Guard and two with the Leopards, and they would offset each other thereby providing the right balance. He said he thought we ought to go approve. I said, this doesn't change what the military survey said. Armored cars are not what we ought to be selling to these people. He replied, you have to understand that the "mature relationship" with Latin America that Nixon had announced has permitted the sale of Phantom jets to Peru or Columbia. This was the new mature relationship, which essentially meant that if you could afford to buy a weapon, we'd sell it to you, all except the current first line of weapons. Therefore, under this mature relationship, we should sell these six armored cars to the Haitians. I thought this was outrageous. The next thing I know, the director decided to rearrange my portfolio of responsibilities. It was an issue as to my maturity to handle an account as complicated as Haiti. I was now given the Bahamas and Netherlands Antilles and the French West Indies. The Bahamas was interesting; the other two were of minor significance at this time. So much for my understanding of the mature relationship.

Q: Let's talk about the Bahamas. I mean, basically the Bahamas, it was all geography, wasn't it, the fact where they were and being off to one, I mean as you say, people were using it for a multiplicity of purposes.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. The Bahamas is a very interesting place in a lot of ways. It's a chain of 700 islands where life is good and the inhabitants all seem to live and work remarkably well together. The British had something of a prize in that part of the world. They had agreed with the local leaders that they would move toward independence. Lyndon Pindling, who was the head of government, had been in local politics for some time under the semi-autonomist political arrangement that existed. He seemed to be an upright individual. Given the Bahamas' proximity to the United States, was like the United States in many ways. A number of Bahamians, including government leaders, served in the American military, and many of the elites had been educated in the United States and had worked in the United States. They were very close to us in their political orientation and they weren't much given to the radical approach. Tourism attracted tens or hundreds of thousands of Americans, as well as Canadians and Europeans. On Paradise Island which is the second most populace island was the center of the tourism trade, and especially of gambling. When there's gambling, there's almost always organized crime and sure enough the American organized crime was represented there. We had an extensive array of connections with the Bahamas, which were important enough that the U.S. couldn't ignore them. Bebe Rebozo, a close friend of Richard Nixon, had a place in the Bahamas which the president had visited many times including while he was president.

Q: Bebe Rebozo?

WAUCHOPE: Bebe Rebozo.

Q: He was the confidant of Richard Nixon.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly.

Q: In fact, his only friend.

WAUCHOPE: He well may have been. I think he made his money in real estate in southern California, and yes, they were great buddies. So, we felt that when the new Bahamian ambassador, who was named L. B. Johnson and known as LBJ, went to the White House to present his credentials, that he would get more time with Nixon because he had spent some time in his country. He got no more than anybody else. He came in with eight other ambassadors and was whisked through with a brief photo op, an exchange of letters and boom, off he went. In any event, we were soon disabused of how benign the situation was there, as it turned out that Lyndon Pindling was on the take, and he was protecting Robert Vesco stole some $250,000,000 from shareholders of Overseas Investors Services which in those days was a lot of money. Vesco quietly had taken up residence in Grand Bahama.

Q: He was wanted in the United States.

WAUCHOPE: He was wanted in the United States. Among other things, the U.S. government wanted to get Vesco for securities fraud as he had bilked thousands out of their life savings. The SEC in particular really wanted to take action against Vesco. I worked with the general counsel of the SEC, Stanley Sporkin, who was determined to try to find a way to get Vesco. He was successful in seizing the assets of Vesco's, which are not only his accounts that they could identify, but also his other assets. He owned several planes and several yachts among other assets. The SEC set up operations to seize these yachts by sending agents aboard as crew members and when they set out to sea, they'd take over the yacht in the name of the United States government, sail it to the United States and sell it. We heard that Vesco became so paranoid that when he flew on his own plane, he had an armed bodyguard who was knowledgeable of aviation, armed with navigational maps, sit next to the pilot to be sure he was going to the proper destination places. Vesco was concerned that his pilot might be have been co-opted by the Department of Justice to bring Vesco to the United States. So, the government had gotten under his skin at least to that extent. In any event, Justice finally developed a case to extradite Vesco to the United States for wire fraud. The Bahamian government cooperated to the extent that Vesco was served with a subpoena, but as the Bahamas had just become independent, and it had to figure out which extradition law would apply. They decided to use the British extradition treaty, which had a wire fraud provision. We were advised that to pursue an extradition case in the Bahamas you had to be represented by a queen's counsel which is a senior attorney versed in commonwealth law It turned out that there were only two queen's counsels in the Bahamas and Vesco had hired them both. He tied them up before Justice could figure out what was going on. The Justice Department finally arranged to hire a queen's counsel, but he was from Uganda. We were pretty skeptical from the outset as the U.S. had a Ugandan queen's counsel pursuing an extradition case for the United States against a guy who is deeply entrenched in the Bahamas. Vesco was obviously spreading money around, and we wondered, what were our chances? We pursued the extradition, but I must say, I had a sense that is effort was as much for the record, for appearances sake, as anything else. I had a strong sense that the Nixon administration did not want to bring Robert Vesco back to the U.S.; they just wanted him to go away. While the SEC seemed to be quite serious about getting Vesco, Justice always seemed to be a day late and a dollar short in the pursuit of Robert Vesco. Predictably, the Ugandan queen's counsel was whipsawed by the locals who knew all of the officials around the courthouse. The final decision was that the 1937 extradition agreement provisions on wire fraud did not encompass the crime with which Vesco was charged. . It had not been defined in 1937. Our extradition request was dismissed. As part of this exercise, under pressure from the U.S. the Bahamian government summoned him to come down to the police station to be photograph and possibly fingerprinted. He was then he was released on bond and he returned to his compound. He apparently thought he had bought the government so completely that he would never even be pulled into the police station. So, he was very annoyed. As soon as his extradition proceedings were completed, he flew out of Bahamas and ended up in after that. He was no longer our problem. The Desk was involved in transmitting much of the supporting information for the extradition, but the strategizing was all Justice. Vesco flew the coop and that was that. The SEC general counsel, Stanley Sporkin, later became the general counsel at the CIA, having gone there with SEC Director William Casey, the Reagan friend, and he's later became a federal judge on the DC bench. Ironically, Sporkin was presiding over the women's class action suit against the Department, and seemed to rule against us at every opportunity. The word was that he did so because in his days at the CIA, State blocked a number of Casey's more bizarre initiatives. I must say, Sporkin struck me as being a very serious individual, and he knew a hell of a lot about Vesco and he was genuinely intent on getting Vesco, and I always wondered what he thought about how Justice pursued that extradition.

Another thing that we used to get involved in was fisheries issues because of the proximity, the number of islands and the length of the Archipelago. Inevitably, there were conflicts between American fishermen and Bahamian fisheries enforcement. We would get cases where an American flag vessel would go into Bahamian waters and they would poach lobster in particular; the Caribbean lobster, which is mostly tail.

So, in any event we were involved in he fishery issues. Most of the American fishermen involved were Cuban exiles who had fled to the United States claiming to be political exiles. They then bought fishing boats, had them registered as American flag vessels, and then went back to poaching the same waters they had when they fished out of Cuba. The Bahamians were at a great disadvantage because of the size of their fisheries zone, and they had only six enforcement vessels, of which only half were operational at any given time. The U.S. Coast Guard would contact us about issues of hot pursuit of American flag poachers, seeking guidance. One evening I was preparing dinner and I got a phone call and it was the State operations center. The operations center was patched to some Coast Guard people in Norfolk, and from Norfolk they were talking to a commander of an American Coast Guard cutter. The captain described the situation, "There is an American flag fishing vessel that is being pursued by a Bahamian enforcement vessel, which is firing across its bow. The U.S. flag boat is not heaving to, and our coast guard vessel and the other two boats are in international waters. But the Bahamian and the U.S. flag vessels just left the Bahamian exclusive fishery zone in hot pursuit. What should we do? Should we interpose ourselves or should we fire a warning shot across the Bahamian's bow or show we not intervene?" I knew this conversation was being recorded because you could hear the beep every 15 seconds. Remember the Simas Kudirka case where the guy and the captain...

Q: This is a Lithuanian who had escaped and the coast guard had put him back.

WAUCHOPE: He actually made it to a coast guard vessel and the coast guard captain allowed the Soviets to come aboard, beat him senseless and drag him back to their ship. The captain claimed he was in contact with the State Department. He claimed that the State Department gave him conflicting and unhelpful advice. So from that day forward the coast guard recorded every conversation they had with the Department of State. So, hearing this beep I thought to myself, I am not going to fall into this trap. I said to the captain, "Okay, let's review the situation. You outlined the situation as follows. Am I correct in my understanding of it?" He said, "That's correct." I said, "What do your standard operating procedures tell you to do under these circumstances?" He said, "Well, I should intervene between the two vessels." I said, "Is there any circumstance that I should be aware of that would have you deviate from this standard operating procedure?" He said, "No, there wasn't." I said, "Well, I would suggest you follow your standard operating procedure." Well, as it turned out, the American vessel outran the Bahamian enforcement vessel and it didn't come to any confrontation per se, but I was pursued that this was one of those situations that I just didn't want to freelance. So, I put the burden back on the person on the scene, which is the way it ought to be in any event. These incidents continued, and there was some effort to control the Cubans exiles, but once again their exiled community felt that that was an obstacle to their economic opportunity. The Bahamians were being badly used simply because they couldn't possibly control their own fishery zone. It was not traditional American fishermen. It had been mostly these Cuban poachers who had been doing this before. So this situation kept us on our toes.

Another event that was indicative of how The Bahamas was different from other nations was the celebration of the Bahamian independence. Immediately there was an issue about U.S. representation at the event, which shows the differences about how our relations with countries that are close by versus those that are more distance. There was a group that called itself the Friends of the Bahamas, which was a group of Americans, who were very senior, prominent people. The two central players in this were Congressman Pogue, or Chairman Pogue of the House Agricultural Committee and Congressman Flood of the House Arms Services Committee.

Q: From Pennsylvania.

WAUCHOPE: From Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Prior to independence, they had engineered an AID project as an acknowledgment of an independent government. They decided that there should be a $10 million beef cattle project on Andros Island, which is the largest island in the Bahamas. This was a $10 million project. I thought a cattle project on Andros Island for $10 million; when I was in Chad we were trying to get about $150,000 to have water well points to bring the cattle into the capital to the Fort Lamy. We couldn't get $150,000 and here's the Bahamas that has no history of beef cattle production of any sort. We looked into it because there no cattle activity or any animal husbandry experience. Why Andros Island? Well, just because it's big, and it should be able to offer good pastures. When they examined the soils, however, they found that there was an overlaying volcanic crust that couldn't be broken with a tractor or a plow. You had to bulldoze it to crack this crust and to pulverize it sufficiently to make it into pasture. I mean the whole undertaking was an absolute boondoggle. When the $10 million was examined carefully, it did not make any sense. When Prime Minister Lyndon Pindling looked at this project, he said, "Well, this is great; $10 million. When do I get the check?" The answer is, well, it doesn't quite work that way. It turned out that the Congressman Pogue represented the district in Texas where the Western Institute of Science and Technology, WIST, was located. The other half of the project was given to Penn State Wilkes-Barre which Congressman Flood represented. So, the $10 million was split between the two congressional districts. So when they went to the Bahamas for independence, they insisted that that they put on a big show for their friends in the Friends of Bahamas group. I think Nixon's friend Bebe Rebozo was involved in that as well. Congressman Flood was one of the old barons in the House.

Q: He had a magnificent mustache.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. Of course, he fell on hard times eventually, but he was in his heyday at this point. So, he said, I want to take these friends down to the Bahamas. He said to the Department of Defense, specifically, the U.S. Army, "I want six helicopters to ferry my people around to the various events for independence." Just like that, the army said no problem. We'll have six helicopters for you and support services. When we learned that Flood wanted six helicopters we were appalled. The ranking dignitary at the independence celebration was Prince Charles who was conferring independence on the Bahamian people in the name of his mother, the Queen. We asked, "What's the Prince's entourage?" The Brits said, "It's modest, but he's got a helicopter." There was no way we were going to agree that Flood have six helicopters. So, we went back to DOD and said you cannot provide Flood six helicopters. DOD said, "We're not going to tell him no. If you want to tell him no, you go ahead and tell him." So we did. I went to Flood's people and said, "You cannot upstage Prince Charles. That is simply not acceptable. It will be a major gaff." I dealt with an assistant named Steve Elko; what a bandit he was. They fought and fought and fought, but eventually they lost. The Department prevailed on the issue and he went to Nassau with no helicopters, but he did get the royal treatment nonetheless. In any event, Steve Elko later went to jail for influence peddling, manipulation, extortion, etc., when Flood lost his seat. I remember he was brought to trial for illegal activity, he was considered to be non compos mentis. He was too senile. He sat as chairman of his committee up until a few months before he went on trial and he was determined to be incompetent to stand trial. Regarding the Andros project, to my knowledge there are still no cattle on Andros Island today. It was a non-starter, but it was a way in which these two Congressmen could channel money to their congressional districts, which they successfully did.

Q: Welcome to Washington.

WAUCHOPE: Well, you know, it just was that kind of a situation with the Bahamas; everything seemed to have a different cast to it by virtue of the proximity to the U.S. You could make an argument for support of the Bahamas that you couldn't make for other nations or regions because of our security concerns. I think that security was the underlying consideration. If we don't provide them what they need, it could create problems for the U.S. The other countries I worked on were Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. Surinam was going through continuing turmoil, and our principal interest there was the massive Alcoa bauxite operation there. We were able to work well with those two nations without major problems. In Surinam, there were always conflicts among the various ethnic groups; the Indians, the indigenous peoples, the Malay population. Thank God, during the time I was responsible nothing went awry. The Netherlands Antilles was involved in a situation that gave some insight into how Washington works. The Congress had written and passed legislation providing certain tax benefits for offshore companies including those based in the Netherlands Antilles. The Netherlands Antilles earned about $125 million a year, from registration fees for these offshore companies. The Netherlands Antilles was important to us because there were two massive refineries located there; a Shell refinery in Curacao and a big Texaco refinery in Aruba. Almost two million barrels of oil a day destined for the United States came through those two refineries. So we had some legitimate security concerns. There was an in-house radical group that not only advocated breaking ties with the Netherlands, but also hinted that it wanted to shut down these refineries. It was rumored that there was some communist influence, and money from them was being channeled to their leader. In fact, I think he was pretty tame when you got right down to it. There was a constant watch on that situation. The U.S. had a very sweet operation there. We'd been given the site for our consulate general on the hillside looking over to the south over Willemstad on Curacao in return for our Marshall Plan assistance to the Netherlands following the war. We had a little consul general with five Americans. It was a real plum to be the CG in Curacao. In any event, they sent a delegation to the Untied States to ensure the extension of this legislation benefiting these large American corporations with offshore operations. Their concern was the $125 million in fees they received annually. We were inclined to help them make their case because it was a significant revenue earner for the Netherlands Antilles. Again, because of their proximity to the U.S. we learned that they had hired a group of lobbyists who succeeded in arranging high-level appointments. We tried to get appointments for them, and the best we could do was at a fairly low level. The next thing we knew they had Treasury Secretary Simon lined up to meet with their president. There were six islands under the Dutch union, and they were all theoretically equal partners. But they were not completely autonomous, nor did they really want to be because then they would lose all of the benefits from their connection to Holland. So, the presidential delegation arrived and we went through that process. It turns out that this was a critical time in the Nixon Watergate scandal. Nixon was now in very deep trouble. The tapes had been turned over, and the contents were being revealed. The committee was moving towards impeachment. The key lobbyist was a fellow name Mullins, who was an attorney. His partner was named Silverstein who had worked for the Department of Treasury and, surprise, surprise, he wrote the legislation that the Netherlands Antilles, as well as other offshore nations, benefited from. Having written and helped pass the legislation, I assumed by a Republican Congress, he resigned from Treasury, and obtained employment by interpreting the act for interested companies. He apparently thought, here I am earning $50,000 or $60,000 a year as a deputy assistant secretary, where I could be in the private sector and answer questions about it for real bucks. Mullins hosted this delegation at his spectacular home in Northwest Washington. It had an indoor pool, a waterfall, and a lighted and manicured garden. That very night we sat around the TV with the president of the Netherlands Antilles and his senior ministers and learned that Nixon would resign. Everybody was shaking their hand. It struck me that these people were very sympathetic to Nixon. They commented that what Nixon did wasn't so bad; that he had just got caught in a situation. Why are Americans taking this so terribly seriously? They had a strong sense that office should be respected. The whole Watergate exercise was demoralizing, and the involvement with the Netherlands Antilles was humiliating. I was becoming very discontent. After I had been moved off the Haiti desk and I wasn't really sure whether this career was for me. At that juncture I went to talk to my CDO and said to him....

Q: Career.

WAUCHOPE: Career Development Officer, right, in Personnel. I said to him that I would like to go on leave without pay for a period of about a year. I was then about 15 months into my assignment in ARA/CAR, and from a personnel perspective, that's the first issue; how do they fill a job that is off-cycle. I said, be that as it may, I wanted to do this. So, the CDO hemmed and hawed, and said he would look into it; someone will get back in touch with you. Well, he got back in touch, and he didn't know if that was going to be possible. He said it was going to be very difficult for PER for various reasons. I said, I really was quite intent about doing this. I was very disappointed about how this whole foreign policy process worked. I was shocked at how the Nixon White House had conducted itself, and particularly the use of agencies of the executive branch against its enemies. I thought, Jesus, I don't know if I want to be associated with this process any longer. Also, I realized that my last two assignments were jobs that I hadn't really sought, and they hadn't been very productive for my career objective of working in Africa. So, the CDO and I went back and forth. He dragged this out, as I had started this exercise in August. In October I finally went to the CDO and said to him, "Look, you have got to tell me how I can go on leave without pay, and then get it done within two weeks time." He said, "Well, I've looked into this and there's just no real way you can do it. You can resign." I said, "Okay, how do I resign?" He said, "Well, you write a letter to the Secretary and you tell them that you had a great career and you really enjoyed it; however, these circumstances have arisen and you don't want to serve any longer." So, I thought, screw it, I'll do it. So, I went home and I drafted this resignation letter very carefully. I did have the good counsel of a friend of mine who had gone through a similar situation. He said to incorporate in the letter the fact that I had asked for leave without pay, but it wasn't granted. I thought that was fairly clever. As it turned out, as I found out later, even resignations have to be paneled, and when they come up in the IF panel, they usually ask, why is this person resigning. So, I figured, what the hell, I'd give it a shot. So, I wrote the letter over the weekend and presented it on Monday morning. I dropped it on the CDO's desk only to find out that he had gone off on two weeks leave, so he left me twisting in the wind for two more weeks. He came back and I finally got hold of him. I asked, "What do you think?" He said, "Well, what I'm going to do is to grant you 90 days leave without pay on my own authority." I said, "That's interesting, but 90 days is not enough. I want more than that." He said, "But you don't have a proposal that is career enhancing. Let's just say, you're going to go to law school or somewhere that will enhance your attractiveness to the Foreign Service." I said, "Well, I'm sorry, but that's not how it is." He said, "I'll see what I can do." Sure enough, I went off on leave without pay and he finally came through. They did panel me for LWOP, giving me an extra six months, a total of nine months. I went out to Loudoun County to live in Middleburg, Virginia. I found a place to rent and I moved out of my apartment in Columbia Plaza, and I started doing things I always wanted to do. I learned how to fly. I worked for a community hotline up in Leesburg. I set up the Loudoun branch of Common Cause. I had been an active member and figured I'd try to extend it to Loudoun. I had also wanted to write about my political beliefs. I started doing some writing and found it much more difficult than I thought it would be, and requiring more discipline than I was prepared to devote. I owned the land in northern Loudoun north of Waterford. So I could go up there from time to time and work on clearing the land. I had a good old time, but it didn't turn out to be as productive as I hoped. So I just sort of rusticated, if you will, for about nine months. While I was rusticating, all of a sudden I became a hot property. One of the reasons I believe that I was not just bounced out of the Foreign Service was that there was a deficit of FSO-5 political officers. They apparently just didn't want to have to admit that they couldn't hang on to me. If it took him a year to get his head clear, well, okay, let's see if we can't let it happen. I had a friend who tried the same routine with USIA, and they let him go. I guess I just hit it right. In any event, I now started to get job offers; four of them. One was from the ambassador in the Bahamas for whom I'd been the desk officer. He called and said he wanted me for his political officer. It was a great job, but it was out of the area that I want to serve in. I turned him down. I got another job offer from out of the blue, and Personnel asked if I was going to be back in the assignment cycle. I said, I guess I would. So, I put in a bid list and gee, I got two different job offers as part of that process. I thought this never happened when I was on regular duty, why was this all happening now? The one job that was most appealing, went through the standard bid process was the deputy principal officer in Asmara, Ethiopia. That's where I ended up going. It was an area in conflict, but I felt that could be an interesting place.

Q: You went out there in '75?

WAUCHOPE: I did, right.

Q: Okay, this is probably a good place to stop. One question though about the Bahamas, how about drugs?

WAUCHOPE: It was a concern. On the surface, most of the activity was marijuana from Jamaica to Florida. People would go to Jamaica and buy a load of marijuana and then charter an aircraft. They would attempt to fly to some little field in Florida. Oftentimes they weren't that experienced pilots. They would crash in the Bahamas or they'd crash at sea. Suffice it to say, after awhile, aircraft owners in most of the Caribbean would not charter aircraft to people they had any suspicion about. In terms of hard narcotics, there were reports of such traffic, but no major seizures. We worked with DEA on this. In the Bahamas we had a pre-clearance facility which was both U.S. customs and immigration service. If you visited Nassau, you could be cleared to return to the United States by American immigration and customs officials. That created something of a flap however, because, while it enhanced tourism and tourist revenues for the Bahamian government, they were very concerned, as it turned out, properly, that the U.S. agents would run operations, particularly the customs service, against narcotics. Sure enough, our customs people were discovered doing so and there was a great flap about it. They had tried to suborn a Bahamian law enforcement individual to work on their behalf, and this incident got into the public domain. All countries close to the United States are always afraid of having their officials co-opted by Americans. We were able to persuade them that the pre-clearance facility was beneficial to them and they allowed us to keep it going.

Q: Well, this was a time I was consul general in Athens at this particular time and it was a time we had an awful lot of Americans taking their year off. These are mostly college students or something wandering around and heading to where there was hashish or marijuana, not hard drugs, was this a problem?

WAUCHOPE: Less so in the Bahamas. Again Jamaica was the place for these folks to visit. There was a difference between Bahamians and other Caribbean islanders, and I particularly saw this with Jamaicans. Bahamians are much more sort of formal, conservative, quiet folks than the Jamaicans. Jamaicans are outgoing and loud. Bahamians never seemed to be that way. They were very decent people. I don't know, they just seemed more British in their approach and less prepared to tolerate drug trafficking. If you went to the major hotels and I'm sure you could get marijuana there without any problem.

Q: You didn't have camps of kids sitting around the bonfires?

WAUCHOPE: Thank God we did not, no.

Q: Good, we'll pick this up in 1975 when you're off to Asmara?

WAUCHOPE: Okay.

Q: Today is the 23rd of May, 2002. Keith, you're off to where Asmara?

WAUCHOPE: Asmara, yes, via leave without pay, which I think I made some reference to.

Q: Yes, talk about that.

WAUCHOPE: Okay, well in the summer of 1974, which was a turbulent time in the U.S. as you'll recall with Nixon under fire for the Watergate, and that was reaching a culminating stage. I was increasingly unhappy with what I was doing in the Caribbean office and eventually went to the point of actually going to my advisor, my CDO and saying to him, I've got to make a move here of some sort. I want to get out of this job in Caribbean affairs.

Q: What in particular?

WAUCHOPE: Well, a variety of things. I felt that first of all that our policy was wrong. I think that I made reference to the fact about the armored car sales to Haiti which I thought was wrong, for which I was removed from the Haiti desk and was given responsibilities in the French West Indies and the Netherlands Antilles. I felt also that my career was not evolving as I'd hoped. I'd wanted to focus on Africa and I kept getting sidetracked to Cultural Affairs, and now at the Caribbean affairs. The Caribbean, as I think I indicated, was mostly the domain of "Christmas help." There were no regional specialists in Caribbean affairs. Sure, you had them in Latin America and you had them in other parts of the world, but assignments in Caribbean affairs were just a filler position. I just was very frustrated at that stage. I was also ashamed about how the Nixon administration had conducted itself and wondered whether I wanted to be associated with it. In reality, I felt that if I wanted to make a break and leave the government, the Foreign Service, ideally I would be able to do it from the position of being on leave without pay rather than actually having to resign. I couldn't get my career development officer to focus on my request, that so finally I wrote the letter of resignation to Henry Kissinger. I said in the letter that I've enjoyed the career, but that I regretted the fact that the system couldn't offer me the leave without pay that I had requested. That turned the trick because the CDO did grant me the leave without pay. I left the office ARA/CAR in something of a lurch, but I knew they could find other people who were capable of picking up the responsibility. So, then I went off and rented a place out in Middleburg, Virginia. As I mentioned, I did a variety of things out there. By the spring of '75, I was ready to return to the Department. Remarkably, people began to get in touch with me. Ambassador Weiss in the Bahamas asked if I'd like to be his political officer. Several other options were offered to me. I did want to get back into the African Bureau, so I waited until the right opportunity arose and that was the deputy principal officer position in Asmara which was a consulate general. It was agreed that I would be assigned, and I arrived in July of '75.

Now, let me set the scene a little bit about what Asmara was like.

Q: You were there from '75 to when?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I was there from July '75 to April of '77.

Q: Okay.

WAUCHOPE: I began studying up on the problems of the area. Haile Selassie had been removed from office, but was still alive, and was under house arrest in the country. The country was being run by a shadowy group of military officers who were making decisions for the government. The Eritrean civil war had been going on since 1959 or '61 depending on how you calculate it, when the Ethiopian government under the emperor betrayed the UN brokered agreement on Eritrea's semi autonomy. Haile Selassie occupied Eritrea and dissolved their local legislature. It started as a very low intensity insurgency, but that had been going on for some 15 years by the time I arrived. In January, 1975 there was what was later known as the uprising, at a point when the military clique that ran the country, the Derg, was at a weak point. Eritreans, including some who were in the military and those who had risen to positions of great responsibility, attempted to seize the capital of Asmara and thereby break the region off from Ethiopia by force. The insurgents, with the collusion with these Eritreans, overran the city and held it for several days. The Derg then sent more troops to Asmara and they eventually drove the rebels out of the city. But the impact on the city was staggering. I say this as preface to my arrival what this city was like. First, there had been a very substantial Italian community in Eritrea in general, and in Asmara, in particular. At its peak under Mussolini, who had encouraged migration there, there had been 135,000 Italians. Prior to this takeover in January of '75 there had been about 15,000 to 20,000 Italians still left in Eritrea. But after this uprising, in which there were firefights in every quarter and many buildings were damaged or destroyed. As a result, the Italian population dropped off markedly.

Q: Was this because of nationalist impulses and saying get these foreigners out of there? They decided it was a healthy place?

WAUCHOPE: The remarkable thing about the Italian experience in Eritrea, and this addresses the cultural issues and the differences in the way in which colonial experiences vary in Africa. Some Eritreans, and particularly the insurgents, were favorably disposed to the Italians. The Italians had invested in Eritrea, they had businesses there. They ran the brewery, a big textile factory and the Coca-Cola bottling plant, and they had trained Eritreans up to a certain level, mainly technical skills. Yet they had never established a college. It was only after the British administration under the United Nations mandate that they the first university was established. The Eritreans intermarried with the Italians, and they felt the Italians were sympathetic people. They got along with them quite well, so it was not the insurgents' intent to drive them out, but the Italians felt they were in danger of being caught in the middle. After the Derg drove the rebels out of Asmara, the Ethiopians were very harsh in repression and they shut the city down. Asmara became much less a pleasant place to live. For Italians who first colonized Eritrea in the 1890s this had been a sweet existence, I can tell you. There were third-generation Italians there who had lived in Eritrea all their lives. First, you have to remember that at 7,700 feet, so the climate is cool, pleasant, and sunny virtually all of the year round. In the rainy season, it rains from about 3:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon, and then that's that. They had these very productive farms, not to say plantations, and they ran all the industrial activity. They played bocce ball and sat around drinking and talking in the afternoons under the big shade trees. Life was very, very nice; not unlike what the British had in Kenya during its heyday. The possibility of being driven out was very difficult for these people to accept. Nonetheless, the Italian population dropped drastically, as they realized that this was probably not a long-term situation that they could hang on to. In any event, when I arrived in July of 1975, the population of the city was down probably by a third from what it had once been. There were whole middle class neighborhoods that were abandoned, including both Italian and matesse communities. All major buildings were pockmarked with bullet holes, and heavily armed guards in sandbagged positions at all the government offices. There were roving patrols and machine gun jeeps throughout the city. Most particularly, there was a rigid curfew. The curfew was from 7:00 at night until 6:00 in the morning.

Q: Oh, that's a rough one.

WAUCHOPE: It was a curfew for which you could have a pass, but it was worth your life to go out because the security forces would open fire on anybody who was out after 7:00. So, everybody had to be in by 6:30 because, being not far from the equator. daylight hours didn't vary very much. We felt it best to be in well before the sunset. We got everybody into our compounds, and every night there was gunfire. Some of it would be just trigger-happy sentinels, or sometimes the insurgents would infiltrate the city. The curfew gave them that opportunity, and with the help of people in the city who were sympathetic to the rebels, they could slip in. They used the opportunity to communicate with their family, raise money, propagandize and then slip back out again. Occasionally they would attack some of the facilities. They'd shoot them up.

Q: Were the Ethiopians still maintaining that these were bandits or shiftas?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, that was their basic position that the insurgents were shiftas, and they denied that there was any real political underpinnings. The Derg maintained the fiction that Haile Selassie, now deposed and discredited, in incorporating Eritrea into Ethiopia and disbanding the autonomous legislature had acted in accordance with the will of the people. In reality that wasn't the case. The Eritrean people were very strongly opposed. Even though they agreed on thatï¿½ that the insurgent groups were themselves split. The ELF was primarily a Muslim group with ties to the more radical Arab states.

Q: ELF being?

WAUCHOPE: Eritrean Liberation Front. Then later and more importantly there was the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front, the EPLF, which was a Marxist-Leninist, largely Christian group with some Muslims. It was more disciplined and it became the more powerful and more coherent of the two groups. But both of them were significant political organizations and had a structure and a leadership hierarchy. They were not people to be taken lightly. They had some successes in the countryside even after the failed January attempt to take over Asmara. They had excellent intelligence and they knew virtually everything the Ethiopians did. They made a point of taking actions that would tend to demoralize the Ethiopian garrison. For example, they blew up the Coca-Cola factory shortly after I arrived. There was great consternation over that in the expat community, no soft drinks and no mixers for their gin and tonics. Also, the rebels had factory owners they liked and the ones they didn't like. So, they tended to target the former.

I arrived in this situation in July 1975 the city very tense and the people feeling oppressed by the very tight security. In addition to the curfew, you could not travel out of the city. There were roadblocks on every egress. These rules applied even to consular corps officials. So, we would host these kabuki theater-like lunches with local officials. I remember asking agricultural officials what they thought of the coming harvest was going to be that season. They'd say, oh they think it's going to be better. Well, they hadn't themselves been out of Asmara because it was worth their life to travel out as they would be shot or kidnapped. They had no idea what was actually going on out in the countryside. That's essentially what the Ethiopian occupation was. They controlled all of the principal towns, and particularly the ones along the supply lines to the south to Ethiopia. The rest of it was effectively beyond their control. They didn't make heroic efforts to go and challenge the rebels. They'd occasionally bomb or shell certain areas or suspected infiltration routes, but they weren't carrying out any significant counterinsurgency operations per se. At that time, they just let things play out because they figured as long as they held all the centers of the productive activity in the territory; that was all they needed to do. The senior official there was called the Martial Law Administrator, a Brigadier General named Getachew. I got to know him reasonably well. He had been to the United States, and had attended the Army staff college probably under IMET, the International Military Education Training program. As a result he had a reasonably favorable opinion of the United States. This was at a time, however, when there was an evolution of attitude among Derg officials towards the United States. The government was going increasingly moving to the leftist camp, and was now receiving assistance from bloc countries and Cubans. They had asked the Soviets and the Cubans to help them repel the Somali incursions in the past, and they were becoming more and more dependent on them for arms. Every time they would ask us for replacement weapons, as we'd been their principal arms supplier, there was a clear reluctance and often a long hiatus between the request and even the partial fulfillment of those requests. They were viewing the United States as an unreliable supplier of military equipment. Again it was a military government faced with insurgency not only in Eritrea, but in other parts of the country as well. They needed a reliable source of arms and they weren't getting it. They felt the United States was not living up to its part of the bargain. So, they turned more and more toward the Soviets, and more of the Derg's rhetoric had a Marxist tone. This fellow Mengistu was beginning to emerge as the leading figure in the group. Initially he had several lieutenants behind him, but increasingly as time wore on his subordinates disappeared from view. The next thing you knew, they'd been executed or exiled.

In any event, as that whole process was unfolding, there was a growing problem in terms of how the consulate viewed the insurgency in Eritrea and how the embassy in Addis viewed it. That is not an uncommon problem, yet we felt it was our obligation to report things as we saw them. In the time that I was there, some 21 months, there were at least 450 Eritrean civilians killed in reprisal actions by Ethiopian government security or military forces. In some cases it was parallel police. Shortly after I arrived there had been an assassination of an Ethiopian officer in a certain neighborhood. That very evening, troops from units that he had commanded came into that neighborhood and dragged people out of their homes and eviscerated and left their bodies around the assassination site. There were 45 people killed in retaliation. We quickly learned of it. The Eritrean staff, our FSNs, would tell us without embellishment what happened. So, we would attempt to confirm it, to get good solid information, and then we would report it. We had the right and authority to report directly to the Department, and we'd also send copies to Addis. That was never really challenged. Our embassy was trying to retain a shred of proper and friendly relations with the Ethiopians, and these atrocities placed a strain on this process. We still had a functioning military mission in Addis. We had a fairly large defense attachï¿½ office as well. By reporting these things and sending them to Washington, we could be seen to be undermining that effort to retain the basics of a relationship. The Embassy conveyed a sense that we could be a little less sensational in reporting these incidents. We said when one person is assassinated and 45 people are killed in retaliation, it's very difficult to put any other face on it than as an atrocity. To be fair about it, Art Tienken was the DCM and he's a very good and decent man, and he could see our perspective. As such, there was no real effort to censor or quash what we were reporting, thank God. This was not always the case with his successor, Peter Sebastian.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

WAUCHOPE: Art Hummel was the ambassador. When his tour was up, the U.S. didn't send anybody out for a long period of time so Art Tienken became the Chargï¿½. Art Hummel was sort of an odd choice for Ethiopia. He was Old School, an old Asian hand. He was born in China, a missionary child, and he actually fought in the Chinese nationalist resistance against the Japanese occupation. China was his area of expertise, and he ended up going to China eventually. He was a very elegant and decent man. His wife was very nice and gracious, of the old Foreign Service. The Embassy had this fantastic compound in Addis, the former Japanese Embassy and residence. We used to get down to Addis fairly frequently because it was important to maintain our contacts with the Embassy. While we had all the restrictions on our movements, etc., they had no such restrictions. There was a curfew in Addis, at 10:00 pm, I think, but you could show a pass and no one would open fire on you. So, we would visit the Embassy to make sure that we understood one another and that knew the personalities we were dealing with in Addis.

As I say, Ambassador Hummel was a very decent fellow, of the old Foreign Service, but there was one issue that I brought to his attention that I was disappointed with how he reacted. In Asmara, whenever you went for an official appointment the Ethiopian security guards insisted that you submit to a search. I remember going to see the mayor of Asmara and the guard kept insisting that I had to go through a body search and of my briefcase. I had an appointment made well in advance, so I just got my back up. I refused as a consular officer to be searched and insisted that the guard call the mayor to tell him I would not be coming because of the search requirement. I tried to make it clear that they had to respect my rights and immunities. Of course, that effort went over the guard's head, but he did call the Mayor's office and was told not to search me. I was trying; one by one, to preserve my rights and the respect to which a consular officer is entitled intact. Another time, I was a non-pro courier bringing a classified diplomatic pouch to Addis and airport security insisted that I open the pouch. I told them that, if they insisted, I would take the pouch and go back on the plane to Asmara. The confrontation kept escalating to higher and higher levels. Eventually, I won the point, although it took over an hour. It took that kind of willingness to face these people down. So, I brought this issue to the ambassador hoping for his and the Embassy's support. He said that even when he went to the movies the Ethiopians insisted on searching him and he didn't it was big deal. So I didn't get any satisfaction on this, so we just had to carry on the fight ourselves. I must say, however, we pretty much made the point and increasingly they didn't hassle us. They eventually realized that we did have certain rights and privileges.

Q: Now, in Eritrea, was Kagnew Station, had that gone?

WAUCHOPE: No. In point of fact that's why we still had a consulate there at all.

Q: Why don't you explain what Kagnew Station is?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, that's a good idea. The history goes back quite a way. What is extraordinary about Asmara is the location is not only is it 7,700 feet, but it has beautiful, clear weather most of the time. It's a superb location for telecommunications, communications relay going back to the establishment of Radio Marconi in the 1920s by the Italians. It was used by the Italians to communicate with their east African provinces and navy. They could get radio signals from Rome or from Libya and then retransmit them into the Indian Ocean and along the coast. In the Second World War the British Captured Eritrea in 1940 and they set up their own facility. They realized that you could not only receive and relay communications, but you could also intercept their enemies' signals. It became a very important interception location. If you read some of the literature on this, for example "The Bodyguard of Lies," we helped the British even before we entered the war in these interception activities. In particular, just before the D-Day invasion, the Japanese military attachï¿½ in Berlin had inspected the West Wall and prepared a very detailed report on the fortifications in Normandy and in Calais. We had broken the Japanese diplomatic code. We intercepted this report, broke the code and had a fairly detailed idea of what the allied invasion forces would confront. It proved to be a remarkably important facility during that phase.

Beyond that when the war ended the British continued to maintain their communication, telecommunication facility there so they could communicate throughout south Asia and relay communications, and they probably did some intercept work. In 1952 when the U.N. mandated Eritrea's semi-autonomous federation with Ethiopia, the Americans negotiated an agreement to set up a telecommunications facility in Asmara called Kagnew Station. It became more and more sophisticated as time went on, and at its peak in the mid-1960s, there 6,500 Americans there. It was a massive operation with 13 sites. It did telecommunications relay, and telecommunication intercept work. Increasingly, Kagnew got more and more sophisticated equipment. It had a huge dish antennae that was some 80 feet across and it took them weeks to get it up from Massawa, up the winding road to the heights of Asmara to install it. It cost millions of dollars. I remember in my time we sold it for scrap for $6,000. In any event, Kagnew had been a tremendously successful operation over the years. For example, it had provided the communications relay for Kissinger's early trips to China, first the secret mission and then the Nixon visit. It had the capability to communicate directly to Beijing from Asmara and then relay to Europe and then to the U.S. Telecommunications technology was constantly changing, and while I was there, DOD was considering its options. First there were the costs versus the efficiency of the technology; then there was the threat from the insurgency which included safety risks to its personnel. Our profile, while much reduced from its peak of 6500, was still very high with some 60 Americans and three sites plus the main base compound still in operation. We were still viewed as we had been in our heyday when Kagnew employed thousands of Eritreans. We had operated our own television and AM/FM radio stations. They had a big R&R facility down in Massawa for the Kagnew families. They could go to the Red Sea and go swimming and rent boats and all that. They had helicopter communications between those R & R sights. They had a hunting lodge in Keren and other recreational activities in the region. The Americans had also become involved in charitable activities. They supported an eye hospital, and had programs to fly people, especially children, back to the United States for medical treatment. Americans had an excellent reputation. The Eritreans really liked the Americans because of all we had done there and because they had treated the Eritreans with decency. Our reputation, however, had begun to erode by the time I arrived. There were about 55 to 60 Americans operating three sights at that stage because satellites had taken up much of the burden. We still had interception capabilities and other telecommunications relay capabilities. The U.S. Navy was now operating the facility primarily for communication relay for the Indian Ocean fleet. Kagnew still provided useful and reliable telecommunications relay activity. There were 11 or 12 U.S. Navy personnel and the rest of the Americans were contractors. They lived on the main base, the American part of which was one tenth of what it had once been, the rest having been taken over my the Ethiopian military. The outlying facilities had been automated to a certain degree and they were at some distance from the main base. The issue of whether the DOD was going to retain Kagnew was an open ended question. From a budgetary perspective, they basically wanted to retain it at a minimal cost since no money had been budgeted to replace it. This was fine for the near term, but as the political situation evolved and the tensions between the U.S. and the Ethiopian government increased, the future was very uncertain. Among the insurgents, the "fighters "as the Eritreans called their countrymen, out in the bush, there was a sense that the need to maintain Kagnew was why the American continued to support the Ethiopians despite the increasing friction. Despite the residual friendly and cordial relations between Americans at Kagnew and the Eritreans, the insurgents tried to figure out ways to get this message across to the American government. This resulted in their actions against Kagnew operations and particularly the Americans operating them. The insurgents had just begun a campaign of kidnapping foreigners to get some international attention. They seized the British honorary consul, a British businessman and marched him off in broad daylight into the bush. He was released almost a year later, and was the better for the experience reportedly having lost weight and being more fit than ever. The first kidnapping of Americans was when they overran one of our outlying facilities at night. There was a just skeletal staff there, and no real guards to speak of. They took the two Americans hostage and marched them off into the bush. In total there were five Americans kidnapped; two more at a remote site and one from his home is Asmara. They were all eventually released, having been held for about 10 months to 15 months. They were all treated well. When they were released, in Sudan in every instance, they had no complaint. Things became much more somber however, when two Americans were killed. I remember as I was the acting principal officer at the time when the two Americans were killed in a land mine explosion. The insurgents had planted a land mine on the roads to one of the outlying sites. It was placed in a mud puddle and, as such, the American couldn't see any sign of it. Two civilian contractors were driving a pick up truck when they hit the mine. They were blown right through the roof of the cab and were killed instantly. That event cast a pall on all of Kagnew's operations. We were surprised and much taken aback that the insurgents did this. We never learned whether they were after us or whether they were after Ethiopian patrols. We were certain that they knew damn well that the Americans came down that road and, if they really cared to avoid harming Americans, they would not have done that. That was the only such deadly incident, but it was bad enough and it accelerated planning for alternatives to Kagnew. We did close down that sight; it was just too remote. The Navy shifted to using two sites closer to the main facility. The Navy's general sense was, whatever the threat, they were tolerable for the time being, so let's try to keep this thing going if we can. We did, and Kagnew personnel came in and went out. The contractors were paid well, and they were basically self-sustaining. Kagnew hired very substantial numbers of Eritreans on construction and maintenance crews and this kept whole facility running at a relatively low cost. All the costs were largely sunk costs and they had already been amortized.

Kagnew was the key rationale for the Consulate being there. There were six positions at the consulate, although that included a secretary who was sent down to Addis after the situation began to get dicey with the kidnappings. In addition to the five Americans, all males, there were six marine guards. That was our total complement.

Q: Who was the, was it consulate general or?

WAUCHOPE: There was a consul general, yes.

Q: Who was the consul general?

WAUCHOPE: George Sherry was the first one, and Bob Slutz was the second. Again, neither one was really an African area specialist, but they were good solid officers, and did a credible job. There was a very small consular community in Asmara. The British had an honorary consul who was kidnapped six months or so into my tour, and not replaced. There was a small French consulate and a Sudanese consulate as well. There was an Italian Consulate General because of the number of Italian citizens, which, after that initial January of '75 attack, had dropped to perhaps 3000. As the situation returned to a degree of stability, the numbers then returned to as many as 9000. The official policy of the Italian government was to have the Italians out of harms way and it was paying resettlement allowances for them to return to Italy. I got to know a number of Italians in Asmara, and they were really nice and gracious people. Of course, they were all neo-fascists, if you will. You could find Mussolini buttons and other fascist memorabilia in stores throughout Asmara. Many of the Italians were brought to Eritrea under Mussolini and they harked back to the glory days. The Italians in Asmara thought that Italy was in the grasp of the communists, or worse yet the socialists. They had no use for any of these groups, and the idea of going back to live in Italy was just an anathema. As I said, they had a very good life in Eritrea and they wanted to hang onto that.

Again, their community went back up to over 9,000 after the January '75 draw down. The Ethiopian government preferred that the Italians not come back to Eritrea, and they put restrictions on their return, in part because it thought that the Italians were colluding with the rebels. In some cases, the Italians would sneak back through Sudan to Asmara through the rebel side. They were welcomed by the Eritreans, who felt that the Italians, at least recently, treated them decently. I will say that, while the Italians didn't provide the Eritreans a university, they did provide them vocational training. As a result, Eritreans learned to do just about anything a European could do in terms of operating and maintaining equipment and doing whatever was necessary to keep things running. For example, the Eritreans ran the power plant and the water pumping station in Addis. As there had been some acts of sabotage in Addis, the Ethiopians decided that the Eritreans were a threat to the security of their capital, and began to expel the Eritreans. Once they started the process, they quickly realized that the Eritreans ran all these vital operations and that there were no Ethiopians who could do it. Then they had to relent and allow them to stay. Of course, Ethiopian Air Lines was operated almost entirely by Eritreans Likewise, most of the pilots, both air force pilots and the airline pilots were Eritreans.

So there was some appreciation for what the Italians had done for them. During my time there, I saw the Italians treat the Eritreans reasonably well, although sometimes they could be harsh and critical. Given the extensive intermarriage at the lower socio-economic level, this is not surprising. The Italian consul general had large responsibilities. Besides himself, there was a consul, vice-consuls and had a technical staff. The French consulate officer was a career officer, a vice consul with some African experience. The Sudanese consul general was a really nice fellow, both honest and frank, and obviously sympathetic to the Eritreans. I learned later that he was in contact with the insurgents. I met him later when I was Sudan Desk Officer and he had become the chief of protocol at the Sudanese foreign ministry. He told me that the insurgents knew about our movements and where I lived, but he told the fighters not to give my any trouble; not to come after me. For much of my time there, until the kidnappings became a serious threat, I was living off the compound, and they knew where I was. There weren't that many foreigners and they knew where everybody was. He told the rebels to leave me alone, because I was a good guy and was sympathetic, which I was. I suppose it's not very professional, but I felt that their cause was not being properly represented in the West, that we had gone so far down the line to try to maintain a relationship with the Ethiopians. In doing so, we had forgotten some of our basic values. After all, the Eritreans were fighting for self-determination, it was their country, they had been betrayed by the West. The UN mandate for federal autonomy had been ignored albeit by Haile Selassie and we had acquiesced in that action. We saw American-made aircraft dropping American bombs on the Eritreans. They would come to us and ask, how could you do this to us, we have been your host for many decades and we've never mistreated you and now you've given the weapons to our enemies to kill our people. We in the Consulate heard what they were saying, but beyond telling the story as accurately as we could to Washington, we could little more. We tried to make the point, but ultimately we were losing our ability to persuade the Eritreans of our sympathy. It was to the time that the U.S. military mission would learn about military activities, but would not share this intelligence with us. This really riled me because our security could be at risk. I got the consul general riled up on this as well. The MilMish (US Military Mission) had contacts in the Ethiopian military, and they even occasionally visited counterparts in Asmara without advising the consul general of their visit. They would discuss with their contacts in the Ethiopian garrison about what they needed which was indicative of their operations. They would return to Addis and make their recommendations to DOD, and never share their information on the security situation with the consulate. We took great offense at this and eventually we required them to obtain our clearance before they visited. The MilMish was apparently concerned that, if it shared what it learned with us, it would compromise its relationship with the Ethiopian military which was increasingly tenuous. When you think about it, putting its relationship with the Ethiopian regime over the safety of their fellow Americans is a sad commentary. Ultimately the Ethiopians prevented them from traveling to Asmara. As the kidnappings continued, we reached a point where it was considered too hazardous for dependents and they were sent to Addis or back to the U.S. Even the RMO would only come up for an afternoon. He'd come up and he'd say. . .

Q: RMO being?

WAUCHOPE: Regional Medical Officer. He'd say, I'm responsible for these people, but I don't think I want to spend the night. He met with whoever needed advice or an examination, inventory of the medical cabinet and then he was gone. Basically, if you wanted to see him you had to go down to Addis. Basically the routine of life in Asmara at that time was a repetitive routine. It would start at 6:00 when the curfew lifted and suddenly the streets would buzz with activity. Because of restrictions on travel to the countryside, food was oftentimes in short supply. For example, they'd run out of the peppers that they put into their zighani, their meat or vegetable stew. There was great consternation when there were no peppers. Teff, a kind of wheat that they used to make the injera was often in short supply. Gasoline was tightly rationed; 20 liters a week per vehicle. Twenty liters wouldn't get you very far, but then you couldn't drive very far anyway. So, a lot of horse carts were brought back into service. Eritrea was going backwards in many ways. Once the daily activities would get underway, usually in a beautiful sunny day in the mid 70s, people would go about their business. It was an industrial city, with the textile plants, the brewery etc. in full operation. The Melotti beer was probably the best of the three breweries in the country. There were several big textile plants as well factories making tiles and building materials. There was a active Ethiopian Airlines operation at the airport. By the afternoon, business people would take a siesta and then return to work between 3:00 and 6:00. There was a great rush to the stores and bars, and some would be open to 6:30 and then everything closed down. By 6:30 everybody was off the street, and by 7:00 the curfew went into effect. The streets were empty and quiet. With the kidnappings, we were all eventually moved onto the Consulate compound with the Marines, the CG's residence and another residence which became a sort of BOQ. Everybody would then have dinner and then assemble in the consulate reception area and projected movies from the Army-Air Force movie circuit. We'd settle in and then start the movies about 8:00. Often by 9:00 the gunfire would start in the city. So we'd shut down the projector and the marines put on their flak jackets and helmets and would take their firing positions on the perimeter. In addition to the six marines, we had eight locally hired guards who were armed with 45 caliber pistols. We had some seven Ethiopian military personnel armed with two machine guns. Our marine NCOIC was the commander of the guard force, and he was to ensure that these other guards didn't do something stupid like shoot at anybody on the street. They were to fire only if someone tried to come over the wall. We would go over and over the rules of engagement. Old Radio Marconi facility, which was now the Ethiopian naval headquarters, shared our south wall. They had a cement guard box at either end of this wall on the adjacent streets So when the insurgents would dash along the shadows in these streets, the Ethiopian navy security force would open fire down these streets on either side of us. We'd just sit tight, turn out all the lights and the marines would radio us what was going on. We sat in the doorways so that you'd stay out of the line of fire, and hear bullets going through the trees. Consulate officers were not part of the defense force, and I had full confidence in the marine detachment. They were good people, solid guys. The shooting would go on for an hour or an hour and a half. Finally it would subside, lights would begin to go on in the neighborhood again and then we'd go back and flip on the projector and see to the rest of the movie.

We used to have official visitors spend the night in Asmara, and some thought we were putting this on for them; that this was part of a show. We said, this is pretty much the routine every night. Sometimes flares would go off and we could see who was moving up and down the streets. You could see people like rats scurrying across the street as the insurgents were circling around.

Q: Were you able to talk to Eritrean insurgents?

WAUCHOPE: Well, not directly and we were not authorized to establish contact with them. That was clear and we had to respect instruction from the Embassy in Addis because it would have undermined the credibility of our bilateral relationship. We knew we were talking to people who were talking to the rebels, and we knew that our own staff was talking to them as well. These contacts would give us insights into rebel thinking. As in most African countries, the elites knew one another. They often shared educational experiences whether it was the schools in the city or overseas in Italy or elsewhere. They often knew rebel leaders and had some idea of their perspective. We could cross check information with other sources. We talked to the Italians who had excellent contacts. They may well have been in touch with the other side the Italians still living in insurgent held areas. The Sudanese consulate had good sources as well, and we knew they were in touch with the rebels.

Q: During this, well '75 to '77 period, were you picking up from your contacts in Addis and what you were observing the growing nastiness or whatever you want to call it of the dirge and who was the man?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. I'll tell you we had one story that was later confirmed by the Embassy, but we picked it up first even though it happened in Addis. There was an army colonel named Daniel, an Eritrean, and a formerly a trusted lieutenant of Mengistu. There rumors of a conspiracy to overthrow the Derg leaders. So, Mengistu called a conference of the Derg leadership, the composition of which was not known to anybody outside the group. Our PAO in Addis, Art Lewis, a black guy and a very capable and intense officer, seemed to be the only one who had reliable contacts with the Derg. Our CIA people only seemed to know one or two members, but Art must have known a dozen. We thought there were maybe as many as 40 members of the Derg. In any event, on this particular day Mengistu learned that something was cooking among elements of the Derg. Mengistu convoked them to a meeting hall in the old royal palace. They all appeared at the appropriate moment except for this colonel Daniel fellow who was late to arrive. At the appointed moment Mengistu stepped out of the meeting with a couple of his trusted people, and suddenly the doors opened, his bodyguards burst in and machine gunned everybody in the room. Daniel arrived just as the attack was taking place and when he heard gunfire he figured out what was going on and he took off. He eventually made it into rebel territory.

Another time, I was down in Addis when a member of the Derg, Colonel Sisay, also an Eritrean, and the deputy commander of the air force met his fate. He had been sent by the Derg to Eritrea to do an assessment of the possibilities of winning the war there. He returned to Addis and told the Derg that there was no way that it could win militarily. They had to make peace, had to find a political solution. Mengistu was not happy with this. The officer returned to his home after giving this report, and the Derg sent armored vehicles to surround his house. They did not give him a chance to surrender. They opened fire and absolutely leveled his house. They killed him, his family and his servants. They just fired until the house was rubble. That what happened when you told the Derg what it didn't want to hear. They were getting increasingly vicious and repressive. During this time the Derg launched the red terror in Addis. It created a group of the parallel police to eliminate its enemies. There was a group of even more radical Marxists who were proselytizing among the young people. The parallel police were picking up young students in the Addis area just before curfew. They were tortured and their bodies were found the next morning. In Asmara there was a similar process. Our sources among the Eritreans would give me the license numbers of some of the cars that they were using This process of red terror reflected the Derg's paranoia. One of the reason that Mengistu's paranoia was that he was a graduate of an inferior staff college and was viewed by other Ethiopian military officers as having risen by the back steps of the hierarchy. He also had a reputation in the military as a troublemaker who had been moved from one post to another, one garrison to another, because he constantly created trouble. He was an agitator for one cause or another. Therefore he was not well regarded by the more serious and more traditional Ethiopian military leaders. He was only a lieutenant colonel. He had retired or imprisoned most of the generals, but there were still some full colonels around. These feelings of inadequacy were said to motivate him to eliminate his potential opponents. As I said, his fellow Derg members periodically disappeared and were later found to have been executed. During this time he also apparently poisoned Haile Selassie. The Derg claimed he died of natural causes, although no one really believed that. There was very little in way of mourning in Eritrea for the departure of the Emperor; only in the sense that he had to some extent protected them from some of the worst excesses of the Derg had he continued to live. But when the Emperor died, the Eritreans knew things were going to get worse which they did. During the red terror in Addis Mengistu's would shoot these young students and their bodies would be laid out in the yard outside of the hospital. Then the parents came looking for their children and the police would say, if you find your child you can have the body if you pay for the cost of the bullet used to shoot them. So, there was seething resentment against the Derg, but it ruled with an iron hand and they had all the elements of the security apparatus completely and thoroughly under their control.

Q: I had back in 1960, '61 been in INR and I had the horn of Africa and I had never been there, but anyway of course everything at that time was predicated on Kagnew Station. That meant that we gave very short shrift to Somalia, you know, if you had to and Haile Selassie of course was firmly in control. There must have been sort of a real sort of title change wasn't there? I mean as satellites replaced antenna, Kagnew was no longer important; it was becoming less and less important. Then you had this very nasty government which we were finding I assume harder and harder to stomach in a way. Were you watching this?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, we used to ask why we are going down this path with the Ethiopians so slavishly. Part of the explanation we were told at that time was that, under Kissinger with the withdrawal from Vietnam in April of 1975, there was a question about American reliability and about its commitments to other countries. As a result the U.S. felt it was important to maintain our credibility by trying to maintain a relationship with Ethiopia even though Haile Selassie who had been our special friend was gone. Haile Selassie, in his later days, became increasingly repressive because, like many of these chiefs of state in the Third World, he had created the conditions for his own overthrow. He established the national university, actually Haile Selassie University. It was highly regarded and was very successful in its international connections. There were many academic exchanges; the Ethiopians went overseas, Americans came to Ethiopia on the Fulbright program and other schemes. At universities people asked questions; for example, why do we live under an absolute monarchy; there's got to be a better way to rule our country. It was these university students who led to the popular uprising, which the emperor tried to suppress, and after many bloody confrontations, the military said enough, we refused to shoot anymore young people. They rose up against the emperor and their leadership formed the military that became the Derg. Even as this group became increasingly radical under Mengistu, the U.S. government still tried to maintain a relationship, claiming that it was important because of the withdrawal from Vietnam. We recognized the emperor had his shortcomings and tried to moderate his actions. We hoped that this military government would transition in to a more democratic process. It didn't prove to be the case and increasingly it went the other way.

Now, with Washington parroting this line about maintaining relationships, the consulate then had to wrestle with the recognition that things was going sour, and we were trying to bring Washington around to realize that we were reaching a point of diminishing returns. About the only way we could reflected U.S. concerns was by our responses to request for military equipment. We would examine their requests, we would hesitate and then we would provide only a small percentage of what they asked for. We told them up front this aid was to be used to address external threats, like the Somalis, or the Sudanese, not to repress their own people. They gave us all the assurances, then immediately used it in Eritrea. That was a betrayal of our agreement and we had to call them on it. So, increasingly, each time they asked for something, they had more difficulty getting it. And so, we became an unreliable arms supplier in their minds.

Q: Were you at all an observer of what was happening down in Somalia?

WAUCHOPE: I did not have much a sense of that. When I later came back to AF/E we became very involved in that issue. There were other crosscurrents at work as well. For example, the Israelis played a role in Ethiopia as well. They were very concerned about the ELF's ties with radical Arab states. They were concerned about Sudan and were interested in seeing if Sudan would become the sort of soft underbelly of Egypt, to keep them sort of off balance. They were providing security assistance to the Derg.

Q: Were there still the Falashas there?

WAUCHOPE: The Falashas were still there, that's right.

Q: The Ethiopian Jews.

WAUCHOPE: Right. The Ethiopian Jews. They were not at that time the particular focus of anybody, nor were they being subjected to the abuses that came later. In any event, the Israel connection was reflected in the fact that most Ethiopian security forces on the streets carried Uzi submachine guns. There were Israeli advisors assigned to the police and the internal security organs as opposed to the army. They thought that they were ensuring that Eritrea not fall into the hands of Islamic groups and become a radical Islamic state on the Red Sea, i.e., Eritrea under the influence of some nation like Iraq. In reality, that was not really likely because, while Islam bound the ELF together, it was not what motivated the insurgency. Ethnicity was a more important division in Eritrea, which was split almost a 50/50 between Muslins and Coptic Christians, with the Muslims being in the low-lying areas and the Christians in the highland areas. The Christian groups were the more sophisticated and the more connected with the larger ideological movements, where the Arabs were more traditional and local in perspective. The rebels went to the Iraqis only because the Iraqis would help them create trouble wherever they could. While the rebels received some help for the Iraqis in the early 70s, they were not beholding to the Iraqis. The Israelis were mislead as to the threat that radical Islam constituted in Eritrea, but they wanted to keep their finger on the pulse because it was an area of importance to them.

In any event, the Horn of Africa is sort of a crossroads in a lot of ways between Islam and Africa and of the Christian-Muslim conflict. There are lots of longstanding feuds and territorial disputes in the region. There were not only the Eritrean separatists, but the Tigrean separatists just to the south of Eritrea. They were pretty quiescent at that time. As history has shown, however, they became the dominant force in Ethiopia when they took over the government in Addis. There was also the Oromo liberation movement in southeast Ethiopia which was becoming more active. There was also an insurgent group along the Sudanese border. The Derg were really under siege in a lot of ways, hence, it became more autocratic and more disinclined to listen to other points of view. Mengistu himself felt that he had to eliminate all potential opponents or contestants for power. The government became more and more distasteful as time went on, and the U.S. conducted assessments to determine how important Ethiopia was to our regional and global interests. The response from DOD focused on the ongoing commitment to support the U.S. military forces in the Indian Ocean and in the Gulf, and that was working well. As I said, there was no budget for any replacement facility at this time, as it seemed to be a relatively cheap operation. Given the Department's policy horizon at that time, Eritrea fell below the radar. To take a cynical perspective, all the costs of the political upheaval including the kidnapping of five Americans and the death of the two technicians were all civilian contractors. The navy complement was only 13 and it administered the operation while these civilian technicians operated the facility. It was a low cost operation and no one was ready to pull plug saying it was no longer important. If Kagnew shut down, then the consulate general would have shut down as well. Our other interests in Eritrea were limited and increasingly not worth the risk. There were some American missionaries there and we wanted to follow events there, but it would never have been enough to warrant maintaining a consulate.

Q: Did the Soviets play much of a role?

WAUCHOPE: Well, there was some concern that the Soviets were looking for a Red Sea port for rest and refit, and refueling their ships. Ethiopia's relationship with the Soviets began to improve under the Derg because it was looking for alternative source of weapons, and the Derg leaders started parroting leftist jargon. Mengistu declared that he was a Marxist-Leninist. The Soviets were very pleased, they thought they had a convert, and did not have to try very hard to persuade them. Marxist Leninism, as was the case in many other Third World countries, was an instrument of maintaining political control over their people more than it was philosophical conviction. If you had asked Mengistu what the tenets of Marxist Leninism were, he would have a damned difficult time telling you. Basically it was it was a unifying concept that allowed him to require loyalty of all his subordinates, and he was the head of the Supreme Soviet, if you will, of Ethiopia. As this process developed, there were concerns that the Soviets moving in to replace the U.S., and there were reports that the Soviets were seeking the right to take on fresh water and to refuel in Massawa. This had a very sinister tone. We didn't like the concept of the Soviets being in the Red Sea in any capacity, but the Ethiopians were going to do what they were going to do. We didn't have much influence remaining as we were increasingly viewed as an unreliable arms supplier by this time. So, we were concerned.

Q: Did you go down to Massawa?

WAUCHOPE: I did, yes, God, it was the hottest place I've ever been in my life. It was in October, which was supposed to be the coolest time part of the year. We had two Americans stationed in Massawa to conduct liaison with the authorities and to handle Kagnew material which occasionally still came through Massawa. When I first arrived, there was still some private travel by the spectacular road with its hair-raising switchbacks to Massawa, but following several ambushes, all such travel was by air. The air distance was about 35 miles and by land it's over 100 miles while dropping a mile and a half. It became too hazardous to try and drive down there.

Q: That was because of insurgency?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, the insurgents attacked even in daylight hours. The Ethiopians hadn't made a heroic effort to keep the road open. They didn't have large forces deployed to try to keep the rebels away. I traveled by air to visit our little liaison facility and I was able to see what we used to control in Massawa. We had several large warehouses, a barracks and recreational facilities and as well as docks. When I got off the plane, which had basically just taken off and then glided down the escarpment, I was floored by the heat. On the Red Sea, it is not only hot, it is oppressively humid. This was in October and the America liaison officer said, what are you talking about, this is the cool season. It was about 115 degrees I guess when I landed. I guess in the dead of night it got down to 100. We were put up in an Italian villa right on the Red Sea that had electricity, which much of Massawa did not.. There was no interruption and the unit air conditioners made it tolerable. It was clearly a city under siege with about half of its original population. It wasn't so much that it was shot up; there was just no activity to speak of. The port was virtually shut down because there was no place to transport the incoming freight.

Q: Where did Addis, Ethiopia proper get its supplies?

WAUCHOPE: Assab, which is the only other port along Ethiopia's coast. It was also claimed by Eritrea, although I think that they have now agreed to allow the Ethiopians unfettered access to the port. Assab at that time had become their principal port for fuel and commodities. There was a rail line running to Addis. There had been a rail line from Massawa up to Asmara, but it was out of operation. It had been knocked out for some years before I got there because it had been sabotaged many times. The port of Assab became the principal reason why the Derg said it would never permit an independent Eritrea. Ethiopia would be cut off from the rest of the world and become a landlocked country. They acknowledged that Massawa was part of Eritrea, but they tried redrawing of maps to claim that Assab never really was part of Eritrea. That was a great concern to all Ethiopians; to become landlocked was intolerable.

Q: Did Djibouti play a role in what you were doing? Wasn't it under French control?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. Djibouti was an alternate port for the government of Addis, but not a very important one. They weren't so sure whether they could depend on the French and its port indefinitely. They wanted a port they could control and Assab became the port for them. We knew that Eritreans insurgents operated in and out of Djibouti and, I think the French would turn a blind eye to their activities. The Sudanese insurgency in southern Sudan was a continuing problem for Ethiopia. Those rebels would be driven out by the Sudanese government into Eritrea in some cases and in others into Ethiopia. The Ethiopian forces would drive them back across the border. There were occasional incursions and this was one of the Derg's justifications for its need for arms. They were concerned about the protection of their borders with Somalia and Sudan, and they tried to make that a rational case. Ironically when I got to AF/E later we were then listening to the Sudanese concerns about the threat from the Ethiopians. In any event, in terms of its neighbors, the Derg was concerned with Kenya in that Somali insurgents were operating in the eastern Kenya which has a very significant Somali population, and this might spill over into Ethiopia. This Kenyan component was one of the five points on Somalia's flag's five-pointed star. There is Italian and British Somaliland, now Somalia, and then Djibouti, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and Kenya. They are the five parts of the greater Somalia. The Ethiopians were concerned that some day Somalia would unify all these elements and, because Somalia is supposedly the most rational national entity in because it has one language, one ethnicity and religion, they would pose a threat to its neighbors. . Yet look at Somalia today. It's in complete meltdown.

Q: Broken down into warlords, absolute chaos, it's not even a nation anymore.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly, but there was the concern that they would bring it all together and then Djibouti would be threatened and then the Ogaden, which some thought might have mineral resources and oil, and then northeast Kenya.

Q: Well, then as a political officer, what was your job? I mean it doesn't sound like a hell of a lot of politics.

WAUCHOPE: Well, I was the DPO, I was the consular officer, political officer, and the economic officer, as well. In the consular we had a very fine consular assistant who did most of the work, and I didn't have too many problems in that area. The economic and political side of it was very difficult because all representation efforts had to be done at lunches. Some people used the few hotels to host a decent lunch. But, generally you would do representation at our homes. The first residence I had was right across the street from the Consulate. When I went in to look at this place which they were fixing up, there was a 50-caliber bullet hole all the way through the house. It had come from the pillbox at the Naval HQ and had gone from the living room, through the dining room and out through the kitchen. I thought, this isn't really very encouraging. They did patch it up, and I lived there for a few months until there was a firefight right across my house and I spent an hour or so on the floor. For security and representational reasons they found me a very nice villa on the other side of the Consulate. That one had 36 bullet holes in it, but it was above the Naval HQ so no one could shoot across it. They fixed it up and furnished it. I hosted lunches there as it had quite elegant gardens. I was the only consulate officer to live off the compound, and after the kidnappings, I was required to move back to the compound. We retained this villa so I could continue to host representational functions. I had a adequate cook and a gardener who did quite a good job. Representational lunches were confined to businessmen and government officials. Businessmen were very constrained in what they would say because of the threat of nationalization, and the government officials would blatantly lie to you because they didn't know what was going on and they were terrified of departing from the party line. I did get to know General Getachew, the Martial Law Administrator, but he would not come to my home. Most military officers kept their distance from the Americans, although our Kagnew managers were in contact with the second division commander

I'll digress for a moment to give you a sense of the complete authority that Getachew had. One morning I arrived at the consulate and as I passed our senior local Mesfun Hailu, I asked "How's it going today?" He said, "Not very well." I thought that's strange. I said, "What's going on?" As background, his wife had been arrested for being an accomplice with the insurgents, and she was detained in jail. He had been in contact with her and found that her conditions were okay. Although the charges were bogus, they were trying to force her to confess because two other Eritreans were arrested up from Ethiopian Airlines for whom she worked. The authorities were persuaded that they were raising money or channeling money to the insurgents. He was fairly confident that this thing would blow over as there were no grounds for it, and she'd be released. He said he received a call this morning from my wife saying that she was going to be executed this afternoon. I thought Holy Christ, and asked, "Well, what can I do about it?" He said, "Well, I don't know. I'm at a complete loss. I'm trying to contact people I know." I offered to call the martial law administrator and talk to him about it. I have a reasonably good relationship with him. He said, "Well, okay, he may get really angry about it and it may make things worse, but what can I do? They're going to execute my wife?" So, I got Getachew on the line and started talking in very general terms about how things were going. Then I said, "By the way, one of our senior employees here, Mesfun Hailu, whose wife has been arrested and he received a phone call this morning from her saying that she'd been told she's going to be executed this afternoon." God, this guy exploded like a volcano. I'd never seen him react like this before and he said, "Mesfun Hailu is a spy. He's a rebel and his wife is giving them money." He obviously knew the case. He said, "It's no business of yours. He's an Ethiopian national and you have no right to intervene or you are covering up for spies." He ranted on and on. I let him vent for about five or ten minutes. Then I said, "Well, general, could I ask you just one thing? Would you see Mesfun and talk to him to see what can be done?" So, he said, "Send him down right away," and he hung up. I thought, oh my God. I explained it all to Mesfun and he said, "What can I do?" He went down directly to Getachew's office, and I learned later because he too was arrested. Apparently what happened when he went down to the office, he was made to wait for two hours sweating it out right up to the time when the wife was supposed to be executed. Then a detachment troops came in and hauled him before the martial law administrator who just lambasted him, never letting him speak.

The martial law administrator just blats him for being a spy, for his disloyalty for bringing this to the attention of the Americans, and threatened to shoot him. He ranted at him for ten minutes, and then had the paratroopers haul him out and took him to jail. His brother also worked for us, and I found out from him that Mesfun had been jailed. I thought what the hell am I going to do? At the same time, I realized that he was an Ethiopian national and there are limits in what we are going to be able to do. As it turned out, he was held in jail for about ten days, although he was not abused. Then an agreement was reached. He was released and his wife was expelled from Eritrea and sent to Addis, which was okay. They had four daughters and the daughters then went with the mother down to Addis, and she resumed her employment with Ethiopian Airlines. It's quite a story. She's written a book about her entire experience, as a matter of fact. In any event, Mesfun was then transferred to our Embassy in Addis so that he could be with his family. They both had their families in Asmara, and after Getachew was killed, which I'll explain in a minute, she returned to Asmara to test the waters, flying back and forth. She then brought her four daughters up with her. One night they all slipped away and crossed the lines into rebel territory intending to go to Sudan. They hoped to go to Sudan and then from there to the United States, which they eventually did. The two older daughters decided to stay behind in Eritrea and fight. They were 17 and 19 at that time. They spent the next ten years in the struggle. One was a nurse and the other was a schoolteacher, and of the two was injured in a bombing. In any event, the mother got away and eventually settled in the United States. But the irony was that Getachew, this hardheaded military officer, went to Addis on periodic briefings of the Derg, and finally said to them that the war was unwinnable. There had to be a political solution. He'd seen the way things were and that the resistance was implacable; there was no way to win out. He was sent away from the Derg meeting and returned to his Addis home. Later the same day, the military surrounded his home, destroyed it, and killed him and killed his family and his servants as well.

This was just one more example of the Derg's ruthlessness and recourse to violence. That was the way in which the place operated. We had another FSN employee, whose brother was picked up on an Asmara street, hauled off and hanged without trial. Other people were summarily executed by Ethiopian authorities. Our sympathies were with those people we knew. Our nationals were suffering. Some of them would leave or would transfer or just couldn't continue to live there any longer, and were driven out of their homes.

This brings me to the closure of Kagnew and our expulsion from the country. It turned out that the relationship was now very bad and we were receiving reports that the Soviets and the Cubans were gaining influence in Addis and that they were prodding the Ethiopians to change the relationship with the United States because the Americans were unreliable . Our consul general, Bob Slutz had long planned a trip to Europe for R&R. He departed on a Friday morning. I remember because it was the Saturday afternoon that we learned of the expulsion order. We had just come back from playing volleyball over at Kagnew when I got a call from Addis saying that they had just received a diplomatic note saying that five U.S. activities in Ethiopia were to come to cease operations and depart the country in four days. They included Kagnew and the consulate general in Asmara. Also it was the U.S. military mission, the DAO and a naval medical experiment facility. Those three were in Addis. We were to make plans right away to how we would carry out the closeout. I said, all well and good you in Addis, you can move around without a curfew. We were facing in one hour's time a curfew that's worth your life to violate. I got on the phone with the Kagnew navy commander, and the ranking leader of the contractors, and we started our planning. The next day was Sunday. Of course they the expulsion order on a Saturday because they knew Sunday was a non-functioning day and it would make things that much more difficult for us. The expulsion was an extraordinary exercise that ended up lasting six days. We got a two-day extension on the third day. I was the Chargï¿½. The thought of getting Bob Slutz, the CG, back quickly vanished when they figured they couldn't get him back in any reasonable period of time. So they had to count on me, an FSO-3, to manage the evacuation. It turned out to be just constant chaos. I remember the first night we had all these plans by phone and radio, constantly calculating what we would need to do, what the phases would be, what we needed to get out and how we would get the people out. I got two hours of sleep that first night. On Sunday we started to get things together and immediately found that we had two Americans down in Massawa on R&R. The two liaison guys had been transferred out; but Kagnew folks still went on R&R down there. I went to the new martial law administrator and asked his help in getting these people out. He immediately saw an opportunity to essentially he them hostage to be sure that we behaved ourselves and followed their orders. Unfortunately, at the first facility that we started to shut down things went awry. The Ethiopian guards, who were supposed to protect us, now turned against our people and came onto the compound. They went into the buildings and prevented them from destroying the classified equipment, and there was a confrontation. The men at the site foolishly tried to sneak out some firearms in the trunk of a car, and they were caught at it. That tore it. The Ethiopians said we could no longer go back to this compound. Well, we had a lot of classified equipment still there. We communicated the situation to Washington in a flash message because American lives are at risk. The Navy said we had to destroy this communications equipment that is very sensitive, but they had no suggestions as how to do so. So, on Monday we started negotiations with the Ethiopian authorities. I had taken a course on emergency evacuation several moths before, and this was one of the times when training actually served some benefit in the course of this negotiation. In the negotiating course we were told that every detail is important. The first thing you want to figure out is what should be the physical location of the talks. You want to take the opposite sides of the table and put them at the greatest disadvantage that you can. Things like having the sun shine in their eyes. Also, they said, if you know the size of the other delegation provide one less chair than that number so they are scrambling around for a chair and it puts them at a disadvantage. So, I dredged up all the things that I had learned in this course, which at the time thinking I thought was kind of silly.

The Ethiopian delegation was all senior military officers and there was the pre-planned scramble for seating. I was able to lay out for them the issues that we absolutely had to have, and one of them was access back to this facility. Among other points, I asserted the that we were immune from search. They countered that everybody's baggage would have to be searched. We went back and forth on this point. Just to give you an idea of this issue, at the consulate we had something like 30 or more firearms. We had perhaps seven carbines left over from when Kagnew was a bigger operation. Our local Ethiopian guards were paid off and told to leave the compound. .So, in the dead of night, I had our marines, smash all these weapons into pieces and threw them down the defunct well. We didn't want to turn weapons over to the Ethiopians. They did insist that we turn over the 45 automatics from our contract guards. The marines had several Uzis, shotguns and their side arms and we just simply weren't going to turn them over. We had seven classified communications machines at the consulate. We immediately destroyed five of them along with all of the classified material in the consulate. We kept two machines operating, and one principal and one backup. Throughout the negotiation, I sent messages to Addis and Washington and asked that they squeeze the Ethiopians because they are the host of the Organization of African Unity. We had friends among the African delegations, and I wanted the U.S. to go to the government in Addis and demand that the not search our materials. The argument was Ethiopia cannot be the host of the OAU and yet treat consular officials without regard for internationally recognized privileges and immunities. The embassy did prevail upon the authorities, and after awhile the Ethiopians relented. They let us go back to the abandoned facility and agreed that they would not inspect our effects. Before we went back to the site we worked out a destruction plan in advance. First, we decided the essential equipment that we had to destroy, and then a strategy to do so while the Ethiopians weren't paying attention. We decided to have our people carry clipboards as if they were inventorying everything. When the guards got bored with following them around, then they would actually remove what they had to destroy. Things worked out remarkably as we had planned. Those pieces they couldn't disable they destroyed by putting them in a drainage sump with an automatic pump. They would detach as much of the components from the circuit boards as possible and put the pieces in this sump. Whenever anyone put their hand in the sump, the pump would automatically roar into action which would make people disinclined to probe into the sump. They were able to take every element out of it that was classified and needed to be destroyed.

We were able to pack and ship out some of the unique equipment. On Tuesday, the Ethiopians agreed to extend the evacuation by two days. On Wednesday, the first two C141s landed. These 141s they brought in some Air Force cargo handlers with a forklift trucks and by now the Ethiopians were more cooperative on what we were being allowed to take out. So, we sent out about a third of our people including the two from Massawa who had just returned by air that morning, as well as most of our people's effects. When the first C-141 was loaded and departed, the second aircraft was barely half full. The Air Force guys said, "Don't you have anything else to take out? We're headed back out to Greece." They saw the principal officer's Chevrolet, which was armored, and it had arrived about three months earlier after months in transit. They said just drive it in the back of the C-141, but make sure it has let than a quarter tank of gas. That was not a problem, since there was gas rationing, the Ethiopians guards quickly siphoned out the gas, and we drove it into the back of the plane. We later got to use it when we were evacuated to Athens. Besides the two people from Massawa, we had a senior contract employee who had a common-law marriage with an Eritrean woman and she had a child He wanted to evacuate her and the child together with him. This proved a major problem as they were Ethiopian nations and not subject to the expulsion order. So after several attempts, I dug out a copy of the Ethiopian law code and I cited the law to the Martial Law Administrator. I knew I had him nailed as the woman qualified under their law for a common law marriage. After a long hesitation, he replied, "Maybe Ethiopian revolutionary law will have to prevail in this case." I asked if that law had been codified, if not, the prevailing law is what the Ethiopian code says. Unless you can show me that it has been superseded by some subsequent law, it is still the law of your land. In the end, he let the woman and her child leave with us. It was a very exciting and exhilarating time. The DOD was moving ships in toward the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. A destroyer was dispatched into the Red Sea to provide support if it were needed. Realistically, the Navy would have had to come to Kagnew by helicopter, and at 7,700 feet, a helicopter can't carry much in the way of a payload. So, the C-141s were the way to go. As a operational manager at that time, what I felt was necessary was not only to give clear directions to everybody but also to get them all working together and to prevent our people from doing stupid things. One of our contractors who was packing out his household effects at his villa downtown had too much to drink and he started throwing his clothes and possessions over the wall. This created a disturbance. Of course the police arrived and threatened his arrest. This is just what we didn't need. This fellow was sent out on the first plane.

Another minor crisis was that our local employees, including the unions at Kagnew demanded to be paid off before we departed. The Ethiopian authorities supported this demand. So, I sent a message to the Department and DOD, and they authorized the payment in the form of statements of obligations to pay, which fortunately satisfied our Eritrean workers. Without the cooperation of these employees, our evacuation would have been much more difficult. Then the telephone company said we couldn't leave until we paid their bill as well. I said, talk to the Derg, they ordered the evacuation. I told them to send the bill to our Embassy. I even had to deal with an Ethiopian who lived across the street from me. Weeks before, my gardener had left the brake off in my car and the car had rolled across the street and damaged the neighbor's cement block fence. He now said that I couldn't leave until I'd paid to fix his fence. When the Eritreans heard the Americans were leaving after 35 years, they just wanted their piece of the pie before we closed down. That said, we had a very clear sense that the Eritrean people felt that the forced evacuation of the Americans was the last straw. When the Americans go, they feared that the Ethiopians would be unleashed to conduct ethnic cleansing which would result in great suffering once all the foreigner observers were gone. We tried to reassure them. We also had to try to reassure our FSNs that we would help them. We would have loved to taken them with us on the plane with us, but we couldn't. Nonetheless, they helped us right to the last minute with the pack out, getting our gear aboard and liaison with the local authorities. It was really extraordinary. Thank God, all of our principal FSNs got out of Eritrea. Mesfun's brother went down to our embassy in Djibouti. The consular assistant went to Khartoum and was hired there in the consular section. Virtually everybody who wanted to get out did. In the last days we made a point of sanitizing of the consulate offices destroying all calendars, schedules, calling cards etc. On the other side of the coin, we did plant some things in our desks. I left papers that looked like codes slipped them into stacks of blank paper. They were from Dungeons and Dragons. Even more lethal than that, out at the Kagnew site we were forced out of, they placed a destruction packet in a closet. This phosphorous blanket, meant to melt a safe, was detonated by a ring on a string. Some guy put the blanket on a high shelf in a closet, and then had the string hanging down like a light cord, thinking that would teach them. We were persuaded that the Soviets were going to come in right after we left to search for intelligence. This motivated us to see to it that we did the most thorough destruction possible. We retrieved about three and a half million dollars worth of equipment; unique classified equipment. We left nothing that they could use.

In terms of executing our evacuation, I think we all did an excellent job. My only regret was not packing up the CG's silverware, but I did make the Ethiopians sign for the compound. On the very last day, it was a Friday, I made out a receipt for the Consulate and our property. The last C-141 was to take us out that early afternoon. I organized a ceremony formally closing the consulate with our heads up. We had three marines left, and they were in their dress uniforms. We ceremonially lowered the flag. All the FSNs were there, we played the national anthem on a tape recorder. The marines lowered the flag, folded it and they handed it to me and I marched out with it. We then got into a convoy joining the last people from Kagnew and drove down the main streets. People lined the streets to see the Americans leave. Some people were in tears to see the Americans go. In part, they were concerned for themselves, but also, they were sorry to see the end of that relationship which had been a very good one for both sides. We headed to the airport and we said tearful goodbyes to our FSNs on the tarmac, and wishing them the best. We got on the plane and taxied to takeoff. When we were wheels up, we all had a great sense of relief. In that six days of the evacuation I'd probably had a total of ten or 12 hours of sleep. When the plane lifted off there was a great cheer from all the people on board. Off we went to Athens. My one regret was that my wife at this point was assigned in Nairobi. After a few weeks in Athens for debriefings with the embassy and talking to people who came out from DOD, I wanted to try return to the U.S. via Nairobi to see my wife, as we had been married for just six months. Unfortunately, any flight going from Athens to Nairobi went through Addis. So I asked the embassy if they would see if I could get an Ethiopian transit visa. I found out through this effort that I had been PNG'd. I was not allowed even to transit Addis. So, I didn't get to see my wife for another five months. Anyway, I received a presidential letter of commendation and a superior honor award and other recognition. I sent out a final telegram from Asmara explaining what we had done, how our group had operated superbly as a team, and of course, praise for all the help that they'd received from all American agencies. I tried to make our evacuation an exercise we could take some pride in doing professionally and with dignity. I had served in Vietnam and the departure of Americans from Saigon was, I thought, disgraceful, and I just wanted to make sure that we weren't being driven out with our tails between our legs. So we made a proper show of it. Everybody seemed to appreciate the effort that we had made in that regard.

Closing the consulate and Kagnew station was the end of an era. Ironically, the U.S. is now back in Asmara. We reestablished relations when Eritrea became independent in 1993. We are back in the same compound, which the Eritreans turned back over to us.

Q: Well, that was well done. Well, we'll pick this up next time in 1977 and you're; what happened to you after?

WAUCHOPE: AF/E. East Africa. I was fresh out of the horn they figured they could use me in dealing with that region.

Q: Well, you got back to African affairs, Great.

Today is August 9, 2002. Keith, 1977 you went back to AFP, what?

WAUCHOPE: No, AF/E, East African.

Q: East Africa. What did you have?

WAUCHOPE: Well, at that time they wanted to take advantage of my experience in the Horn of Africa having been in Ethiopia, now Eritrea. I was assigned to the Sudan desk. It was at a time when our relationship with Sudan was evolving favorably. They wanted someone who had an appreciation of the political dynamics of the Horn of Africa. AF/E at that time was a very vibrant office; there were a lot of very bright young officers in the office, and a lot of hot issues as well. I very much looked forward to the job and I did have a fine assignment there.

Q: Well, you were there from 1977 to?

WAUCHOPE: To '79, yes. A full two-year tour.

Q: Who were some of the officers you were working with?

WAUCHOPE: Well, Dick Post was the first office director, and then Gordon Beyer took over from him. Sam Hamrick, and later Jack Whiting, were the deputies. Lou Janowski was the Kenya desk officer. Bob Illing was the Somali Desk, followed by Gerald Scott. . Dick Baker handled Kenya. Pete Smith, who later resigned from the Service, was the Tanzania Desk Officer. Pat Garland came in to take over the Ethiopia Desk. It was a good crew, a good group of guys.

Q: Well, when you came, you had the Sudan desk, what was the situation with Sudan and what had been sort of the past?

WAUCHOPE: In our relations with Sudan, the past was weighing on the present, if you will. The past was that there had been the assassination of the American ambassador and his DCM in Khartoum.

Q: Cleo Noel and Curt Moore?

WAUCHOPE: Moore, yes, exactly. The U.S. orchestrated an effort to compel the Sudanese government, despite pressure from the radical Arabs, to transfer the assassins to Egypt where they were put under house arrest; a very loose kind of confinement. The Sudanese government was disinclined to imprison them in Khartoum because Sudan would be a constant target of radicals seeking the assassins' release. There was a lot of unhappiness about this arrangement, not only in the U.S. government at large, but most particularly in the Foreign Service. As we began the process of improving our bilateral relations and increasing our aid program, we got blowback from the Foreign Service organizations saying they felt it was improper to normalize relations. We responded that it was in the U.S. national interest to do so because of our setback in Ethiopia. These tradeoffs were a reflection of the changing dynamics in that region. Obviously, the Ethiopians had thrown their lot in with the Soviets. As such, there needed to be some degree of balance, and the Sudanese looked to us like they might be able to provide that balance. In addition, the Saudis were pressing on us to improve relations with the Sudanese. They had an interest in stability there. There was a significant Sudanese population in Saudi Arabia, and the Saudis were willing to put money into projects in Sudan. They were particularly interested in developing Sudan's potential to produce food for the Arab world. Sudan has the Nile and had a number of irrigation projects had, in the past, produced cotton. International donors had proposed Sudan consider food instead of cotton. They thought that this food could serve both domestic consumption and the export market.

Now, Nimeiri, a former general who had taken power by a coup, was a very pragmatic individual. One of the things that earned our respect and commendation was the fact that he made peace with the southern insurgents, who had been engaged in a long festering war. It was one of the objectives that we wanted to see achieved. In doing so, he showed himself to have the ability to control events and to have the wisdom not to allow himself to be swept away by the more radical Islamic elements within previous governments. He co-opted this group by keeping them on the fringe of his own government. He had an inclination toward modernization, so overall he seemed like a good man to back.

Q: Well, now had we restored relations by this time?

WAUCHOPE: We had. By the time I took over we had restored relations, we had sent Don Bergus who had been the DCM in Cairo and an experienced Arabist as Ambassador. Sudan had always been an orphan in terms of where it fit; the Near Eastern and AF bureau. At that particular juncture, we considered it as an African nation for operational purposes, but it was also an Arab, or an Islamic nation, even though there is a very significant Christian/animist in the south of the country. There was a prospect, as we were told by American oil companies, that there would be significant finds of oil in the interior of the country. We also thought that we could help it to transition from a backward agricultural nation to a more modern state; perhaps to fulfill the Saudi vision of becoming the "Breadbasket of the Arab world." There was some hope that we could participate in that process and that the World Bank and the IMF were willing to help out with our encouragement. European powers were involved, as they wanted to see if we could provide the kind of assistance that would keep Sudan out of the hands of the radicals. We had a variety of activities at that time. A U.S.-Sudanese chamber of commerce had just recently been formed under the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and I had considerable involvement with them. Tenneco was a major corporation that wanted to become involved in the agro-business in that region. They went to Sudan and met with Nimeiri, who was the most important point of contact. In fact, when I went out to Sudan on my orientation visit, Don Bergus saw to it that I met with Nimeiri, as well. Bergus was a very intelligent, pragmatic fellow, and the idea was that if you want to motivate your desk officer, you take him in to see the chief of state, and let him see for himself what the guy was like. Nimeiri was very soft-spoken with a evident degree of determination to what he thought was right for his country. I was favorably impressed and thought he might well have a shot at successfully making this transition.

Q: What about at that point, what about some of the neighbors? What was Libya doing for example?

WAUCHOPE: Well, that was one of the reasons why we focused on Sudan, because of our concern about its neighbors. At this particular juncture, Qadhafi was being particularly obstreperous. He was deeply involved in the Chadian insurgency. He was stirring things up in North Africa, in general. He was alternately trying to make friends with Egypt or trying to undermine the Egyptian government. In general, he was throwing his lot in with the most radical Arab elements and was involved financing terrorist activities globally. There was a pro-Libyan faction in Sudan and we were encouraging Nimeiri to keep a close eye on them. There were radicals who would have liked to turn Egypt away from the West. Qadhafi's objective was to undermine Egypt by going through the soft underbelly of Sudan. He attempted to do that through his agents who were Islamic true believers or those who followed of the more radical Islamic approach to government, like the imposition of Sharia. If they had been successful at that time, as it proved to be the case later, it would have thrown the south into rebellion again, which ultimately did occur.

Other players in the region included the Israelis who wanted to see moderate Arab nations encouraged in their moderation. The loss of our strong relationship with Ethiopia had been a big factor in state of flux in the Horn. When Ethiopia threw its lot in with the Soviets, the Somalis decided that, while they had been very close to the Soviets, if the Soviets were going to side with the Ethiopians, then they had to look for new friends. The Somalis had longstanding designs on the Ogaden, region in southeastern Ethiopia. Clearly, with the Soviets backing the Ethiopians, the Somalis' plans were going to be thwarted. While we were trying to build relations with the Somalis, and the AF Bureau was preparing a decision paper to send to the Secretary. Yet we were really not clear in our own minds where we saw this going. Who know what would happen if you threw the U.S. and other western powers behind Somalia. Would that encourage them to move against Ethiopia? Initially we didn't think that was likely. We thought that we could trust Siad Barre, the president, to stand by his word that he had no intention of using force to extend his territorial claims. Of course, there are three areas outside of Somalia they sought to control; Djibouti, parts of northeast Kenya and the Ogaden in southeastern Ethiopia.

Q: I was thinking of the five star flag.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly right. The original two points are English and Italian Somalia.

Q: The other three are Ogaden, Djibouti & northeast Kenya.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly. We were concerned about Somali irredentism. Given that this was a tumultuous area we had to navigate fairly carefully. The Carter administration was just coming in. I'd been tossed out in April and my wife was serving in Nairobi. We'd been married less than a year. From Athens I communicated with the embassy Addis and suggested that it would be useful if I could have the opportunity to travel there to debrief on how the evacuation went in Asmara. They thought it was a fine idea. I could then travel on to Nairobi and see my wife and then head back to the United States. They went to the Ethiopian government to get me an entry permit and I found out that I was PNG'd from Ethiopia, so that was that. As a result I didn't see my wife for about seven months, so I went back and set up housekeeping back in Washington.

In any event, I reported to AF/E in June and one of the early issues was the sale of F5s to Sudan. We were considering the sale of just 12 F5s which seemed like a reasonable and modest number. The rationale was for the sale was these aircraft would constitute a minimal deterrent to the Ethiopian air force which the Soviets were beginning to provide significant numbers of aircraft. The Ethiopian air force pilots were a pretty talented group, mostly trained by Americans. The Soviets had supplied almost 100 jet aircraft. The focus of the Ethiopians air force was Somalia which had claims on the Ogaden. There were Sudanese exiles in Ethiopia, and there were Eritrean exiles in Sudan, and there were frequent cross border friction and clashes. We could see these escalating into a wider clash and possibly a clash in the air. We felt that 12 F5s would be just enough to provide a deterrent to any attack, especially one directed at the capital.

Q: The F5 at the time was considered sort of called the Freedom Fighter I think. It was a very good, but not terribly sophisticated jet plane, which we use to sell to foreign powers.

WAUCHOPE: Right, it was sort of a standard unit of military assistance that we couldn't provide because we had limited avionics on it so that it couldn't challenge American aircraft, but we were using them in the United States as a replacement for the MIG21 because they had many similar characteristics. They were capable if properly handled and certainly challenged the MIG21s.

Q: We used them I think in our training, weren't they?

WAUCHOPE: That's correct, they were always the aggressor.

Q: Because they did have these Soviet characteristics.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, that's right. On the surface of it, Andy Young had signed on as to the Carter administration as their ambassador to the United Nations had passed through Africa having a continuing interest in the region and he had met with Nimeiri and they talked about the sale. Young came back and he said to Carter and to the administration that he thought it was legitimate to sell these F5s. I thought this deal is golden, in addition to which we had a commitment from the Saudis to pay for them. So, it wasn't even a contribution, we would get repaid for the sale of these aircraft which is oftentimes not the case. All the factors had fallen into place and as we began the process of actually working out an export permit for this transaction, we ran into all manner of opposition to it. Ironically, a large part of it came from within the Carter administration at that time. They felt that it was improper and it was reflective of previous Republican administration policies to interject weapons into areas and the concept they said they wanted to retain was not to be the first to interject a new level, a higher level of air capability or any capability, military capability in a given area because that would look like we were encouraging people to escalate the arms race, the regional arms races. We tried to point out that the F-5 was really not an escalation and that the Soviets had already provided the Ethiopians a level of aircraft. The Libyans had the French had purchased French aircraft with their oil money which were much more sophisticated in many ways than the F-5, but we could not move this thing. It went on interminably; I came to AF/E in June and the issue had just been initiated and it was still going on after I left two years later. The transaction was never concluded by which time the Saudis had withdrawn their offer to pay for the aircraft. So, then we had to do it under an FMS program. Sudan is one of the poorest nations in the world and the great miraculous transformation has never occurred in Sudan. It certainly wasn't on the horizon two years later, and their having to pay for the F-5s was just not rational.

It was kind of indicative of how things went in that administration. Here you have Andy Young and the president conceptually, saying this sounds like a reasonable thing to do, and at two years later you still don't get it done. Now, eventually the transaction was concluded, by which time the Ethiopians had overwhelming air superiority, but thank God, the conditions on the ground never led to clashes that would have brought both nations to their knees.

Q: Where within the Carter administration was the opposition coming from?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I'll tell you from the human rights people. I'm trying to think of the woman.

Q: Derian.

WAUCHOPE: Patt Derian, yes, her representatives and AID people as well. AID types thought that our assistance ought to be exclusively developmental variety which is fine in its own way, but we didn't see them understanding the threats in the immediate region. In point of fact, 12 aircraft are not going to change the balance of power in the Horn. We tried to make that case over and over again, but they just felt it was symbolically wrong to do it.

Q: Well, were you thinking of the aircraft in a way of being symbolically like a security blanket or something? It wouldn't change.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, a deterrent. It would not have changed anything militarily. They were too few in number to be used aggressively. At this particular evolution in the Carter administration, and it may have occurred under the Nixon administration, when a sale was challenged by Congress, State and DOD came up with this concept of defensive military assistance. So you ask yourself, what's defensive military assistance? Well, its things like anti-tank weapons, its anti-aircraft weapons, anti-aircraft missiles. All well and good. Obviously, these all can be used in an offensive role if you choose to do so. But that is for example what we were talking about in Somalia. We wanted to back the Somalia regime, but in a manner that would not give them any signal that we would support their assuming an aggressive role. Likewise, these F-5 aircraft didn't have a long-range capability to operate over Ethiopia for any period of time, but they could serve well as a local air defense capability of the capital regime and the Nile Valley. But even that argument failed in these various councils on Sudan. We couldn't get these people to understand the limited nature of this modest military sale. They kept coming back to the symbolism and we kept trying to hammer in the realities of the situation. When the transaction eventually occurred, it was in the most disadvantageous way for both the U.S. and Sudan. It was a foreign military sale, for which we were never paid back because then the regime changed. They abrogated their predecessors' responsibilities, and the aircraft fell onto disrepair, by which time Ethiopia was preoccupied with its internal problems. There was no longer the threat that there appeared to have been before. Now, maybe we didn't need to do it at all, but the sense was that in order to secure and maintain a relationship with Nimeiri and his military leaders it was important to give them a sense that we were (a) behind them in the transition process, and (b) providing them this minimal deterrent. That was the rationale we tried to use with very limited success. It seemed that we could win some of the various battles, but we seemed to be losing the war. Each time we would seem to persuade certain representative of human rights and AID, it would get blocked somewhere else. Then we'd have to go back to square one and start over. It's sort of indicative of how things operated in the early Carter days, and to some extent throughout the administration.

There is another incident, which I'd like to record, although I was only on the periphery of this, but I certainly was an observer. In the early Carter days one of the things he insisted that we do was to be open to the press. So, for example, AF/P, the public affairs office, would route telephone inquiries from the press directly to desk officers. This had never been the case before. They would be provided guidance and they would try to respond to the extent they could. So, we were often times confronted by press people asking about certain specific issues. Carter himself was as good as his word in this concept. He invited, I think it was Time Magazine correspondent, to spend the day with the president in the Oval Office. He would have complete access to the White House and the president's schedule, and would sit in on the president's meetings. One of the documents that crossed the president's desk that day was a NSDM about our policy on the Horn.

Q: NSDM?

WAUCHOPE: National Security Decision Memorandum. The subject was shifting our alliances away from Ethiopia, where it had essentially been booted out, toward Somalia. The idea was to try to provide the Somalis a level of military capability to defend against a rearming Ethiopia. The Ethiopians had many grievances against the Somalis and there was constant friction along the border. So, we proposed that we would provide Somalia defensive weapons. The president allowed the reporter look over his shoulder, and the substance of the NSDM made it into the Time article. Somalis read Time and they learned that the United States was going to sift its support to them. Now, granted, we had told them to a certain extent what we proposed to do. But, they thought, the U.S. will back us in all things. At least that's how they interpreted it. In a matter of six weeks or so thereafter they launched an attack into the Ogaden. I don't think that they had received any of our weapons by that time, but they had what they had received from the Soviets. They figured the sooner we move the better because the Soviets have not yet provided that much military wherewithal to the Ethiopians. So, they attacked. We had egg all over our face because they had apparently misinterpreted the NSDM and they saw an envelope of time in which they had to act, if they were ever going to act at all. So, they did. They quickly occupied a large part of the Ogaden. Their actions accelerated the Soviet response, and the Soviets brought in more weaponry, and military advisors and eventually Cuban troops. They had three brigades of Cuban troops as the spearhead; we figured about 15,000 Cuban troops. They drove the Somalis back out of the Ogaden over the next several months making the whole region much more unstable. Of course, now we are stuck with the Somalis who have just been badly clobbered in the Ogaden for this rash involvement. Ethiopia has ten times, well, not quite, maybe eight times as many people as Somalia. It's not going to be a fair fight at the best of times. Not that that would have deterred the Somalis, but it weakened their government and it led to its eventual collapse thereafter.

In any event, we had decided that we had wanted to continue to play a role in the Horn. It was important to back that up with assistance that would give people some degree of assurance that we're not just making verbal commitments, but were prepared to follow up with both military and development assistance. Sudan was to be a player in that effort on the Horn as well. For the remainder of my time in AF/E we were involved in a variety of opportunities to try to set up commercial relationships, and cultural relationships with Sudan, and to fend off the radical elements that were there. In point of fact, during my visit to Khartoum I saw Sadie al Mahdi, a leader of the former regime, who was one considered to be the radical bad guys. He'd been allowed to return home, but he was sort of under close surveillance by the government. Because of his following, Nimeiri felt that he couldn't quash him altogether. They had to accord him some degree of respect, which they did. Of course, he later came to power and Turabi, of the Muslim Brotherhood, became the philosopher of the fundamentalist regime. I saw him as well, a very bright guy, a very capable guy. He was educated in the West, but very dedicated to the Islamic cause. In any event, Nimeiri tried to play this right, he tried to not crush these people, but at the same time keep a close eye on them so they not get the upper hand. Of course, in the long-term it did Nimeiri in. The military people they put in were more radical in orientation then Nimeiri. I thought our approach to Sudan was quite a reasonable given the situation. Maybe we oversold the concept of the breadbasket, more than was warranted. Sudanese infrastructure was very weak and when they did find oil in Darfur province in the west central region. It's far away from anywhere, and of course building a pipeline from the wells to Port Sudan would be a logistical nightmare. There was another massive project being contemplated to shift Nile water from Sudan to Saudi Arabia. Water had always been a critical element in Saudi Arabia. They talked about building a pipeline from the Nile across the desert to the coast, and then pipe it across the Red Sea and bring it to Saudi Arabia. Needless to say, nothing ever came of that, the symbolism of shipping water from Sudan to Saudi Arabia would be disastrous.

Q: The Egyptians would probably howl, too, wouldn't they?

WAUCHOPE: They would. The whole flow of the Nile is critical.

Q: Did the Nile play any role, I mean, who controls the Nile while you were there?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. As the Egyptians became more moderate in their approach to Israel and expressed their willingness to talk with the Israelis, the more important Sudan was to protect Egypt's southern flank from Arab radicals.

Q: But you were there during the Camp David process?

WAUCHOPE: Right.

Q: The visit to Jerusalem with Sadat?

WAUCHOPE: Exactly. As a result, there was a sense that we had an obligation to protect Egypt's southern flank from Qadhafi. As a result the Egyptians also understood this. If you go back in history, the Egyptians and the British in colonial times always felt Sudan was vulnerable to outside pressure, you recall the Fashoda incident, and it was susceptible to manipulation by radicals. So the Egyptians encouraged us to play this role. They didn't have the wherewithal beyond some technical assistance that they could put into the pot, but they wanted very much that we play a role to keep things quiet. This was one more source of pressure on us. So, when you looked at it, it was in our own interest to maintain stability in the region as the equation between Ethiopia and Somalia was shifting. You had the Qadhafi dimension, the Egyptians interest in stability, and the Israelis looking for a moderate regime as well. So, all of this militated that we become more aggressive in our overtures. Our assistance program went from about $10 million to a projected $100 million a year, which would have made it one of the largest programs in Africa. I don't think that it ever reached that level, but that was the direction that we certainly were headed.

The Sudanese account was very interesting, but while I was handling that, the office decided that I should also take over Uganda at least as far as the issue of emergency evacuation because of my experience in Asmara. Idi Amin had been a problem for us for some time. We had closed our embassy in Kampala in 1973, when Amin was becoming increasingly obstreperous. There had been threats and incidents against Peace Corps volunteers, and they had been removed. After that there was an incident involving embassy personnel in which they were clearly threatened. Idi Amin's government did nothing to protect our people. So, we closed down. Now, at this time the Uganda account was pretty quiet, there wasn't much going on in Uganda and it was just as well. Idi Amin was doing all manner of outrageous things hoping to provoke a media reaction. . He was viewed as a clown on the periphery of the process. While there some regional concerns like the southern Sudanese insurgents who had taken refuge in Uganda, it was never a significant issue. There were opponents of Amin who had been taken refuge in Sudan and in Ethiopia as well, but they posed no threat to stability. Despite this, the volatility of the regime and the growing hostility of his neighbors, it made sense to review the entire E & E plan for Uganda. So, I was tasked to do that. Our protecting power was West Germany, so I went to Bonn with a small delegation and met with the German officials. We worked on the plans and tried to determine whether they were realistic.

Q: What did we have there? Did we have many people?

WAUCHOPE: We had about 250 missionaries constituting most of the American presence. There were a few odd teachers and dual nationals, but basically it was the missionaries. They had been advised that we did not think it was wise to remain in Uganda, and they knew that and they made their according to their consciences Our focus was on how we would get them out. We were in contact with the missionary organizations here in the U.S. We had a reasonable idea what their numbers and locations. They were pretty good at keeping us apprized of changes if they took people out and moved people in. They were uncomfortable working with our government on the one hand, while on the other they had made this commitment apart from our concerns. The missionaries knew what was going on in general terms, and thought they could get along with Amin's folks, and that the U.S. would protect them if Amin went bonkers. We weren't so sure. So, after the stop in Bonn, we went to Nairobi and met with the German and French ambassadors resident in Kampala, and several other foreign residents, to find out about the situation in Kampala and the country at large. The German ambassador was fairly pragmatic and he said there were terrible things going on. The French ambassador, by contrast, seemed almost oblivious to the atrocities. He said he lived not far from the central prison. He said, yes, at nighttime you heard people screaming, but said, "I just turn the air conditioner up." He didn't know what all the fuss was about. Of course, after the fall of Amin, we found out a great deal more about the atrocities he had committed. But the French ambassador seemed not to want to know about it. Nonetheless, they gave us useful information and promised assistance in terms of communication and, to some extent, support.

Q: Were the German and French having trouble with their citizens or did Idi Amin only pick on the American Embassy?

WAUCHOPE: He picked on the Americans because we had suspended relations and were unfriendly to him. In addition, there was a Congressional effort to impose an embargo on Uganda. The more provocative he became, the more American politicians saw an opportunity to make some hay because who is ever going to support Idi Amin? Don Pease of Ohio, who I see recently died, took up this legislation. Pease was like a country school teacher in a lot of ways and in the world there were either rights or wrongs, or at least that's how he played this. He thought Idi Amin was a bad man, which Idi Amin definitely was. So he felt that there should be a legislatively imposed embargo. They felt that the administration's willingness to acknowledge Amin, or even tolerate his existence was unacceptable, and that we ought to hurry the collapse of his government by imposing embargoes. The U.S. should suspend commerce and restrict Americans from moving in and out of the country. Department representatives testified against this effort, and got clobbered by this congressman from New York, a very bright guy.

Q: Solarz?

WAUCHOPE: Right, Solarz. Steven Solarz.

Q: I've interviewed him.

WAUCHOPE: Did you? He took apart Bill Harrop, who was the PDAS in AF at that time, about State Department policy. He drew parallels to State Department's failure in the pre-war period, when Jews were being killed in Germany while we sat idly by. I thought to myself, this is so outrageous. I had carefully prepared Harrop's testimony. I had tried to stick to the legal and policy aspects of a Uganda embargo, but, all of a sudden we were being crucified by what predecessors two generations removed had done. Then afterwards Solarz and Harrop, who knew each other quite well because Solarz had a special interest in Africa, were all buddy-buddy. Solarz just had to exploit this issue in his report to his constituents that he beat up State for its past sins. I, as a relatively naive young man, thought to myself, this is so God-damned outrageous. Of course, he's grandstanding for the purpose of having it appear on the congressional record. He's taking us to task where the parallels were nonexistent.

One of the things we tried to explain to Congress was that, if you legislatively impose this embargo, when the day comes, which it probably will given the fragility of this regime, you're going to have to pass legislation to remove it and it's going to take a long time. The much more effective way of achieving it's goal was to have it as an executive order which can be lifted by the stroke of a pen. We said we were looking into how we would do that, but the Congress was absolutely unmoved. They had their teeth into this one and they weren't going to let go. Sure enough they passed the Goddamn embargo. Sure enough within months thereafter, having no relationship at all to the embargo, Idi Amin's troops got in trouble with Tanzania, which invaded and Idi Amin was overthrown. While we had closed our embassy in Kampala, we did not break relations. Therefore the Ugandans had representation at the Chargï¿½ level in the U.S. because it was a nice place to be, and they wanted to keep tabs on U.S. policy. The Congress held three days of hearings. It was typical congressional show. The first day they had a lot of academics and the academics would tell you the history and background of the present situation. The second day was the good stuff where they had the Uganda victims testify about all Amin's horrendous atrocities. For example, about how they lined these people up and each guy had to batter out the brains of the next one in line. Somebody else said they drilled a hole in his stomach and they put a firecracker in his stomach. There were all kinds of atrocious tales to get the headlines and their political juices flowing. Of course the piece de resistance was Bill Harrop. He was the last to testify. He followed Commerce and AID representatives who were noncommittal on the embargo. Eventually they got to Bill Harrop and he was clearly the main course. They scrubbed his head from the beginning. He barely started reading his statement when they said, "We'll enter that into the record," now answer this question. They started hammering on him about all the atrocities and how could the U.S. defend Amin. They got what they wanted; media profile. Idi Amin was definitely a bad actor, and there wasn't going to be anybody standing up for him except the hapless State Department that only wanted some rationality in our policy.

In any event, what brought Amin down was a border conflict in the southwestern part of Uganda on the Agar River. The Ugandans alleged that some local Tanzanian farmers had come across the border and stolen some cattle. The Ugandans organized an attack across the Kagera and stole back cattle and anything else there was to steal. The conflict exploded into charges and the counter charges as who had started it. Then the Tanzanian army slowly and methodically organized a punitive expedition against the Ugandans in the immediate area where this incident had taken place. They were going to cross the Kagera River and go to the town of Mbarara, about 25 or 30 miles from the border. They made it to this town with little resistance and burned and dynamited it to the ground. In that process they realized that the Ugandan army, once well trained, had degenerated to a bunch of thugs. They didn't have any military cohesion, and were no longer an organized military force. So, the Tanzanian army stopped in this town that they had destroyed and came to realize that they could take this all the way to Kampala and overthrow Amin and solve that problem once and for all. They reorganized and resupplied themselves, and then started a slow, very methodical, very African advance toward Kampala. They brought to bear their artillery, which would lay down in a barrage for a day or so and then they'd slowly advance to see what was left. They'd find that the Ugandans had long since withdrawn, and the Tanzanians would repeat the process. In this way they progressively moved forward toward Kampala. Finally, as the approached the capital, they began to realize that there were all kinds of possibilities now. Coming from the southwest, there were two avenues, one toward Kampala and the other toward Entebbe and the airport. At the point about 25 or 30 miles between the two, they would make a rush for the two objectives. They were able to do this because by now the Ugandan army had collapsed completely. They advanced for the capital and hoped that with the others going to Entebbe, they would catch Idi Amin before he could fly out with all of his treasure. But Amin beat them and he flew off to Libya. The Tanzanians had taken the capita and the airport, and they basically had thrown the rascal out. They went to the central prison and they found the execution grounds. Among other things, they found buckets full of heads and many corpses. At Idi Amin's residence they found a refrigerator with the heads of people who had been his opponents. He had them in the freezer and allegedly he used periodically take the heads out and lecture them on their misdeeds.

Meanwhile, as this process of Idi Amin's downfall was unfolding, Ugandan exiles came to AF/E wanting to discuss the successor government. Godfrey Binaisa, the former attorney general under Obote, was among them. There were three or four serious contenders. Binaisa came in with a group of five or six retainers. He started out by asking for American military assistance. He wanted arms, military training, aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons, and, of course, he needed money. I said I didn't see how we could meet his needs. We did not agree to do any of this. Their demands began to winnow down and they said they were absolutely determined to return to Uganda when the government collapsed. We wished them the best of luck. I suspected they had already received assistance from other groups. Finally after about an hour of discussion, recognizing that they were not going to get anything out of us in a tangible form, they asked if they could we get visas to re-enter the U.S. in case their endeavors didn't work. I thought, now there's a serious level of commitment. But in point of fact, Binaisa did go to Uganda and, while he wasn't initially made chief of state, later on he did serve as president of the country for a period of about two years and was then pushed out by someone else. He was a relatively decent guy. He was educated in the UK and seemed to have his head screwed on properly. Basically he was looking for a boost to give his faction the edge over the others. In any event, Idi Amin was driven out, a new government comes in and we have the struggle to try to restore assistance to Uganda by obtaining the repeal of the legislatively imposed embargo. Congress said, yes, we see that, that's fine. Could you tell us about the new government? We told them what we could. They said, okay, that's fine, but we've got a legislative bill, then we have to put it on the calendar, it has to go through the committee, it has to go to the floor, etc. It took the Congress six months to lift the embargo so we couldn't provide assistance to the needy Ugandans during this time, precisely as we had testified would be the case if they went ahead with the embargo, which, of course, they did. We thought we were on the side of angels in doing what we had and found out that we were just hapless victims of a Kabuki theater that Congress devised for us to play.

Q: Did you find, sometimes the congressmen will get the bit in his teeth as you mentioned, Congressman Pease, was it? But, sometimes you get staff members who've got particular hobbyhorses, did you find that?

WAUCHOPE: Pease. Yes, there were several of them as a matter of fact. What their job seemed to be was to identify and feed to their congressmen issues, in this instance in Africa, that would have no downside risk and should return maximum favorable publicity. I remember a couple of staffers who were intense about it, but it seemed that Peace himself was personally driven on this issue. As I say, on a certain level, the embargo makes sense. On a more sophisticated level, there are downsides and they were just not listening to them. They were not prepared to accept them. We had done our best and the U.S. did have a reasonably good relationship with the successor government and eventually were able to provide assistance. There were no other issues, economic or commercial that we needed to quickly resolve. Strategically speaking, Uganda's frontier areas were pretty remote and didn't cause a threat to their neighbors. Of continuing concern was clashes among tribal groups and whether they would take umbrage at whoever got control. That's always been a concern in Africa, and the military leader was always a sort of compromise candidate because their first loyalty was thought to be to the military, and then secondarily to the tribal,

Q: Did you get involved with the Tanzanian government?

WAUCHOPE: Remarkably not very much. There are ironies in the Tanzanians playing the role of aggressor against their neighbor. I mean Nyerere had always been an international socialist and a person who believed in the socialist principals and non-aggression. He was a perpetual critic of the West and of capitalism, part of the imperial "hangover" if you will. The successor government, he was no longer the chief of state by that time, although he still had considerable influence, to do this was remarkable. Practically speaking, Amin was a pain in everybody's side and it served all the nations in the region purposes to get rid of him. Tanzania just happened, just by fate of history, to be the instrument for that process. As I say, their military performance wasn't dazzling, but it was adequate because the reality was that Amin's army was useless as a fighting force.

Q: But they didn't get in there and begin to get hungry or something like that?

WAUCHOPE: No, remarkably, the Tanzanians pretty much wanted to turn the country over to its people. They had their own candidates to take power, who would be friendlier to them, but they didn't they stay on. They allowed the successor regime to come in, and went home, which is impressive. This is in marked contrast in recent events in central Africa with the Rwandans being in the former Zaire. Tanzania was at least faithful to its principles to that extent, that they didn't see themselves remaining as an occupying force and manipulating the successor regime in Kampala. We were pleased by that. Our relationship with the Tanzanian government wasn't all that great. I mean it was okay.

Q: Nyerere was not our fair-haired boy particularly.

WAUCHOPE: No, he wasn't.

Q: Because the Scandinavians and other sort of the socialists of Europe, the EU poured billions of dollars into these schemes which went nowhere.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly. You know, the Tanzanians would listen to us, they were always reasonably friendly. But we had tried to block some of their candidates for leadership in international organizations because their orientation ran contrary to our perspective on the world. As a result the relationship was cool, but correct. When we would ask them about the situation in Uganda, they'd give us just about what they'd give the press and not much more.

Q: Then back to the Sudan, you haven't mentioned really, I mean I almost have the feeling that Sudan one talks about Khartoum and all that, the vast desert kind of. Then you've got this bottom side where we don't have a post, we've never had a post I guess and I was wondering was that sort of the other side of the moon or something?

WAUCHOPE: Well, not entirely. We were aware of it because there were a lot of American missionaries in the south. There was a Christian-animist mix. There have been some very promising people coming from that region who came to the U.S. For instance, Francis Deng. He was and may still be a professor at Yale University, and he was for a brief period an senior official in the Sudanese government under Nimeiri as part of his reunification effort and rapprochement with the south. He did put some southerners into positions of responsibility. Juba, the southern capital is pretty hard to get to, I mean it's on the Nile, but in the swamp regions. We had missionaries in various parts of the region. We also had an AID relief operation that operated out of there for food assistance primarily, but it also pursued some level of development as well. There were refugees from the previous period of fighting with the Islamic north. There were significant populations who were in parts of Uganda and Ethiopia as well. There were liberation groups that operated out of parts of southwestern Ethiopia. Then even after Nimeiri's peace settlement, there were elements in the south that were still opposed to Khartoum. They wanted succession. We studied that option because there were a number of people promoting the concept, especially friends of the missionary community both in the U.S. and elsewhere, but you couldn't imagine a more hapless entity that an independent south. They'd be completely landlocked, and, while there was a potential for agriculture in the fertile flood plain of the Nile, there were no roads. Agricultural inputs would have been extraordinarily difficult to bring in and where would they ship their product from? We encouraged southerners to see their fate as tied to a moderate Islamic government in Khartoum as their best outcome ultimately.

Q: Did you receive delegations to the south and all?

WAUCHOPE: It was a very tricky business because we were developing a close relationship with Nimeiri, but we received some emissaries on behalf of these groups through missionaries. Likewise I believe our embassy in Nairobi had some contact with these groups as well. Because we wanted to keep tabs on them and you can't just ignore the missionaries either. They always have an influence. They also have knowledge on the ground that a few other people have. We were not unaware of these groups, but these were not at the forefront of our interests because this would compete with our regional strategic objectives. The southerners concerns fell very far short in terms our interest in supporting a moderate Islamic state, particularly given our concerns about Egypt and Libya.

Q: Well, was there sort of a feeling within the State Department, things were beginning to open up because we are talking about Sadat going to Israel, Camp David, you know, I mean it looked like you're going to end up with peace in the Middle East.

WAUCHOPE: Well, it's part of our considerations as what we wanted to promote modern governments and sustain them by giving them the economic wherewithal to keep their people happy, and the Nimeiri seemed to have the characteristics that we were looking for in that regard. He was not only a moderate, but a guy who understood the value of making peace even thought there were critics when he did. He was able to take them on. Essentially, he seemed to have all the apparent ability to bring about the economic development of his country. He was committed to the idea. All African leaders, to a certain extent or other, have this tremendous temptation to become corrupt. He seemed less inclined to give in to that than many of the others. His lifestyle was modest. Now, I'm not saying there wasn't some back channel of funds to him, but he didn't flaunt the fact that he was the chief of state. He was no Mobutu or anything like that. He seemed like just the kind of leader that we could work with. Other moderate leaders in the region also felt that was the case. As I say, the Saudis were big backers of Nimeiri and his approach to things.

Q: Did the Falashas come up at all while you were there?

WAUCHOPE: No, they didn't.

Q: You might explain who they are.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, the Falashas are the black Jews of Ethiopia. They became a concern to us when the socialists and Marxist Leninist government in Addis started considering them as potential subversives and they became quite harsh in dealing with them and then the Israelis were successful in getting the American Jewish community and the international Jewish community to support their cause. They were being subjected to human rights abuses and eventually there was an airlift to bring them out to Israel.

Q: But this was not on your watch?

WAUCHOPE: No. My two accounts, Sudan and Uganda, kept me plenty busy. The big issue in AF/E was the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict. The idea that the Soviets would aggressively assist Ethiopia militarily and that the Cubans would provide three brigades of infantry to fight a battle in Africa was a potential president for some very serious instability and great power conflict..

Q: But, who was the assistant secretary for African affairs at this time?

WAUCHOPE: Let's see, Schaufele was there initially, and he was replaced by . . .

Q: It was Dick Moose.

WAUCHOPE: That's right. That's quite a story in its own right, specifically regarding the F-5s for Sudan. Dick Moose, as people who were in the Department at that time recall, was appointed by the Carter administration first as the Undersecretary for Management and he filled that job for something like three months. Rumor had it, as it came down to us troops on the AF desks that his tenure as M had not been successful. He was reportedly asked by the Secretary what other job he would prefer in the Department. He had done a tour as, he was an O3 economic/commercial officer in Bangui, so he apparently asked for the African bureau, and that's where he ended up. Dick Moose came to the first staff meeting, and I remember this remarkably well, because it happened that he commented on something that I was right in the midst of. He was a true reflection of the early Carter administration. He was one of several former Foreign Service officers appointed to senior positions, Tony Lake being another.

Q: Jim Lowenstein.

WAUCHOPE: Right. They had all been critical of the Nixon administration's involvement in Vietnam, particularly over the Cambodian invasion. At various points they had resigned in protest, and now they were back. Moose was a reflection of that group. So, at the first bureau-wide staff meeting he attends, he outlines in this sort of touchy feely way, his view of what our policy to Africa should be. He was remarkable also for his penchant for wearing casual clothes. He would show up in blue jeans and a work shirt like shirt you get at Sears. We were amazed and amused. He said he thought that we ought to have a very interested and active, yet benign approach to Africa. We should be very concerned about the potential for further military takeover of governments. We ought to promote the democratic process and encourage democratic movements. Then he said we shouldn't be too quick to approve the sale of military hardware such as aircraft to areas in which they haven't before been introduced. So, here's the head of your own bureau saying that he has serious reservations about the F-5 program. The irony being, that, ultimately he signed on to the F-5 sale, seeing it as a modest contribution to regional stability. More ironic, toward the end of his tenure under the Carter administration, we were up to our ears in trouble in Liberia shoring up the Doe regime. He had to travel repeatedly to Monrovia and then to report to Congress saying we had to provide Samuel Doe more military assistance to fend off the Libyan backed subversive elements that are threatening his regime

Q: Sam Doe was not a pleasant person.

WAUCHOPE: No, he wasn't. We'll hear more about that because I was the DCM in Doe's waning years in Liberia. As I say, I had an excellent tour in AF/E, a good group of people, a lot of high profile issues that grabbed the attention of the front office and I had a great time. Lots of changes happened in my accounts during that time.

Q: Was there in the African bureau would you say that by this time the bloom was well off the rose, do you know what I mean? During the '60s Africa was, it was a new day dawning, fresh winds from the subcontinent and all that, were the African hands, were they realists, I mean, how would you describe them?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, well, it's an excellent question because we had evolved in our views. In the immediate post-independence period we had programs that were going to be responsive to the needs of all the countries. We set up embassies everywhere, and then after a while we saw the incredible inefficiencies of these governments, and we reduced the number of "focus" countries to ten, to include Nigeria. They got into some kind of a snit with us, and they told us we could take our AID and shove it. So, we were down to nine countries. Then we began to have a regional approach to aid, and we began to expand our activities, and have individual programs again. But the frustration, both on the economic development and the political levels, the civilian governments in the immediate post independence period were increasingly being replaced by military governments. The military governments showed themselves to be both ineffectual and corrupt. Eventually these leaders were pushed out either by other military leaders or by popular movements, which forced the military to cede power back to civilian authority. By 1977, the bloom was not only off the rose, we considered ourselves to be much more pragmatic about the African reality, but we still felt there was a lot of potential there. This potential was the tremendous amount of natural resources in the region. Even the Africans leaders themselves were beginning slowly to realize that you cannot just plunder these countries. Resources are finite, and now having squandered whatever they had inherited from the colonial powers, now was the time to start creating something on their own. We hoped that they could broaden economic development from a concessional approach, such as existed in Guinea where the American and multinational mining companies strip mined bauxite and exported it through its enclave port and contributed little to the regional economy. There should be a broader range of benefits available to Africans as a result of the capitalist corporations exploiting the natural resources, but no spreading the wealth. One contribution to that process would be in developing people of talent and ability who would then take over positions of responsibility in government and industry. Just the general lifting of all boats by the increasing the economic prosperity derived from exploiting these resources. We still believed that this was possible.

Now, at the same time, looking at Sudan in particular, our policy was also driven by external considerations, particularly Near East considerations. So, this concept of the "Breadbasket of the Arab world," which we promoted, we recognized was a long shot, but it was possible. If the Americans ran it, we could make it happen, but could the Sudanese make it happen? There was a good deal less optimistic on that score, but the concept was still valid. I remember Don Bergus talking about that and as a true Arab hand without any bleeding heart tendencies. He said if things go badly, the Sudanese can at least eat the wheat which they can't do with cotton. If they produce cotton they are completely dependent on world prices. He felt there was a logic shifting agricultural production in that direction even if it didn't have a great impact on Sudan's export market or in the Arab world. That made sense to me. They grew this long staple cotton, which is very desirable, but the prices were dependent on world production, the cost of inputs and weather. The Sudanese were completely vulnerable on this score. I think that we all learned a fair amount. While we were always a bit cynical, yet we maintained our optimism. Those of us in the African bureau in the '80s and later recognized that all the socialist models that Africans adopted post-independence were garbage and had set back Africa for years. At the same time the Soviet Union is falling apart, so that model crumbled. The stress was then on free enterprise and the democratic process and the benefits that derive from them. We began to evolve with this transformation, but we were still cynical, but optimistic and hopeful that good things could happen.

Q: It also represented one of the few places where we could kind of really do something. Because when you're looking at Europe or when you're looking Asia, there's not an awful lot you can do. Here you can sort of roll up your sleeves, very American. We can make a difference.

WAUCHOPE: Right. In addition, the cultural constraints that you find in regions such as Asia are not as strong in Africa. I remember when I was in Chad, we were tasked how do you get nomadic herders to commercialize their cattle? Their cattle were their wealth and their prestige. It was their Mercedes Benz. We explained to them that there was a market for their cattle in coastal Africa where you can't raise cattle because of the Tsetse fly. They would be willing to pay you good money for your cattle. The herders resisted. For them, every cow they had made them a more important person. How do you deal with that? That was about the worst of the cultural constraints we faced, and donors found a mechanism to get them to sell a small percentage of their herd by promising to decrease their losses from disease. The point is that in Asia you find yourself confronting several millennia of cultural constraints. We thought of Africa as a region where, given its struggle to find an identity and the continuing tribal conflict, if they could achieve a bit more prosperity and opportunity, and education for their kids, that we could offer formulas that would allow them to have those things, and that the tribal frictions would melt away over time if they could benefit from democracy and economic opportunity. There were many examples indicating that urbanization in Africa could lead to a breakdown in tribal conflict, but such integration was never complete. Tribalism was always a factor, always in the background, and if Africa is ever going to succeed, it's got to have viable institutions that transcend tribalism, and to be able to feed itself.

Q: '79, where did you go?

WAUCHOPE: '79, okay, I was in AF/E and Ambassador Ann Holloway who was a protï¿½gï¿½e of Andy Young, she ran in Andy Young's Washington office, told Dick Moose she needed somebody to go out as her DCM in Mali. Ann had actually been proposed for another African mission but insisted that she knew Mali was available and that's where she wanted to go because of its cultural uniqueness. It's known in French as "le berceau de la civilasation de l'Afrique de la Ouest," the cradle of West African civilization. Ann wanted to go to a place that was culturally interesting as well as politically active. They gave my name to her. I talked to her and said I'd be very interested in going. It was an O-1 level job. I was recently minted O-2, but I was married to a Foreign Service officer in my own right. I proposed that as a condition of accepting, we would have to see if there was some opportunity for my wife to work as well. Fortunately, there was a joint administrative office, JAO, which was staffed primarily by State officers. As such, my wife could work in that operation and we could have the necessary cutouts in terms of rating and reviewing officer. Ann said she thought that a JAO assignment could be worked out, and the deal was done.

I went to Bamako on the regular rotation in 1979. Pat Byrne was the outgoing Ambassador, and I replaced a fellow who I had actually worked for in Hong Kong. He had a very different management style than me. The most striking thing about Bamako was its very large AID mission for a relatively modest and low-profile post. Just to give you an idea, we had an AID program of $16 million and we had 42 direct-hire AID employees, plus seven regional employees that were based out of Bamako. On top of that, there were another 50 American and TCN contract employees. If you calculate out the cost to support an AID family in Bamako, it worked out to be more than half of the $16 million that was going just to the support of this bloated staff.

Q: This is a real problem, isn't it? The tale, which is an American tale, absorbs great majority of.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. Sure we are providing technical assistance to a certain extent, but in virtually every case these people are simply project administrators. None of the direct-hires lived outside the capital. They only occasionally traveled to the interior; perhaps two or three times a year. Their families all had to have proper accommodations, and that's fine, but when you calculate it out this cost was a very significant part of the whole USAID program. In terms of the material assistance, that was by far the lesser half of our assistance. In this instance the oversized mission was attributable to the AID mission director. He was a very aggressive administrator, a bureaucratic gamesman and a flat-out empire builder. For example, the regional AID office in Abidjan, REDSO, was supposed to support Bamako. Our AID Director demanded his own engineer, lawyer, etc. He had remarkable success in getting his own people on staff. The regional seven man office was related to a West African organization based in Abidjan, and they were supposedly providing technical assistance to the other member nations. Even so, 49 USAID direct-hires, when the State complement was about 19 is an exceptional situation. We had a Peace Corps program with staff and there were two people at the U.S. Information Agency. Otherwise the U.S. Mission was fairly standard for a Sahelian African post. The USAID mission was disproportionate, and it had its own office compound. In part, it was because the host government had shown a willingness to commit itself to economic development. Mali was certainly no great friend of the U. S., and its leaders had a socialist bias talking about sort of the revolutionary origins. They had close ties to the Soviets and other Bloc nations. It was generally moderate in its votes in the United Nations, which has always been a big factor in our presence in these posts. In any event, the USAID mission director was an FE-MC; I arrived as an FS-O2. In fact, there were 17 people at post who outranked me, and yet I was the DCM. Within six weeks of arrival I was the Chargï¿½, and served in that capacity for almost three months before Ann Holloway finally finished her processing and came out. In that interval there was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As Chargï¿½, I was instructed to go to the government, as were all chiefs of mission throughout Africa and all over the world to persuade the host governments to speak out against the Soviet invasion which was an egregious act of aggression. We thought the Third World's expression of condemnation would be very valuable. I went to see the foreign minister about it, and the foreign minister said, "You have to understand we're very distant from the scene of this issue, and we don't understand the complexities of it. It is not our traditional pattern to condemn these things." The fact of the matter was the Soviets were in Mali in substantial numbers. There were probably some 200 to 300 Soviets in the country. They had a large embassy; they had a technical assistance program; doctors and teachers in the school system. Mali was receiving a significant amount of support. We found out later that it was even more to it than that. The Foreign Minister temporized about any kind of statement; "We will consider your request. I'll talk to the president about it." A very frustrating exercise. About the third or fourth time that I had been to talk with him, I said, "You realize that if you cannot be more responsive to our request which is of great importance to the U.S., this may have an impact on our bilateral assistance program." He took that onboard and didn't comment much about it. I reported this to the country team at which only the Deputy USAID Director attended. The USAID director went ballistic. "You had no authority to threaten him with a cutback in the AID program. This is not your program, its AID's." I asked, "Why do you think we have an AID program here? We are not here solely to provide development to this country? USAID is part of our effort to support U.S. policy objectives in this country, and in this particularly instance the objective we're talking about here is getting him to speak out on this egregious act." He was livid about it, and I'm sure, as he threatened, he appealed to Washington about it. His protests went nowhere because he was wrong, and I was right. To go back to the AID program, we were involved in a number of projects. The Niger River flows through Mali and the agricultural potential there is reasonable for irrigation and production along the floodplain of the river. We were involved in several multinational projects of that sort, but the key constraint was that the Malians administrators were really not capable of carrying out what we had all agreed were the common objectives. The numbers of projects just multiplied and multiplied and I don't mean any disrespect of Pat Byrne, she's a great person, but frankly I don't think she monitored carefully enough what the USAID director was up to. At one stage I was traveling with her. We were in Mopti in the AID guesthouse there. She asked the deputy USAID mission director how many projects we had in Mali. He replied it was up to about 36 projects. She said "The last time I checked it was only 23 or so." This was indicative to my mind that she hadn't been keeping as close watch as she might on the burgeoning USAID empire. Of course, USAID also had the most senior of the Foreign Service Nationals at the top of the FSN pay scale, perhaps 12. At the embassy there were maybe two. After the USAID director moved on, in part we believed because Ann Holloway and I were increasingly demanding of project information, in part because he had been there for six years when I arrived and he'd already had a really good run. He had excellent accommodations. He had a massive staff. He had all the perks you could possibly want. He had had pretty much a free hand and then, all of a sudden, we began to ask a lot of detailed questions and he found this more and more uncomfortable and more and more annoying.

Q: In the first place you were there from 1979?

WAUCHOPE: To '81.

Q: To '81. When Ann Holloway came out, what was her background?

WAUCHOPE: Well, she had graduated from Bennington College. She had a Ph.D. from an institution in Philadelphia. She was a bright, capable sort of person. She had recently been divorced and she had her two daughters with her. She was very much into the African experience and culture. Her attitude reflected the attitude that Dick Moose had enunciated; activist and sympathetic, but not aggressive. She was inclined to accept Africans for what they are. During her tour in Mali, there was increasing political agitation against the government. Students were unhappy with the limited opportunities once they graduated. Like many African countries there were more graduates than jobs. They were frustrated and they took to the streets. By June they were creating rather major havoc and the military was turned out against them. The military handled them pretty roughly. Her relations with the government were tempered by our continuing effort to get out of the government an expression of condemnation vis-ï¿½-vis the Soviets in Afghanistan. Then there was the issue of boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics as a protest about Afghanistan. Again, we were under instructions to persuade the Malians not to participate. In fact, they didn't have a very large Olympic team. There were about six people of Olympic quality. The ambassador shortly after arrival was instructed to go talk to the president about the boycott. So, there was great fanfare and expectation because it was the first formal visit after she presented her credentials. The President's expectation was that we had yet another grand new program to propose to him. Instead she had to present him with the fact that we wanted him to boycott the Olympics and as we had asked other nations to do. I accompanied her to make her presentation. She was nervous and had a little trouble getting her point across. Her mastery of French was never that good. She made a labored effort. The President seemed agitated, and drew himself up, hesitated and said, "Je prends acte;" I take note of what you have to say. Nothing beyond that. He didn't say that we would consider it or discuss the merits. With that, the meeting came to an end and we were ushered out. The media's cameras were all out there expecting the announcements of new accord or assistance, but we said nothing. We left it to him to say how he wanted to handle this with his own press. But, that was not a particularly fortuitous start with the president, as you can imagine.

Q: Who was the president at the time?

WAUCHOPE: Moussa Traore, a former military officer who had come to power in a coup. Regrettably, his wife, who was part Lebanese, was known to be deeply involved in a range of corrupt activities. Among others was the government monopoly on the import of pharmaceuticals, which she ran. This was a money-making machine and she was the beneficiary, and he benefited ultimately as well. In part the students were angry that the economy was not going well, and they were unhappy about government corruption. So, they took to the streets. One day in June, Ann Holloway was out driving around the city and she saw a dump truck load of detained students being hauled off. They had been thrown into the truck, and the military got in and were pounding these kids with rifle butts. She witnessed that, and, all of a sudden, her attitude towards this government began to change. She realized that we really shouldn't be quite so sympathetic to the Malian government, as they were little better than thugs. Then she sent a telegram about the situation and it reflected her change of attitude. She proposed that we try to find ways to get Traore to reform. We ought to be helping to educate people who would possibly be alternates to Traore. But Traore was no fool. He was going to stay on top and anybody who was a real contender for power was sent out to the "brouse," or sent to the salt mines. He wasn't an extraordinarily repressive leader. His ultimate downfall years later resulted from his security forces refusing to fire on a mob of students, which led to his collapse. This occurred after he had directed them to set fire to a school full of students which killed a great number of children. After that his people went crazy, and the government fell.

During our time, the government was not easy to communicate with. You could talk with people who were supposedly responsible. Blondin Beye was the Foreign Minister; an opaque and cautious fellow. After Traore's government fell, he became a UN official of some note. He was involved in mediating in Angola I believe, and was killed in an air crash. You could talk to officials around the President, but Traore himself was really not very approachable. By comparison to my days as ambassador in Gabon where I could see Bongo virtually anytime if I had something important to say. Traore was the typical of Francophone African leaders, and none of the other ambassadors, with the obvious exception of the French, really had much access to him.

Q: What was the role of the French there?

WAUCHOPE: Well, it was significant, but not dominant. The French were principally concerned about maintaining a good relationship with their former colonies primarily to keep their finger on their pulse to make sure that they didn't go radical which could adversely impact French interest in the coastal African nations and in North Africa. Granted, they had more than enough problems with the Algerians and radical north Africans as it was, they didn't need turmoil in the Sahel threatening their more productive relationships with the Ivory Coast and Togo, for example. There were significant numbers of French counseilliers technique and teachers, and they made a significant contribution to the nation's stability and management. The Soviets, with their large presence, permitted the Soviet ambassador a fair amount of access to the chief of state or so it seemed. We knew the Soviet ambassador. He was a fairly reasonable human being. He was from Tajikistan; a Tajik. He had his issues with his own government sometimes. The Soviets were locked into a role in Africa not unlike ours, as they wanted to influence local events for international purposes, but had limited resources. So, they were able to pressure the Malians to avoid condemning their involvement in Afghanistan. The Malians did, in fact, send a delegation to the Moscow games. It turned out that their athletes were all being trained by the Soviets and the Soviets paid their way and provided accommodations in Moscow. They just couldn't turn it down. So, we lost that battle. It was probably a losing proposition from the beginning unless we were willing to pay for them to stay home. The Soviets had this massive Embassy compound with barracks-like staff accommodations; like low cost housing projects in the United States. Of course, they couldn't have any local staff because of security concerns, and they were all watching each other. They couldn't have any contact with Westerners unless it had been approved, except at the ambassadorial level. I had the good fortune of going to the Soviet ambassador's residence for the farewell luncheon for Ambassador Byrne and they really did put on the dog. They had their own dependents doing the serving, and they laid out this fantastic table. There was a phalanx of glasses at each setting. I'll never forget this; there was a tiny vodka glass on the right to the water glass to the white wine glass, the red wine glass, the champagne glass on the left. It was all this beautiful crystal. Contrary to protocol, our Ambassador was at the far end of the table she by the Soviet ambassador's wife. Ed Brynn and I were on either side of the ambassador. We got in a conversation with him about cars. He was quite pleasant and his French was quite serviceable. Every time they served a wine, the hosts would say, this is a Russian product. The champagne was from Georgia; "People tell us that it is better than the champagne made in France." The wines were all from Russia. Of course, the vodka, and they kept your vodka glass constantly full. At the end of the meal, they served something called Armeniac from Soviet Armenia. They said, "It's just the same as cognac. Some people say its better." It was terrible; execrable. We mentioned to the ambassador, with all this talk about all these superior Soviet products, we noticed that he drove a Mercedes. "Why don't you drive a Russian car?" He said, "Oh, no, we have excellent cars, but we want to be consistent with all the other ambassadors' cars; and they all have black Mercedes." By comparison our DCM vehicle was a God-awful mustard yellow AMC vehicle. It was on its last legs as it had flipped over several months before. So, we were no one to talk about our vehicles, I suppose. The Soviets were constantly in a panic that they would be compromised by the Westerners. Of course, we were always interested in getting Bloc diplomats to defect, which was the CIA's principal job.

Q: Yes, because basically that's what they did.

WAUCHOPE: That's right. If they didn't have that mission, we wouldn't have had agency people there. That wasn't just the Soviets, we were after the Chinese, Cubans and Eastern Europeans. Either they were aware of it, or they suspected it, as they were so constrained in their movements. When you could talk to these Soviets, they would tell you, "We like it here in Mali." Their conditions were pretty bad, all things considered, in Western terms. Nonetheless, it was better than life in the Soviet Union at that time. They wanted to stay on. They didn't want to get themselves in a compromising situation where they'd be sent back to the Soviet Union.

Q: So, you really end up with an aid mission that's there for its own benefit. I'm exaggerating. The Soviets are there because it's a good deal, I mean this is.

WAUCHOPE: Our bilateral relationship was in a holding pattern. Those nations represented in Bamako were there to see that things did not go against their interests; that's to say the French, the Soviets, and the Americans. While our assistance program had an idealistic dimension and we hoped to achieve reasonable development objectives, the size and scope was really driven by an empire-building mission director. It was well in excess of what we needed to maintain that basic watching relationship. After I left Bamako, "60 Minutes" with Leslie Stahl, did an expose on the waste in AID programs in Mali. CBS showed a whole parking lot of USAID-furnished vehicles that were broken down and rotting away. Of course, the lack of spare parts and maintenance was to blame, as well as management hubris. But there they were with the USA handshake symbol on them. So the USAID got its head scrubbed in successive years.

Q: When Ambassador Holloway came there, did you sit down and tell her your impression of AID thing?

WAUCHOPE: Oh yes. I said we have a real problem on our hands. Shortly after my arrival, while Pat Byrne was still there, I did my initial orientation to all U.S. activities. I went over to see the USAID mission director, Ron Levin, a name you may or may not have heard of; a world-class bureaucratic gamesman. He high-hatted me from the moment I walked onto his compound to the time that he dropped me off at the Embassy in his chauffeur-driven Peugeot 604 sedan, where he made a point of sitting in the right rear seat, the position of rank. After showing me all the things that needed to be repaired and upgraded in his kingdom as if I were his GSO, he allowed as how if I ever had any questions about the USAID mission, that I could just call his deputy and the deputy would give me a response. I was amazed and amused, so I talked to Pat Byrne and recounted the entire episode. I said "Can you believe this guy's gall?" To her eternal credit, she immediately said to her secretary, "Get Ron Levin on the phone; I want to talk to him." She said, "Now, Ron, you listen to me. I'm telling you how things are going to be. When my Deputy wants to find out something about what's going on in the USAID mission, he will call you, and you will provide him the information, is that understood?" "Yes, Madam Ambassador." So, while she was still there he had to bite his tongue. In the period that I was the chargï¿½, he refused to visit the Embassy or to attend the Country team meetings. He made a point of either being out of the country on some pretext, or he would just send his deputy. I assume that was because he outranked be, and he was certain he was superior to me in al things. The principal tactic USAID used to maintain its independence was to deny us the information we needed to know what their program was expected to achieve. The way USAID played the game there was to ensure that any policy documents like the country program plan, a 160-page largely unreadable document, which they were supposed to submit for COM review and approval would not be provided to the Embassy until the evening before it was to be submitted to Washington. While it was supposed to be signed off by the Ambassador, they would deliver it to the ambassador's office at 3:00 pm in the afternoon and say somebody was hand-carrying it at 6:00 pm to AID Washington. She had less than three hours to review it. I said to the ambassador if you let him get away with this, things will never change. You will never have a chance to have any input, to say nothing about asking him any questions about the program or the process. It was a constant struggle. Nonetheless, we figured out his game and did start asking questions. Major policy documents would not go out until the ambassador has had three days to review it. I just told him that's what the Ambassador wants. Such constraints on his long reign of unbridled empire building proved a sufficient nuisance that he asked to be transferred after seven years. He was transferred about a year after we arrived, apparently because the fun had gone out of the process for him. AID does some good work, but this situation was an example of the worst face of AID.

Q: Yes, and a system, you know, it was one that allowed for this unless there was very close supervision which.

WAUCHOPE: Levin was essentially a very capable guy. He was a bright, a graduate of Harvard Law, I think. He spoke 5/5 French. He was married to a Swiss-French woman and his French fluency was so superior to anybody else's in the mission, and he flaunted it to the fullest. He had a wide circle of contacts in the Malian government over the many years he was there. Many Malians viewed him as the representative of the U.S. and I am certain he did not try to disabuse them. The bottom line was that he viewed the program as his own, and not the United States government's. He would say as much. I tried to make the point that there were U.S. taxpayer dollars, and to remind him why we provide aid to these nations. There were those in AID Washington and many of his own subordinates were unhappy with the way he ran things. He had an iron fist over his own operation, and advancement went to those who were loyal to him and not to the most capable. Ultimately he overplayed his hand in Central America, and he got shoved out of AID.

Q: Well, during this time you were there from '79 to '81, we've talked about the AID thing, were there any other particular developments?

WAUCHOPE: Well, other than trying to get the Malians to support us on international issues against the Soviets, in which we had little success or no success on. The relationship remained cool as a result. The idea of further expanding our aid program or having any dramatic improvement in the bilateral relationship was unlikely. After the repression of the students, Ambassador Holloway was less inclined to promote closer ties. We maintained good relations with officials on an individual level, but we never made a breakthrough with the president. In fact, life in Bamako, was rather hard. You have to remember that this was the period following the great Sahelian drought of the early 1970s. The Malians had received a vast amount of assistance to deal with the drought. We wanted to try to provide some degree of food security so that the drought would never have quite the devastating impact that it did during that time. There was an area In Bamako south of the Niger River which was known as the quatier de la sechresse, the neighborhood of the drought. All the villas were built by officials who were beneficiaries of foreign assistance funds meant to relieve the drought. Instead of going to the people who had been impacted, they had been able to divert it to their own ends, and they built nice villas. Then they wanted to rent them to Westerners, and the U.S. Mission did rent a few of them. You'd see these tremendous cement villas and there were no roads between them. There was just a space remaining between them and that became the road. The other issue was the continuing crisis in the supply of electricity and water. The Canadians and the World Bank were completing a dam on a tributary of the Niger. There was to be a power line from the hydro plant to the capital. There was also an issue about completing the road to the dam. The Canadians were in charge of the power transmission line. They were remarkably efficient in this effort. The capital was dependent on the local generating plant for its power, but the city had grown more than double its designed maximum population. The infrastructure left by the French, and this is repeated all over former colonial Africa, was breaking down. 20 years is about the useful life of any capital equipment. Most African nations became independent in 1960, and the operative infrastructure, power and water plants, were not maintained as they had been by the colonial powers. As a result, Bamako would go for extended periods of time without electricity, in particular. When the electricity was down, the water pumping station didn't operate.

The ambassador and I lived in the Quartier de Fleuve along the river, as did a number of the senior government officials. So, our power and water service was generally better than others areas, but the rest of the mission was scattered throughout the city. We did have an effective generator program that could keep at least lights and one or two air conditioners going on in every house at night. There would oftentimes be no water. There was little we could do about that except set up a system to fill their rooftop water tanks. This situation wears down peoples' dedication and commitment to the mission. As the Deputy Chief of Mission, one of my principal responsibilities was to try to keep our people happy, and to deal with their complaints and concerns. We had an officer who was a pretty tough, experienced character who said, if we don't get power and water in the next two weeks, my wife and kids are going home, and he would leave as well. I said, "Look I'd love to be able to promise you it's going to get better, but I can't, and you know I can't." I was sympathetic as we had a baby in our house as my son Ian had been born in the U.S. in June 1980 and while I had been fortunate enough to return home to be with my wife for his birth, we both had some trepidation about bringing him back into that situation. Our community was constantly under these pressures. I remember a colleague of mine saying, he'd come home and ask his wife if there was any power today. Without power there would be no water. If she said there hadn't been any, he'd just drop his briefcase, take off his suit and shoes and jump directly into the swimming pool. He figured what the hell, what difference does it make when you get down to it? It was very demoralizing after a while. Reliable power was not available until after I left.

Ann Holloway arrived at in December of '79 and when the new administration came in January of '81. One of the very first things the Reagan team did in the transition was to identify the Carter-appointed ambassadors. They were going to be notified very quickly that they were out. Within three days of Secretary Haig being sworn in Secretary of State, the ambassador received a cable from him which she showed it to me. She said, "What do you think about this? What should I do?" The cable said, we appreciate your service to the United States government, and so on, and we would like you to wrap up your affairs in 15 days and turn over your mission to your Chargï¿½. I thought that was unbelievable. I had never heard of it being done in that short a period of time. I suggested that she send a reply saying that it would be detrimental to our bilateral relationship if she were forced to leave Bamako in only two weeks. Further , there are ongoing activities that require her oversight and participation, and she would need a minimum of 60 days to get things in order. So, we drafted a telegram along these lines. They responded giving her a month to leave. So, 30 days later she was gone and I was the Chargï¿½ then from late February until I left in July.

One of the early requirements in the Reagan era was to sell the Africans on the idea that U.S. Africa policy under the Reagan administration was going to be equally as concerned as its predecessor although all the statements being made in Washington belied that. In particular, we were asked, as part of the USIA program, to invite key Malian leaders to my residence to show them a tape of the confirmation hearing of Secretary Haig. When, the Senators asked about Africa, his response essentially said the U.S. sees the region as a battleground of the Cold War. Well, our script told us to persuade Africans that we were interested in the Africans for themselves and not as a factor in the East-West struggle. We were still going to try to provide development, but that there would probably be a greater emphasis on their willingness to support American views, particularly democracy and free enterprise, read capitalism. We made that presentation and they listened respectfully. They responded, your Secretary said that Africa is a battleground and we don't want to be a battleground between East and West. We have our agenda, our own concerns about development and you are essentially reducing us to a role we don't want. We would like you to tell Washington that we don't appreciate that. We told Washington that and it didn't get us anywhere. We continued to peddle this line, but assistance levels were on the decline. Our programs were beginning to wind down, either running out of funds or failing to meet the objectives that they were intended to achieve.

The relationship cooled further. We tried to sell this idea that we were equally as engaged as we had been in the previous administration. It simply didn't fly. To some extent the Soviets and the French gained on us in this time, not that there was much to be gained.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop.

WAUCHOPE: Okay.

Q: You left there in '81 and whither?

WAUCHOPE: We went back to Washington and I was working in Personnel. I was chief of African assignments in PER/CDA, which turned out to be a surprisingly good job.

Q: Good, well, we'll talk about that next time.

WAUCHOPE: Okay.

Q: Okay, today is the 29th of August 2002. Keith you were in Personnel from when to when?

WAUCHOPE: From '81 to '83, I was in PER/CDA/AF responsible for staffing the African bureau, the INR bureau and the Administrative bureau. We were called assignment officers, and there were the CDOs, career development officers were responsible to find job for their clients. It was our primary job was to find the right people to serve in Africa and the AF bureau. INR was sometimes difficult to staff. A was more a matter of finding the right specialist at the right time. But, AF was not considered a highly a desirable area to serve, which was a mistake because, in point of fact, it was a very interesting area. Under the Open Assignments process, we had to work with those who had bid on our positions. Often AF and INR jobs would go underbid or unbid, and we'd have to come up with creative ways of attracting people. Of the five regional assignment offices, we always had to try harder. We had to run hard in place just to keep up, and we did. We manipulated and we used every mechanism we could to try to increase our chances of getting the right people.

Q: Let's talk about manipulating your chances. Tell me down deep and dirty.

WAUCHOPE: Okay. Well, one of the things we tried to do was to persuade people that service in Africa would be beneficial because they would have a level of responsibility superior to that they would have in any other regions because the jobs would be rated at the FS-03 level, but you were really doing the work of a FS-02 or above. They would have large FSN staffs and extensive responsibilities, particularly in the administrative area. As a reporting officer, they would oftentimes be the sole reporting officer other than Embassy management itself. This would get them some profile in Washington and give them a leg up on your competitors in other regions. Further, we would write to the Ambassadors and DCMs to say it was very important that they see to it that their evaluations of their personnel be of the highest quality. We weren't asking them to write outstanding evaluations for people who don't cut it, but they should give full credit for their subordinates' efforts. They were reminded that AF was in competition with the other regional bureaus when it comes to promotion and their records should look strong and credible and give full play to the difficult circumstances under which they operated. We also persuaded the leadership of the African bureau to assist us in arranging good onward assignments for people who've done time and performed well in Africa, and that they prevail on their colleagues and friends in other bureaus to see to it that our people who wanted to take a tour outside of Africa have a chance at good jobs in other bureaus. We would also follow up and help them through that process. These were the more overt ways in which we'd try to do make AF competitive. The more sub rosa, if you will, ways were that we constantly tapping the grapevine for potential candidates for AF. As we knew about the openings and we started penciling in candidates before the cycle began. Then we filled the initial wave of jobs for which we had an adequate numbers of bidders. One of the things that AF could offer that other bureaus couldn't was that AF had some 42 missions, we could offer DCMships at a relatively early stage in a career, at the FS-02 and 01 level. These offered great opportunities for management experience, which was considered virtually essential at that time for officers seeking promotion. The senior threshold concept was coming into existence and PER was proposing six different requirements that individuals would have had to fulfill for the Senior Foreign Service. They included resource management and supervision, personnel supervision, and DCMships would offer those skills. What we would do was not only play that card to attract good, competitive, qualified DCMs, but also, to persuade more junior officers that this was an option that was going to open for them if they did good time in Africa, and if they did well in it in those jobs. That was one of the ways we'd try to entice people to serve in AF. Of course, there's the constant process of networking within the bureau and outside the bureau with your colleagues in other assignment offices, and there was a fair amount of horse-trading. To give you a specific example, I was driving into work one morning and I had heard that the government in Sri Lanka had PNG'd an American political officer there. We were in need of a desk officer in particular in AF/W, and I wondered who this individual was. No name was given on the news broadcast. I worked very closely with Len Shurtleff who, as you know, is an old Africa hand serving as the deputy executive director in AF. He was able to find out from NEA who this officer was. We immediately got a hold of him and made a pitch to him for and AF job, and wrapped him up even before he'd left Sri Lanka.

Q: Who was this?

WAUCHOPE: Ken Scott, a real good officer. He served us well on a number of other positions in AF. He had a general interest in Africa, but we were the first to make the offer.

Q: An ambulance chaser comes to mind.

WAUCHOPE: Pretty much. There was an element of that. As I said, we really had to hustle to get people to serve in our positions because what we could offer was primarily those supervisory opportunities, but not the fleshpots that EUR or EAP could offer.

Q: One of the things, my particular career profession was consular. In Africa it seemed like there wasn't much in the way of moving up because once you reached a certain mid-career level, there really were all these countries requiring relatively low-ranking consular officers.

WAUCHOPE: This is true. There were a very few senior consular positions. There were a number of other constraints other than the perception of the backwardness of the African countries. While Americans were deprived of cultural opportunities, of greater concern were issues of climate, health and education for the children. Children's education was a severe problem for AF because we were looking for more senior and more experienced administrative officers, in particular. The administrative function in Africa is much more important than it is in other regions of the world, given the lack of infrastructure and goods and services. We had to build our own infrastructure and establish a level of maintenance to be able to function. These support operations were really quite impressive. They included generating electricity for our residences and providing water as well as maintaining their homes, travel and other services because none of that existed in the market beyond. So, we wanted more experienced and talented admin people. The problem was the more experienced they were, the more likely they were to have kids of high school age and at that time there were only five accredited high schools in all the African posts. This meant the separation from their teenage kids, which was for many parents very difficult. They were given an allowance to send their kids to private school in the United States or Europe, and the allowance was quite generous. Even in those days in the $22,000 to $25,000 a year range, but it did mean that they would be cut off from their children at a critical stage in their development. They'd see them in the summer and at Christmas, but that was it. If the kids had emotional or educational development problems, there would be a disinclination to accept an AF assignment requiring separation.

Subsequently, of course, several of those five high schools were closed. Maybe those in Nairobi and Pretoria are still functioning. The ones in Kinshasa and Liberia have closed down. The one in Nigeria may not still be accredited. We were constantly trying to figure out what we could do to meet the need for administrative officers. You could get bright, young officers in any of these functions and they could do a good job, but experience was important. It was also important in the administrative function for such things like how to build an operating budget and how to get the best out of your resources. At least the African bureau had a reputation of being very strong in administrative management and very supportive of its people in the field. They had very active and experienced people working in AF/EX. They also had some really good executive directors for the bureau. They understood right away what the bureau needed, that they had to work hard just to get the resources and use them wisely. They had an excellent permanent GS staff who did a really bang up job. Everybody said they've got the best support they've ever had from the AF bureau. That was an incentive to serve in the region. But it was a constant struggle.

The most enjoyable part of working in CDA was that you learned a vast amount about how Personnel really works when it comes to assignments, and assignments are the key to promotion and advancement. No one should delude himself about it. Getting a good competitive job is a key ingredient in your moving forward in the Service. Not all officers are motivated by career advancement. There were family considerations, health considerations and financial considerations. When it came to advancement AF could attract these young, dynamic officers to take our positions. We did quite well at that time. It did require the intervention and sometimes the active efforts of recruitment by members of the AF bureau in Washington, who made phone calls and explained about the jobs. We took the fullest advantage of international communications, such as they were at that time, to try to persuade people to serve in the AF. You also had to know a good deal about personnel regulations. One of the refinements about the Open Assignment process was that a job that had three or fewer bidders was designated as a "hard-to-fill." The bureau that had such jobs, and AF had plenty, had priority of snagging whoever had already bid on that job. So, you could wrap them up before they knew what happened. Everybody had been told that any job you bid on, you could be assigned to, no matter what the priority that you put on that position.

We didn't want somebody who wasn't going to be happy in an AF job, but, at the same time, we had to push pretty hard to get people to accept assignments. Oftentimes they would come to accept these assignments reluctantly, and then they'd look back it and they'd say "That was a fantastic job for me, and my family prospered, we had excellent housing, our health concerns proved unfounded."

In the CDA assignment system, the real fun was the inter-functional panel. It met every Friday morning, and you geared up for it most of the week. These were usually the best jobs in the assignment cycle. They were the DCM jobs, and the jobs that went beyond cone, and they included all the senior positions. There was a lot of competition for these jobs, and every CDA office had to submit an agenda of whom they proposed to assign to what job. The agendas had to be submitted on Thursday and they would be compiled into a master agenda, and then distributed. There were 12 members of the IF panel chaired by the director of CDA who was the tiebreaker only. Each agenda item was then read to the panel as they went around the table. If there were no problems with it the assignment, it would be formally paneled. If someone asked to put a hold on it, each office had two weeks to renegotiate because they had a candidate for the job or they wanted that candidate for a job of their own regional bureau. There was a lot of enjoyable interplay and bantering back and forth in these sessions. It was my sense that this was as fair and open a process as you could devise. The issues were how the agenda was developed, and the horse-trading to get it done. There would be tradeoffs and you'd say I won't put a hold on your candidate if you'll support mine. There was also a fair amount of openness in terms of deciding or debating an assignment. If a question were raised while you were going through your agenda and they'd ask why are you assigning so and so there? You had to be prepared to say, well, he's an officer at the grade, he's had experience in this area and his has linguistic skills, a 3+/3 in Spanish say. You had to explain the rationale for the assignment and it had to make sense to your colleagues who were pretty savvy people. Sometimes we felt that EUR had the inside track on all assignments as they made a lot of assignments before the jobs came to panel. Sometimes they did it before the open assignments cables went out, as they had already lined up people for jobs. We'd see these stretch assignments or where people didn't have the required linguistic skills. Then we'd put a hold on the assignment or we'd vote it down, we'd flat out vote it down. There was considerable enjoyment in shooting down EUR assignments. Next thing we'd know, the assignment was directed by the Director General. There was occasional resentment from senior management in those highly desirable bureaus who felt, "Who are these people in the personnel system who are telling us we can't have so and so?"

Q: Well, I imagine there is a certain amount of you know, trying to knock them down in the line. Fair enough in the system where there is supposed to be about fairness.

WAUCHOPE: Right. What used to happen was, for example, we'd get a directed assignments which meant that the Director General would order, so and so to be assigned to certain post. CDA was reduced to being a rubber stamp. There was a great resentment in CDA about these kinds of assignments. For example, an ambassador chose a DCM, who was a four-grade stretch in a European post. It was a very, very controversial case at that time.

Q: Who was that?

WAUCHOPE: This was Switzerland as a matter of fact.

Q: It's always Switzerland.

WAUCHOPE: It's always a very nice place. The assignment absolutely stunk and virtually everybody knew the real story. There was a fair amount of resentment, but the deal was done. If that's what the Director General directs, case closed. We could give the 6th floor a sense of the panel through the director of CDA requesting that he raise it with the Director General that the IF panel disagreed with the assignment. So, from time to time we'd be able to voice our unhappiness about some of these concerns. The IF panel included Senior officers assignments, of course, and JO's, you had.

Q: JO's meaning junior officers?

WAUCHOPE: Junior officers, right, and you had senior officers, SO, and then you had the CDO's for the four functional cones, and the five regional assignment officers and finally the office continuity employment. It basically had to do with diversity and EEO concerns. Very good people filled this position and they did a very credible job of to maintaining reason and balance in the IF panel's deliberations. They all had a vote and we had to be persuaded that assignments were right and fair, and made sense as well. Overall, it was a very enjoyable two years. I worked very closely with Jim Bishop who was the deputy assistant secretary responsible for AF staffing. We went over virtually every assignment in the Bureau for the entire two years that I was there. We would scrutinize that candidates for DCM, POL and ECON officer, senior ADMIN officers and senior Consular officers, to make sure they were the people who could do the job. We had an excellent group of people in the AF bureau. The AF bureau, unlike other bureaus, considered the assignment officer position in CDA as an important job, and both my predecessor and successor went on to become Ambassadors in Africa.

AF really put serious emphasis in getting the right person into that CDA/AF position. Somebody that would hustle and who understood the region and the kind of people it needed. I don't know that that continued to be the case in recent years. AF desk officer jobs are sometimes hard to sell because there is a lot of routine work, and yet there is always a lot going on. When I was in AF/W, we called it the office the "Coup of the Month Club." There was always some government being overthrown. Desk officers could always anticipate diverse challenges in these positions, and they always got a trip to the region. The downside was that, if they were not persuaded that they wanted to serve in Africa, these could lead to an African assignment, and some had some hesitation about that. To fill these positions we made a conscientious effort to assign more consular and administrative officers as desk officers. The other bureaus, having significant numbers of bidders on all their jobs, could easily take just ECON and POL officers. We tried to spread the net wider to attract officers in other cones because, even if they just go back to those functions and don't go into the multifunctional cone, they would still have very valuable insights into the policy side and have an opportunity to broaden their perspective, and their career their horizons, as well. We also made a point of also getting females into positions of responsibility. For this effort, Len Shurtleff and I shared the Department's EEO Award in 1983. We were recognized for our success in assigning minorities and females into positions with supervisory responsibility. AF had a substantially larger percentage of female DCMs than other bureaus. We would also counsel candidates going beyond the advice of their own CDO. The CDO job was to get their people assigned. They would try to persuade the assignment officers to accept their candidate. If we were not absolutely persuaded, we could take out the candidate's performance file (OPF) and review it. You soon learned how to read OPFs for what they really said. If we still not enthusiastic about the candidate, we might bargain to get another officer in the economic cone to fill this job, then perhaps accommodate the CDO's candidate for another position they were looking for. There was always certain amount of horse-trading in the process. In some cases candidates would come straight to the assignment officers and say, "I understand there is this job, what are my prospects?" This face-to-face contact did make a difference. You say networking disadvantages some, but that's how things work.

Q: Well, yes, we're talking about, if you see somebody and you talk to them. For one thing, they used the initiative to get there.

WAUCHOPE: That's true. It happened in particular in a case in which a DCMship was coming up in coastal West Africa, and there was a slate of candidates. We always had a fairly lengthy slate for DCM jobs as opposed to most of our other positions. By regulation, we had to do was to prepare a list of candidates for the ambassador and the slate reflect the Foreign Service by gender and race. The slate had to have a minimum of three, and usually five or six candidates. In this instance, we sent out the slate and the ambassador called me, and said, "What do you think about these candidates?" I said, "Well, there are two people who are really pretty good," but one of them had come by to see me and he seemed like a bright, capable individual and showed a fair amount of initiative. I said, "If I were to choose I'd choose this fellow." My choice got the job and went on to a great career in the Foreign Service, becoming an ambassador in his own right. What can I tell you? When I was in performance evaluation in the early 1990s, I used to brief all the incoming A-100 classes. I would tell them you have to look after yourself. We have a system and we have procedures, but you have to look after your own interest. You have to go out and find out about jobs and you've got to talk to people about jobs and show your interest in the opportunities. That's reality, whether you like it or not. With the open assignment concept which came into operation in the early '70s, available positions were known to everyone and you could learn the content of the job, its availability, the grade, the tour of duty and the language requirements You could bid on a minimum of six, max 15, and you could then monitor as they were filled. They refined this procedure, such as how many people had bid on the jobs. So, you had a reasonable sense of what your chances were. But the Open Assignment process doesn't eliminate the necessity for showing the initiative and expressing the interest in a position by talking to the supervisor, finding more details about the content and demands of the job. When people did that, they tended to get the job. In the assignment process, there was supposedly a creative tension between the assignment officers and the CDOs, which is to say the AOs had the jobs and CDOs had the bodies. The game was to put the two together for the benefit of the bureaus and the individuals. There was a sense that the people that controlled the jobs had much more influence than the people who controlled the bodies because the CDOs clients who were more competitive usually found their own jobs. The CDOs focused their energies and attention on the people who were the least competitive for positions. That's where they spent the great bulk of their time. Whereas, on the assignment side we had the jobs, and with the DCM positions in particular, we had something really tangible to offer. We had the ability to pick and choose which gave us the balance of power. PER tried to redress this some years later when they did away with assignment officers, and returned to the way it had been before when the regional bureaus controlled the jobs. They then made those jobs available to the CDOs in CDA, and the assignments were made by them. Now, it has changed back.

Q: Tell me, how did you deal with, say the lower 20% or so. I mean the people who are considered all right otherwise, technically they'd be out, and some of these people you couldn't get rid of?

WAUCHOPE: The people we called assignment problems; were those with chronic assignment problems. Often they would not take jobs that were appropriate for them because they thought there were better things in prospect for them if they waited longer. They waited and waited, and in many cases they simply were not competitive and their CDOs would not lay it out in black and white how limited their assignment prospects really were. What we used to do, as we controlled the positions, was to acknowledge that we had an obligation to take some of these people. You simply had to take a certain percentage of these people. What we tried to do in AF is to place them in a position where they would be supervised by somebody with more experience. They might be the number two or three political officer in a large political, economic or consular section. This approach would look after the interests of the post and the bureau, but also look after the interest of the individual. They would get the kind of supervision that they would need. There were chronic assignment problems that would go from one cycle to the next. They would be placed on over-complement or assigned to some temporary position. On occasion, the CDO would say to the assignment officers, this individual could be persuaded to retire, given their age and grade. They just needed to be nudged or even pushed in that direction. They looked to the AF bureau, which had a number of very unattractive posts, to come up with a job that was so odious that it would force people to seriously consider retirement.

We did that once with a job in Guinea-Bissau, which is a pretty horrible place. We offered this job for this purpose, and CDA got several people to retire rather than take it. If they reach a point where if they won't take assignments, their CDO can put them up for a directed assignment, which is to say they are compelled to take what the system offers. They can appeal it, but it has to be a substantive appeal based on why it wouldn't make sense to be assigned to that position. That happened very rarely in the two years that I was in CDA.

We had one case in which an individual who was to be forced assigned as a communications officer to Kampala. He said he absolutely couldn't go. He explained all his incredibly dreadful circumstances. Both he and his wife had medical problems, his parents were aged with serious medical problems, and one was terminally ill. The management of the communications bureau and the Director General's office wanted to go the mat to get this job filled. It was a job that was very difficult job to fill. Kampala in these days after Idi Amin's fall was chaotic and dangerous. Finally, they paneled the assignment forcing this guy to go. By this time his wife was severely ill. His father had died and his children had some sort of educational developmental problems. Then when he took his medical exam he failed, and so he got out of the assignment anyway. So after six months of effort the forced assignment failed. It was only pursued in extraordinary cases. For example, there was a second tour junior officer who was assigned to Buenos Aires during the Falkland Islands war. Embassy Buenos Aires needed American consular officers to help the Americans leave Argentina. There was hostility against Americans because of our friendship with the British. After many efforts to appeal the assignment, this candidate was told by his CDO, speaking for the CA and ARA bureaus, he must depart on this date and must arrive directly. He failed to depart as instructed. Finally, he was told by CDA to either depart on this date and arrive on a Monday, or he was out of the Foreign Service. The guy did depart on Monday, he arrived in BA on Wednesday. He felt so insecure that he booked himself out on the next flight and returned to the U.S. The case came before the IF panel and when they heard the whole story, they pulled the plug on this guy and he was forced out of the Service. Clearly, you can't have that kind of thing when you need people.

Q: Well, one of the things I've talked to some of the people, ambassadors, who dealt with particularly in Israel and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. There were a number of cases of people who really I'm trying to think of a nice way to put it, but chickened out. I asked what happened afterwards, well, the system really didn't do much about it. A certain amount of I won't say bravery, but intuitiveness, you kind of do it, you might feel insecure and you don't have to put your family through that, but it's like being a soldier. If you're essentially, I mean if there's a streak of cowardice there, you should recognize this and say, fine, go be a stockbroker or something like that. I'm not sure.

WAUCHOPE: Right. At the time I served in personnel, there was a strong sense of that since we were all subject to these kinds of assignments, where you couldn't take your family, or where there was a physical risk, everybody should share the risk of such assignments. This sense of dedication was why they were so determined not to let this guy off the hook, the more so because he was a junior officer and really hadn't paid his dues. In this case, he did follow through and made it stick. Inevitably people have found ways to dodge difficult assignments, but there was a general sense and we are all in this together. We all are subject to the kinds of assignments that you would not be enthused about taking, but you are obliged to accept if that's the way it works out. Management would show some flexibility in staffing particularly difficult posts, offering one-year, unaccompanied tour recognizing that it would work a great hardship on one's family. Either the central system or more likely the regional bureau would offer two R&R's in a one year period, finding a mechanism to do that and then fund it. If it was important enough to get the position staffed, they would make arrangements to make it happen. The individual was encouraged to negotiate with the Department on the terms by which he would accept such an assignment. I don't know if that is still the case, but to my mind, a personnel system must show some suppleness so it can bend to the circumstances as they are, while capitalizing on the common sense of dedication and responsibility we all have. As they say, if we're in the Foreign Service, you should expect serve a majority of our time overseas. That's what it's all about, and officers know, that is the way it has got to be ultimately. While I was in CDA, they changed was the eight-year rule to the five-year rule for continuous service in the U.S. There was an appeal process, and certain automatic waivers. Some related to the position that one currently encumbered, such as special assistant or a deputy assistant secretary, or positions requiring unique or special skills. One could apply for an extension based on compassionate reasons such as family health issues, or children's educational. The committee would review them and make a determination. In some cases, it would make some sort of compromise as to what was acceptable, or it decided if the person wouldn't take the overseas assignment, they were forced to resign or retire. I am not suggesting that this process was flawless, but it did give CDA some power to move out those who no longer wanted to serve overseas.

Q: One of the sort of the corridor things I've heard from various officers, I have never experienced myself, about somebody who was just doing a rotten job. They really wrote them up; at least they said they wrote them up, yet they still hung on. Often or at least sometimes the cases that would come to mind would be somebody who was probably of a minority and who had claimed discrimination and everybody they went they were a problem and trouble for everybody. God, don't get so and so because it's just trouble, you're going to spend all your time and they didn't produce. Now, I don't know whether these are real people or I mean just the story that goes around. But, did you run across that?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, there were employees who were truly chronic problems. What we used to say in personnel was, if you can remember somebody's name from a previous assignment cycle, they were probably a problem case. They were being considered late in the cycle and you'd hear this name over and over being proposed for this job and they'd turned it down. The CDO would propose an assignment for them or asking for somebody to think of an assignment appropriate for a certain individual. The reality was that there may have been higher percentage of minorities in that situation, but there were plenty of non-minorities who were assignment problems, I can assure you. They were just difficult people. They were people in some cases who deluded themselves about what their career prospects really were, and there were others who just didn't get it. They couldn't get along with people. They were burned out or just not energetic enough. Their ability to draft was weak, etc.

I remember we had a Hispanic officer who had been sent for a year's university training in composition and drafting in English. After that he still didn't draft well. In a Hispanic environment he did great contact work, but he also had to write reports in clear English and he still couldn't do it. Then the question was what do you do with an individual like that? So, the IF panel, which has the obligation and the authority to do this, instructed the CDO to talk to this individual and tell him that unless he can master this skill within a specified period of time, he has no future in the Service. Drafting, he was an economic officer, is critical to the process.

We had positions in INR, which was not considered a mainstream bureau and was not particularly highly regarded. Officers wanted to be in the operational side of the Department, and this was the analytical side. It had something of a mixed reputation, and some officers took refuge there. Other people saw opportunities to do just a two-year learning assignment in INR working on the region of interest, and then shooting back into their regional bureau. INR had jobs on the economic side, but I must say candidly INR's economic office was probably one of the weakest offices in the econ function. We ended up assigning people who had not performed well in the field or in the EB bureau into the INR economic staff. These jobs were underbid and the people who staffed them were not very competitive officers.

The failing lies primarily with the drafters of the EERs. The raters just simply didn't bite the bullet and tell the rated officer the way it is. In addition, in those days, we selected out only a very small number of people. As a result, it was very unlikely that the non-performers would be removed from the system.

Another aspect of the two-year assignment in CDA was that you could promise a person virtually anything. "If you take this tour and do well, in two years you'll come back and by God the Bureau will give you a really good job. Well, you're going to be gone in two years because assignment officers and the CDOs always moved on and did not extend. In AF we did try to institutionalize personnel management it so that the bureau developed a collective memory about the people who had performed well and the promises to a large degree could be fulfilled.

Q: Putting people from "the other agencies" in some of these jobs, did that sort of screw things up or not?

WAUCHOPE: It did. I can speak from both the personnel assignments side, but also from the operational side in the field. From the assignment side, the problem was that these jobs would appear on the microfiche staffing patterns and people would assume that they were available. They would inquire about them, and you would have to say, no, that job is not available even though the TED would show 08/82 when in reality it wasn't really available. It did screw things up, and it risked the possibility of compromising their peoples' cover. If the agency wanted to have them under the embassy cover, they had to appear on the staffing pattern or the FSNs would think something was fishy about their status. We'd have to send messages back to bidders by DIRGEN channel, Director General channel and say that it was not an available position. Operationally, these arrangements were seldom very satisfactory for the Embassy. When they used consular positions for cover, by agreement, they were supposed to devote a minimum of 30% of their time to those cover positions. To be a consular officer, as you know, you're administering the law; you can't just play the regulations by the seat of your pants. You have to know the regulations and when you don't know the answer, you check the regulations. Often that didn't occur and it proved embarrassing and not helpful to our interests. It is unfortunate that it worked out that way.

Q: Well, then in '83 you're off to where?

WAUCHOPE: One of the things they used to say about assignments in PER is, you help your friends, you screw your enemies and you get yourself a good onward assignment. So, I got a good onward assignment. I went to Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School for a year in senior training. There were three academic positions available. One was at Harvard, one at Stanford and one at Princeton, but it hadn't been active for several years. There had been one economic and Middle East specialist at Princeton the preceding year, but they hadn't had someone as a mid-career fellow for several years. I made some inquiries and found out that it hadn't been staffed, but it did exist. It turned out that Art Tienken, who was head of CDA and DCM in Addis when I was in Asmara, was a Princeton graduate and he thought that was very commendable to restore an active position there. The other options were the National War College and other Defense training slots. I really wanted a break, to get out from under the AF bureau, in which I had served almost continuously since my first assignment in Chad back in '69. Princeton gave me that opportunity. My wife was a consular officer, and was working in CA. Our oldest son, who had been born in 1980, was about three years at this point. So I moved to Princeton and lived in the junior faculty housing. We maintained a house in Alexandria as well and I did a fair amount of traveling back and forth. It wasn't so bad.

The program at Princeton was an excellent. I truly enjoyed it. I took courses at the graduate level at the Woodrow Wilson School. It offered four different disciplines; international economics, public administration; international development, and local government. It was an absolutely superb program with world-class scholars. I took classes for credit and I took a full load, five courses each semester, with plenty of papers. I took only one course that was related to Africa, and the rest of them were on the Near East and economic and global politics. It was very loosely monitored by the Department. A representative PER's long-term training office visited twice a year to see how you were doing. Basically you're on your own. They pay your tuition and give you an allowance for housing, which was almost adequate, and they pay for any school supplies that you need. It gives you a chance to expand your horizons, which I tried to capitalize to the fullest. The program organizers arranged a session once a week for Humphrey fellows and the mid-career fellows, and invited guest speakers to talk on a range of subjects. There were three other mid-career fellows; one from AID, one from Treasury and one from the Library of Congress. Princeton can attract the most spectacular guest speakers. Talk about networking. Of course, George Shultz is a Princeton grad.

Q: I must say on this, Harvard, Yales, they kind of come and go, but I mean once a Princeton grad, always a Princeton grad and they look after each other.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, they network the bejesus out of the system. Ever since my year there, every year I receive a form to fill out giving the position I was currently occupying, in hope that I can help out a Princeton grad student. Sure enough, when I was Ambassador in Gabon, I had Princeton grad students come out to do a summer internship both years, and they were superb. They were bright, and a real asset to the mission. It's not just the usual harassing you for contributions, Princeton wants tangible assistance for their students and graduates. I graduated from Johns Hopkins and they had had nothing comparable to Princeton.

In my second semester at Princeton I decided to branch out a bit. I took four more courses in international affairs, economics and domestic policy, and I also did a course in the history of architecture. I always wanted to learn more about architecture.

Q: Oh, yes.

WAUCHOPE: I just audited that course. It was about the history and philosophy of architecture and taught by a very bright fellow from the Princeton U., not the Woodrow Wilson School. I really enjoyed the time I spent there. It opened my mind; we African types do tend to become increasingly concentrated on that region of the world to the exclusion of other parts of the world. For example, the invasion of Grenada took place and Professor Gilpin asked us about the legality of American action. Remarkably, none of us thought in terms of legality, but focused rather on the policy implications of this action. All Woodrow Wilson School students had to have at least four years of practical experience after graduating from undergraduate school to qualify, and they had some extraordinarily bright people.

There were a number of military officers from all the services taking the full two-year masters program. When asked about what our reaction to the invasion of Grenada, they provided a lot of tactical and strategic considerations, but no one put their finger on the legal aspects of the undertaking. The legal justification was that the Eastern Caribbean Coalition supposedly had asked us to intervene? Well, it was very evident that we had essentially created this coalition and it generated the request for our intervention. The professor wanted to point that out, "Well, you've given me all kinds of explanations from a strategic military or tactical perspective, but what about the legal, what about the precedent that this establishes?" He had a point. We should be putting that issue front, as it is especially relevant to this Iraq initiative that is on the table at the moment. This discussion opened our eyes to that aspect. I was at Princeton in the days of the Reagan administration, and Princeton's drawing power exposed us to a character responsible for one of the most intriguing activities I had ever heard of. He was a professor from Western Michigan University and his specialty was to take important political issues and the President's available time and parse the two out to the maximum advantage of the administration. He did what he called "programming the asset," the asset being Ronald Reagan. Based on feedback from polls that were continuously being conducted, they would determine what was important to his political agenda and how much of the president's time should be allocated to that issue, be it the Boy Scouts or a winning sports team or whatever, or on issues of education or health. They would collate polling information and feed it to the president's handlers and schedulers, recommending that he devote more time to a certain issue and less to another. He said they'd been doing this from the time that Reagan took over in 1981, and they'd had great success. Reagan was remarkably well received by the American people in part because of these people working in the back room working to make the President look good. One of the professors, Gilpin, who found this fellow to be just too smug, said, "Well, you seem to have had this process very well planned all the way through. Did you plan for the recession of 1982-83?" The guy just fell silent, and then said, "We didn't actually plan for that." So much for planning everything! The Reagan man was apparently disengaged about how they performed their image magic. What this demonstrated was that the stature of the President had little to do with his achievements, but more a matter of how to manage his image to keep his ratings up by programming him time. This individual had a good run with the Reagan administration. He then went back to academia and unfortunately died at a relatively young age.

That was the sort of the eye-opening opportunity that Princeton could provide. I think that all officers should have a similar sort training opportunity, be it academic or military. As the military options becoming such a large part of our foreign policy, if they haven't been in the service themselves, they ought to have an opportunity to train with the military and to have a sense of the military mentality and its capabilities.

Q: Absolutely.

WAUCHOPE: For me this training assignment was timed well, and worked out fine from a career perspective. I had recently been promoted to 01 and as such, this is a good time to take training as that first year you're not eligible for promotion anyway. The theory at least at the time, you did your long-term training immediately after your promotion, usually just after being promoted to FS-01. All along, Princeton was to serve as a bridge to a job that I knew was opening up in AF/W. Being in the personnel system and having managed the assignments to the African bureau, I knew a deputy directorship in AFW was coming open. I had a clear shot at that job, and that's where I ended up in the summer of 1984.

Q: Then you took over Western African Affairs?

WAUCHOPE: I was the senior Deputy Director responsible for the Francophone nations of West Africa. AF/W had an Anglophone and a Francophone section. Most of the AF/W countries were Francophone, but the ones that generated the greatest concern and assets were the Anglophones, which is to say Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone and the Gambia. There were 17 nations total, and I had the other 12 French speaking countries. I worked for Ed Perkins, the office director for the first year. Len Shurtleff was in the background orchestrating this personnel ballet. He was then DCM in Liberia working for Bill Swing. Ed Perkins, his predecessor as DCM in Monrovia, was later nominated to replace Bill Swing. So Len worked for Ed for Len's last year in Monrovia, and I worked my first year in AF/W with Ed and my second year in AF/W for Howard Walker. We dealt with an exciting set of issues. As I said, AF/W was known as the "Coup of the Month Club" because, with 17 countries, there seemed to be a political upheaval every month. The Western Sahara's fate was also one of our issues. From time to time it became a hot item because the underlying conflict between Morocco and Algeria, which impacted Mauritania, which was an AF/W nation and an ally of Morocco. There were always things brewing on the Francophone side.

Q: Chad?

WAUCHOPE: Chad was in AF/C and we didn't deal with it directly. We had similar problems such as Senegal which had fractious elections and subsequent student rioting. It was also undergoing significant restructuring of its foreign assistance program. In the Cote d'Ivoire, Houphouet-Boigny was aging and leaders were jockeying for position in the succession. The Anglophones Liberia and Nigeria, took up a great deal of our time and energy. Liberia was our hottest concern. As the senior Deputy, I used to take over for Ed while he was away. He used to travel to the region and domestically a fair amount. He had the good sense to get out there to show the flag in the entire region and to have a better feel for it. Our extensive assets in Liberia, the VOA facility, the diplomatic telecommunications relay facility, and the Omega navigation station were a key concern in the region. These were the greatest aggregation of American assets of any country in sub-Saharan Africa. I was the acting director, AF/W. There was an coup against Samuel Doe's government in October of 1985. Jim Bishop was managing the crisis for the AF bureau, and Ed was now Ambassador in Liberia at this point. Howard Walker was away and I was running the show when the coup took place.

Q: This was where?

WAUCHOPE: Liberia. Quiwonkpa came damn close to overthrowing Doe. The significance was not only the disruptions and repression that occurred thereafter, but also the watershed for Liberia transforming from a non-tribal government as it had been under the Americo-Liberians, to one in which tribalism became the definitive test of loyalty. The Americo-Liberians had successfully suppressed tribalism during their rule. For the first five years of Doe's stewardship the nation continued to avoid tribal conflicts. Quiwonkpa, by contrast, was backed by two large tribal groups. Therefore, when he went after Doe's Krahn supporters, it took on the aspect of a tribal conflict. From that point onward, politics in Liberia became explicitly tribal in their orientation. Our concern was driven by the size of the American presence. We had so many Americans there, the U.S. Mission itself was over 225, and there were about 5,000 American citizens counting returned Liberians who had gone to the United States and obtained U.S. citizenship. So, we had a lot at risk and we monitored very carefully how we in AF/W backstopped the Embassy's efforts to do what was necessary. Unfortunately, our military mission chief did not handle themselves very well and we had some problems deriving from his conduct..

Q: What were the problems?

WAUCHOPE: Well, there was a great deal of resentment against Doe among Embassy personnel because they had reason to believe that he had stolen the election a month earlier, and the U.S. had been compelled to certify the election for political reasons. Further, they felt that Doe was recalcitrant and uncooperative on a range of issues. So, when Quiwonkpa who was a military man, launched his coup attempt, our military people, in particular, took it upon themselves to go out into the streets, ostensively to look after the Americans living in various parts of the city. In reality, they ended up encountering the insurgents who for about 12 hours or so, seemed to be on the verge of taking power. They were observed talking to and joking with the insurgent forces. Inevitably, Doe's people saw this as well. When Doe's reinforcements arrived and put down the insurrection, Quiwonkpa was captured, killed and dismembered. Doe strongly resented the American military for having "collaborated", with his enemies. Doe wasn't so sure that our MilMish people hadn't work with Quiwonkpa and his supporters, and encouraged them to take action against Doe because our relations with Doe were not good at that time. We prevailed upon Doe not to expel these people. They were still assigned there when I arrived. It was probably a mistake. They probably should have been allowed to leave quietly. It would have taken one less irritant out of the relationship.

What struck me when I was in AF/W, was the degree of intensity with which Nigeria and Liberia seemed to dominate the thinking of the bureau whenever they thought of West Africa. We tried to explain that the Francophone West African countries were much more stable, had shown much more promise in many ways. While the French were still influential in their former West African colonies, we could have played the game much more effectively than we did. We tried to get more attention devoted to these countries. Chet Crocker was the Assistant Secretary at the time, and his focus was almost completely on South Africa. Constructive engagement was the AF watchword and it was a challenge to get his attention on problems elsewhere. The Deputy Assistant Secretaries, particularly Jim Bishop, were more focused on the West Africa, and the non-South African side of the continent. He was a consistent supporter of our efforts to persuade the Francophones to be more cooperative and responsive, and to provide more assistance where the opportunities existed.

Q: What are we talking about to be cooperative?

WAUCHOPE: In supporting us in the United Nations, supporting us in the Cold War, and against the Soviets when they were out of line. We hoped that the Francophone would stand with the West, and condemn Soviets transgressions. In the Falklands War, for example, the Senegalese were prevailed upon by the British to allow their aircraft to fly reinforcements and supplies through Dakar to the Falklands. There was still that strategic aspect of the Dakar. We also dealt with them on fisheries issues. We wanted to expel the Soviets from their exclusive fishery zones, and to actually take on the Soviets. You have to put yourself in the context of the time. Under Ronald Reagan, the NSC representative for Africa was Fred Wettering. We used to call him "Free World Fred" because he came up with bizarre ideas of ways in which we could put a stick in the spokes of the Soviets, even at the expense of our relations with the West African nations. He proposed that we ought to seriously consider ways to drive the Soviet trawlers out of the West African coast, particularly off Mauritania and Senegal, which are very productive fishing grounds. Specifically, he suggested that we persuade these nations to provide letters of marque to privateers. They would lease ships crewed by Spaniards or Portuguese and outfit them to seize Soviet ships. We were to encourage the creation of these privateering ventures. They would then capture Soviet trawlers off the coast of Mauritania and the Mauritanian government would allow the captured vessels to be sold off to the highest bidder. Of course, the Francophone Africans would not have agreed. Thank God, we were able to quash this concept before we had to go to the West Africans with it. This gives you an idea to some of the thinking that was going on at this time.

Again, the valuable former French colonies really were our principal focus. Niger had significant amounts of uranium and provided the French nuclear its principal source of uranium. The Ivory Coast has cocoa and coffee, and timber, and Senegal, was of interest for its strategic location and its model of democracy. We had a very significant increase in the assistance program to Senegal under Abdou Diouf. There had been a peaceful democratic transition from Senghor, and Diouf was a very presentable guy. He was six feet nine inches tall and very dignified, poised and intelligent. He was attractive to all the donors. We wanted to make Senegal a model for successful development. We were on the same wavelength with the French in the endeavor. Charlie Bray, our Ambassador in Dakar, was one of our most talented ambassadors, and he worked very thoughtfully and cooperatively with the Senegalese. They are a very educated people, and had excellent officials at the top ranks of their government. Their middle ranks tended to be weak, but in terms of corruption, we considered the Senegalese a cut above most of the other AF/W countries. It was a civilian governmental that hadn't come to power through military machinations or by coup, so we were comfortable in trying to make them an example. The two countries in West Africa that we wanted to play the role model were Senegal on the Francophone side and Ghana, under Jerry Rawlings, on the Anglophone side. We wanted to see them succeed. We wanted to provide them the wherewithal to develop their infrastructure, develop their people, their leadership and their managerial skills. We had longstanding ties with Ghana going back many decades. We wanted to see the extent to which we could achieve the same thing in Senegal

One of the remarkable things about the 12 nations of the former French West Africa, at that time, five of the chiefs of state were still receiving pensions from the French government for their service to the French government or military. By contrast, a very significant number, we figured almost half, of the leaders' families had children studying in the United States. We considered this a realization of a change in the drift of allegiances which we thought quite significant; it was ongoing, but accelerating in this time frame. The Francophone African leaders began to perceive a disengagement of France from Africa. They saw the United States having a greater and greater degree of influence in the world, and France was changing its world view by virtue of two things. First, their investments in Africa were now no longer as great as they had once been. both in absolute terms and in proportionate terms. Its economic focus was on the EU rather than Africa. Secondly, its commitment to Africa has diminished with the departure from the scene of de Gaulle and many of his lieutenants like Jacques Foccart, his fixer, if you will, for Africa. The departure of these actors diminished France's sense of historical commitment to Africa. Much of what the Frenchmen knew about Africa, they knew from their personal experience during Second World War. For example, they knew that Chad had been the first colony to join up with the Free French. I remember on my way to Chad in 1969 a cab driver in Paris immediately recognized Chad, saying something to the effect "Oh yes, my uncle served there during the war." That was fading away with the progression of time. Further, the military power and economic strength of France vis-ï¿½-vis the United States was diminishing. Under Reagan, the U.S. was inclined to exercise our influence and to project our power militarily and economically. The Africans were beginning to recognize this and it was an important transition. While we were not so much trying to exploit this change, we were trying to live up to their expectations. In the contest of promotion democracy and capitalism, we did implicitly encourage African leaders to consider sending their children to the United States for training in management, finance and economics. We felt that the U.S. provided a model that they could usefully apply in their own countries

In that regard, our relationship with Francophone Africa was generally positive. As I say, we didn't have any major disruptions in our relationships. There was a sense in AF that the Francophones were beginning to move in our direction. This is in marked contrast to Nigeria with which there was constant friction. They seemed to feel that we were trying to manipulate them or to push them around. At that time we had a range of issues with the Nigerians. I remember one time Ed Perkins went to a convention of chiefs of police in Houston, Texas. He was to make a pitch to show that the Nigerians, in general, were decent people. They should not automatically be distrusted and abused by U.S. law enforcement and by the immigration service. He gave the best, most reasonable presentation he could. He reported that in conversations after his presentation that whenever they mentioned the Nigerians, the police chiefs' attitude was, "Just put them in jail. I mean they're all a bunch of crooks, it's just a matter of finding out which scam they're involved in." Now, this was in the days when the Nigerians were big players in credit card fraud and narcotics smuggling. They were also developing the scam about the availability of blocked funds and then looting American sucker's bank account.

Q: Blocked funds?

WAUCHOPE: Yes. We received constant calls and appeals from Americans who lost as much as $50,000 or more. The reality was that they lost their money because they thought they could get their hands illegally on blocked Nigerian funds. We'd have to try to explain the scam to them. Nigerians were increasingly being detained for narcotics smuggling, which they claimed was racism. Nigeria had become a way station for narcotics entering the United States from the Middle East. The smugglers were shifting from transiting Southern Europe to transiting Nigeria, and Nigerians were being used as mules. Then the smugglers would shift the traffic further along the West African coast and the next thing you knew they were coming out of Ghana.

Q: There was something about stolen automobiles, too?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, luxury automobiles were being stolen in Europe and driven to Nigeria across the Sahara Desert. They bribed the border guards and then sell them in Lagos. Narcotics trafficking was so lucrative that many senior Nigerian officials became involved. Despite Nigeria's tremendous oil revenues, the corruption and mismanagement was absolutely staggering. Therefore few leaders in Nigeria were untainted by the drug money or by the corruption from the oil revenues. We tried to make the point that as the most populous nation in Africa, estimated at that time at 120 million, later to be determined to be closer to 90 million, should play a constructive role in the region. Subsequently they did play a role in peacekeeping efforts, which hasn't always been that constructive. In any event, we couldn't turn our back on Nigeria. So, we tried our best to work with them, with constant strains on the relationship.

Q: Okay, maybe this is the place to stop. We'll pick this up again. When did you leave there?

WAUCHOPE: Okay. I left in July of '86. I went to Liberia as the Deputy Chief of Mission.

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

WAUCHOPE: Okay, sounds good.

Q: Today is Friday the 13th of September, 2002. Keith, you were in Liberia from '86 to when?

WAUCHOPE: To 1989. Three years.

Q: '86 to '89. Three years. Okay. Before we get into the thing, what was, how did you get chosen to be DCM?

WAUCHOPE: Well, the ambassador at the time was Ed Perkins and he'd been my Office Director in AF/W for the first year that I was there. Then he went out to Liberia in the summer of '88. I had indicated to him that I would be interested in competing for the job as his DCM. He indicated he would be interested in having me, but it was not a done deal because it had to go through the open assignment process.

Q: When you went out there, did you do your homework. I mean you had been in West Africa anyway, but what was the situation, what were our interests in Liberia and what was the situation there when you went out in '86?

WAUCHOPE: Well, it's very important to understand the events that occurred immediately before my arrival as they set the tone for the U.S.-Liberian special relationship, which Liberians constantly invoke. We were reaching a transitional phase in our relations with Doe. In 1980, with the overthrow of Tolbert, the last Americo Liberian chief of state was killed by a group of army sergeants. This group called the Redemption Council, had held sway for five years as a loose coalition. Doe had risen to the top of this council, I was told, because he was the only one who knew how to type. Thus he typed the edicts, announcements and notices, so he formulated their content. Increasingly people looked to him to provide leadership. He was a staff sergeant. He and his fellow NCOs had been living in deplorable conditions that provoked them finally to move against the Americo-Liberian government. We know Doe was in the bedroom of President Tolbert at the time he was killed. Whether he actually killed the president is not clear. For five years this group functioned without significant division along ethnic lines. The sergeants made themselves colonels and generals, but Doe emerged as the undisputed leader.

The privilege that the Americo-Liberians had enjoyed over the many years had to come to an end. The Americo-Liberians, who still held positions of influence in business and society, were, to a certain extent suspect by Doe. They kept their distance from Doe's government. Doe's people believed that the Americos were smarter and better educated than they were, and that they would take advantage of them. Nonetheless, after several years of our prodding, we persuaded Doe's government to take advantage of their expertise and bring them back into government. The U.S. was deeply engaged in trying to bring some legitimacy, credibility and stability to the Liberian government during this time. The culmination of this effort was the presidential election in the summer of 1985, which, while definitely flawed, was sufficiently credible that the U.S. certified the results. We tried very intensely to make certain that the election free and fair. We had tried to persuade Doe not to be a candidate himself, but rather to let others step forward and become candidates in their own right. When Doe chose to run, we saw immediately the handwriting on the wall. He was not going to allow anyone defeat him in this election. Our efforts at elective democracy were shattered in November of 1985, when Quiwonkpa, who had been a member of the Redemption Council and had the title of general, rose up against Doe. He led his ethnic groups, the Mano or Gio against Doe. They were a significant part of the population in the Northeastern part of the country. They moved against Doe because they believed that he was favoring his tribal group the Krahn. The Krahn were considered a backward, warlike, brutish group who didn't really reflect the best of Liberia. In the wake of his unsuccessful coup, Quiwonkpa was captured and killed, and a number of his Mano and Gio followers were slaughtered, both in Monrovia and also in their indigenous areas as well. The Quiwonkpa coup attempt was an outgrowth of the flawed election. It reflected a recognition that the elections were fraudulent, and that the Americans were inclined to accept them simply because we wanted stability to protect our assets, although we did acknowledge that there had been fraud in the election process.

So, this was the setting into which I moved in August of 1986. There was a lot of tension in the country. There were pronounced divisions along ethnic lines and there was a lot of dissention within the U.S. mission. There were a number of officers both in the embassy an the U.S. Information Agency who felt that the Embassy leadership should not have sanctioned that election, that the election was, in fact, fraudulent and that we should have called it that way, and rejected Doe as the legitimate president of the country. That was not the majority view, and certainly not the view of the Department at that time, but it was an ongoing concern for mission management.

Q: Was the prevailing view of the Department, I mean what brought them to feel that we should accept this?

WAUCHOPE: Well, that gets into what the U.S. interests were in Liberia. We had the largest collection of strategic interests in Liberia that we had anywhere in African. These included the diplomatic telecommunications facility, run by the CIA, a 20-man Voice of America relay station that broadcast all across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Omega maritime navigation station, one of eight in the world, and the communications support base which provided communications technicians to support diplomatic communications throughout most of Africa. The U.S. had built Port of Monrovia and the airport, Roberts Field, during the Second World War. We had an ongoing interest in keeping these operating should we ever need the port for American naval vessels operating in the region, and the airport might be useful in the case of conflict in the Middle East. It was considered important to maintain access to these rent-free facilities. Although we did have a significant assistance program, it was not directly linked to paying for these facilities.

The irony in our role in Liberia at that time was, as I mentioned earlier of having served with Dick Moose in his early days in the AF bureau and his distaste for the sale of F-5s to Sudan, we found ourselves having to provide an increasing amount of military assistance to Doe to keep him happy and in power. One thing that Doe had promised the army, the rank and file, was to improve their living conditions; to improve the barracks and mess facilities, their pay and medical care. We were obliged to maintain an uncomfortably close relationship with Doe, which we felt we had no choice but to continue. Some of those in the embassy who were unhappy about the 1985 election results had served as observers in polling places and claimed to have seen ballot boxes dumped out or found ballots that had been partially burned. They claimed there had been substantial fraud, which I'm not prepared to say was wrong, but I am not sure that the outcome would have been different. We were mouse-trapped into a policy that required our acceptance of the election outcome. .

Q: Looking at it, was the army a real army or was it sort of?

WAUCHOPE: Well, it was an army by all outward appearances, which is to say that they were in uniform, and they had units and a military hierarchy and a reasonable amount of weaponry. But no, it was not an army by our standards. Of course, you'd have a difficult time, with few notable exceptions, to show where in Africa there was an army that had a real military structure and capability, and that could effectively defend its borders. Most African armies are oriented to counter internal threats, and are an instrument of the people in power to keep control of the government and the nation. Our objective in Liberia was to try to make its military more professional. We sent Liberians officers for advanced training in the United States. We had a modest military assistance programs, primarily in the area of small arms, transportation and medical supplies. We were not going to provide them with heavy weaponry, like armored vehicles or sophisticated aircraft. They had no requirement for such equipment and we didn't want to have to maintain it. We had been responsive to what Doe thought he needed during this period, but the U.S. was beginning to change its attitude following the flawed elections and the failed coup.

I want to give you an idea about the orders of magnitude of our mission in Liberia. It was the largest mission in the AF bureau. We had about 225 direct hire employees, not including about 140 Peace Corps volunteers. In addition, we hired almost 1,500 local personnel. More than half of them were the uniformed guard force to provide security for our many compounds, apartments and housing. We had an American school that went through the 12th grade. We had an extensive operation not only in the capital, but also miles outside of the capital. Part of the diplomatic telecommunications relay facility was east of the city. The Voice of America retransmission site was out about 18 miles north northeast of Monrovia, as well as the Omega navigational station.

In addition to the U.S. government activities, there was substantial U.S. investment in Liberia. By this time, the Americans had sold out of the iron ore mining business at LAMCO, the Bomi Hills deposits had played out, and the Mano River mines, which had started as an American undertaking, were later taken over by a World Bank consortium, had never produced the amount of iron ore that had been anticipated. What they called the Liberian American Mining Company, LAMCO, was now owned by Electrolux of Sweden. Their mines were up in the Northern region near the Guinea border. While there were Americans working there, it was no longer an American facility. The Germans had an iron pelletizing plant also, a very high grade iron ore in Bong. So the mining sector was now primarily in the hands of the Europeans. The highest profile American investment was the Firestone rubber plantation at Harbel, the largest rubber plantation in the world. Uniroyal had a plantation, which was later sold to a consortium of private American owners. There was also a ship and corporate registry, USLICO based in Monrovia, but actually run out of Reston, Virginia. It was an American company that registered over 200 or so merchant ships, primarily tankers, and hundreds of offshore corporations. This provided the Liberian government a welcome revenue stream. Finally, there was international banking with regional operations of Citibank and Chase Manhattan. They were a good source on Liberia's financial dealings and the economic climate. Forestry was a profitable industry, but the Americans were not significantly involved in operations. The Lebanese, some Europeans and the Israelis all had active operations. So, the economic side Liberia was doing reasonably well.

While most of these activities were enclave type operations were you extract the materials through a self-contained operation. These export operations were self-contained such as the Germans operating their own iron ore port, and Firestone its own export facility. Our economic interests were extensive and our mission was commensurately large. The Embassy was involved in every aspect of Liberian political and economic life. We had probably more people in the U.S. mission than all the rest of the several dozen diplomatic missions combined. Most of the Europeans were represented there. The Bloc countries were represented, and, of course, the Chinese and the Soviets.

I arrived in Monrovia in August 1986. Just prior to my departure from the States, I had heard that Ed Perkins was being seriously considered to be our ambassador in South Africa. Since I came out there to serve with Ed Perkins, I called him before I left Washington. I said, "Ed, is there any truth to the rumor that you might be going out to Pretoria?" He said, "Well, nobody has been in touch with me about it." I'm sure he was correct as far as that went. The reality was that Chet Crocker, the AF Assistant Secretary, was orchestrating his "constructive engagement" effort with the South Africans, trying to maintain a rational relationship with their government to nudge them toward majority rule. The White House was persuaded that in order to forestall a Congressional initiative to place an embargo on our trade with South Africa, the best course would be to send a black ambassador to Pretoria. It wasn't necessarily Chet's idea, but apparently the Reagan administration thought this was a way to deflect criticism of the America's South African policy. The White House approached a variety of potential candidates. One of whom had been the special assistant to the president for minority affairs under Nixon. I had met this fellow when he was the President's representative to the independence of the Bahamas. When they looked into his background, they found something that made them wary. They then tentatively approached Terrence Todman, now a Career Ambassador and the ranking black officer in the Foreign Service. He preemptively let it be known that he wouldn't be interested. Looking down the list of senior black officers, Ed Perkins loomed large. So his name surfaced. I had his tacit assurance that he hadn't been contacted at that time. We arrived at post on a weekend and the following Friday Ed hosted a reception to introduce me to the key players in Liberia, as well as the mission staff. As we were leaving the event, he took me aside and said, "Keith, can we talk for a moment?" I went into the drawing room and he said, "I just received communication today from the Department that they want me back in Washington." I asked, "Is this related to South Africa?" He said, "Apparently. They want to talk to me about that position." I had been at post at this point for six days. I asked, "When are you leaving?" He said, "Tomorrow morning. In addition, I want you to keep it secret that I'm gone." I said, "Good luck."

To understand the significance of this you must understand the role of the U.S. in Liberia and the Liberian scene, particularly in Monrovia. The American ambassador had a profile second only to President Doe. He was a key player in every facet of Liberian life, not to say "The Pro-Consul" as they used to say about Ed's predecessor, Bill Swing. Ed's whereabouts and his activities were a constant focus in the local media. The Liberians had picked up the rumor that Ed might be sent to South Africa. I said, "Well, we'll do our best to try to keep the fact that you're no longer here under wraps." So, sure enough he left discretely the next morning. He went to the airport with the chauffeur only, no flags, and my wife remained home. We tried to arrange his departure as surreptitiously as possible and keep his absence out of the news as long as possible. In fact, he left Saturday and by the next Tuesday the word of his whereabouts came out in Washington, and the Liberians picked it up immediately. There was a strong sense among Liberians that, if Ed had been called back, he would be tapped for the job. Ed was noncommittal, he hadn't asked for it and didn't know if he wanted it

To give further context on the role of the American ambassador in Liberia, I had visited Liberia in 1983 on a trip with the Director General Clark, and I saw Bill Swing in action. Ed was then his deputy. Bill's role was as close to that of a pro-consul as you could imagine. I attended a luncheon that he had organized with various ministers. They were asking him what he thought they should do about a power generation problem. He said, all you have to do is this, this and this. His advice was sound, but essentially he was telling them how to run their government. The Liberian officials were almost taking notes on how to go about solving the problem. They would later invoke the fact that the American ambassador had told them this is the way to do it. That was accepted practice. At that time Doe had agreed to bring some of the more talented Americo-Liberians who were willing into his government. They were people who had some sense of the right way of doing things, but they wanted to get the Americans' perspective on issues. So, decisions were often made in this manner. Ed Perkins was now playing that role and, all of a sudden, he's being tapped to serve elsewhere. It would have a significant impact on our bilateral relations. It certainly was a matter of concern to me. I'd been in country barely seven days and I'm given charge of the largest mission in Africa. Again, I was outranked by all the agency heads and by the Admin Counselor. But we had an excellent staff across the board, and everything seemed to fall into place. We carried off Ed's absence, and he returned in about ten days, and I asked him how it went. He said, "Well, I had a sequence of interviews of the White House staff starting with their personnel people on up the chain." He met with Deaver and then James Baker, who was at that time a senior Special Assistant to the President. Eventually he met with the president. By that time he had obviously been given the Good Housekeeping seal, and the deal was done. He said the decision was close hold and was not to be revealed in any manner. So, we had to conduct ourselves as if there would be no change of leadership. This agreed tactic was to allow the White House to announce the nomination at the critical moment as the Congress moved forward the legislation imposing sanctions on the minority regime in South Africa in hopes derailing their efforts. I should point out that this ploy didn't work. Congress got wind of the ploy and plowed ahead with sanctions. Thus Ed went to Pretoria representing a government that had just imposed sanctions against their government. In any event, he spent almost a month in Monrovia in suspense, awaiting the announcement. When he left Washington he had been told that his appointment would be announced in a week or ten days. The suspense went on and on, and he was twisting in the wind with his mission in Liberia undermined by the expectation of his departure. Eventually the nomination was announced with a whimper, and he was told he should prepare himself to return to Washington and present himself to the Senate and to the press. He would have one more opportunity to return to Monrovia, say his farewells and close out his affairs in Liberia , then off to South Africa.

He returned to Washington and was presented to the press. While in the Department, Jesse Jackson asked to see him with a group of black American leaders. According to Ed's account, he knew immediately that Jesse Jackson's intent was to get some face time in the media in the guise of showing opposition to Reagan South African policy, but Ed was game to meet with them. They had a private meeting in one of the Secretary's antechambers. The meeting lasted for some time and he told me Reverend Jackson said to him, "Really you can't sanction this administration's constructive engagement policy in South Africa by lending your presence as a representative of your race." Ed heard him out. I've seen Ed in action when he dealt with people with whom he disagreed. He very deliberately would just listen and nod, offering no encouragement. At the end of his presentation, Jesse said, "Well, what do you think? What are you going to do?" Ed replied, "I think I'm going to do what the President asked me to do." That was it for Jesse. He reported that Jesse said, "Well, if you are determined to go, then I guess we must support your decision." As a courtesy, Ed accompanied Jesse Jackson down to the diplomatic lobby. He immediately saw a mob of press at the security barrier waiting to get some kind of reaction. He said, to Jesse Jackson, "Well, it's been very nice to meet you Reverend." He turned to leave and Jesse Jackson almost physically dragged him toward the barrier to get him in front of the cameras. Ed is a very large man and a former Marine, nobody is going to take him where he didn't want to go. He walked away.

Ed knew he was being used by the Reagan administration, I believe, but as he said to me, I was a sergeant in the Marine Corps, and when my superior tells me to do something, I do it. If the president asks you to do something, you do what he asks. That was his motivating factor, and that was that.

He returned to post for about a month to pack up and get his affairs in order, and to attend all the farewell receptions. He went to lunches and dinners day after day, while I tried to get a grasp of mission activities, and to pick his brains on dealing with the key players in the Liberian scene. I was going to be Chargï¿½ and, this move being unanticipated, no one would be on the horizon to replace Ed. So, I knew it was going to be Chargï¿½ for an extended period of time. Ed departed in mid-October, and I was Chargï¿½ until I left for the U.S. in mid-April to be present for the birth of my second son, Colin. My time as Chargï¿½ was a very interesting period because the issue of Liberia's performance in economic and fiscal reform came to a head. In the early '80s after Doe had taken power and had begun to bring responsible people in to administer the government, he negotiated an economic reform package with the U.S. and the international financial institutions or IFIs. It was intended to rationalize government revenues and ensure that fiscal policies were in line with revenues so that, among other things, Liberia could service its debt to the IFIs. These institutions were extending to Liberia more credit than they were comfortable with because the U.S. had persuaded them to do so. To keep our promises to these institutions we had to see to it that the Liberians conformed to the reform program and made the promised repayments. Unfortunately, this program, which had been in place for well over a year, wasn't working. During the time I was Chargï¿½ I consulted with the Country Team and with the Department, and would repeatedly approach the government to jaw-bone the Minister of Finance and to the head of the Central Bank. These were bright, capable people, Americo-Liberians. Robert Tubman, the Minister of Finance, was a Harvard law school graduate. He was a nephew of the former president Tubman who was still revered by the indigenous Liberians. So, Robert Tubman benefited from this aura. I used to go to his office and we'd talk about the shortcomings in the implementation of the program, things that weren't happening, and benchmarks that were missed. I would actually take in a copy of the bilateral agreement, and I would highlight in yellow the parts where Liberia had failed to meet its obligations. I'd leave a copy with him so he could show his colleagues the areas of U.S. concern. I felt that, in the absence of an ambassador, I had to try harder, if you will, to press them to focus on things they had committed themselves to do. It had only a very limited effect because of the entrenched questionable practices. So, with the agreement of the country team, I prepared a speech, which I cleared throughout the mission, particularly the USAID mission, which was deeply engaged in this process and believed strongly that something had to be done. We would fire a shot across their bow, and we had to do it in a manner that would get their attention and proper press play as well. The most influential of all of the business groups in Liberia was the Rotary Club which held its monthly meeting at the premiere hotel, such as it was, the Ducor Palace. I would be the keynote speaker. This speech would make clear that the U.S. Embassy believed that the government is not living up to its obligation under these agreements. I gave the speech and initially there was silence, and almost audible gasps from the Liberian audience. We knew that the government of Liberia and its policymakers, were not of one mind on this economic reform. They were not all behind Doe's lax compliance with the program, and the business community felt that the government wasn't putting its house in order and the nation's credibility was at risk. They wanted to see us take a harder line with the government, so they were encouraged by what I had to say. It stirred up quite a hornet's nest, nonetheless. It did make it into the press, the radio and television, but we had certainly gotten the message out. A few days later I was called in by Senator Yancey, who was an old retainer from the Americo-Liberian governments of Tubman and Tolbert, and now working faithfully for Doe. He was a venerable old character, although he was probably as corrupt as the day is long. In any event, he said he'd been tasked by the President to let me know that, as Chargï¿½, and as a young man not understanding the complexities of the situation in Liberia, it was most inappropriate for me to take the government to task on these issues of economic reform and its adherence to economic agreements. I took his message onboard and said, "The intent was not to embarrass the President, but rather, it is a clear expression of our position, which we have made clear to the ministers many times before this speech. I had received their assurances, but nothing has happened. I had the full concurrence of the Department in this message." Although I must say that regarding the Department, I had provided them our intended approach, but I'm not sure how closely they focused on exactly what I planned to do or how much reaction it was likely to generate. In any event, it was very satisfying to capture the limelight in an effort to do what we ought to be doing. We also succeeded in getting the U.S. government to focus by taking the Liberians to task. Knowing that it would be a long time before an ambassador would arrive, even as Chargï¿½, I thought we had to keep up the momentum.

That speech was in early December 1986 and, as it turned out, the Secretary of State was scheduled to visit Africa in January. This was George Schultz's first visit to Africa and it was going to be quite a big deal in the region. The countries that he was going to visit were the countries we considered to be the important countries in Africa. Needless to say he went to South Africa, to Kenya, to Zaire and just before Monrovia, he was in Abidjan. Our marching orders were very clear from the outset. The scheduled visit would be six hours and 20 minutes. We were to arrange the following; the usual formalities to include a working session with the president, a meeting with key opposition leaders, and a session with the mission staff and dependents. During this period the opposition leaders were becoming increasingly vocal. After the flawed elections, they felt they'd had a strong case against Doe. We were told to set this meeting up, and we knew Doe's government would resent it. This was my first Secretary of State visit and, as Chargï¿½, I mobilized the entire mission to support the effort. We stopped everything else we were doing. The Secretary's advance team came storming in and took over the executive suite. There was a young woman officer, perhaps an FS-03, who was on the Secretary's staff. She didn't hesitate to tell me what I was to do. We prepared briefing papers for all the meetings, a last minute briefer to ensure that the Secretary while on his trip would have up-to-the-minute briefings on local situation in the most concise form. I drafted that and passed it to her. She said, "Wow, this is pretty good drafting." I thought, well, that's a very nice from this junior officer of all of 5 or 6 years in the Service. Ordinarily it was my job to compliment others. The security and the press aspects of visit seemed overdone. We knew that there were a number of global issues that were of concern to the Secretary, and we expected that the accompanied press corps would focus very little on Liberia. Sure enough that proved to be the case.

In any event, per instructions, we had the Secretary's scheduled down to the minute. I informed the Liberians that there would be a meeting between the Secretary and the opposition leaders. It would be held in the American embassy, and we had invited all the leaders of the legitimate parties to discuss their perception of the political situation. We knew the president was very unhappy about this meeting and his officials tried to jawbone us out of doing this. Then they decided they would take another approach. They would fill up the schedule with so many ceremonial events that we wouldn't have time for such a meeting. I made it clear that this was not going to happen. I dealt closely on this with the chief of protocol at the Executive Mansion, a distinguished Americo-Liberian who had worked for Tubman. The first event was the working meeting with the president and the motorcade that brought the Secretary into town took some 40 minutes as the airport is quite a distance from the capital. We'd go directly into the meeting with the president. There would follow be a state luncheon and there would be an exchange of toasts. I programmed this event down to the timing of the courses and the toasts. I dictated the time at which we are going to be out of the executive mansion to give us time to be at the meeting with the opposition leaders at the embassy. They tried to extend the program at the mansion and wheedle here and there, but I held firm. On the morning the Secretary arrived, to give you an idea of the last minute insanity, a stretch Mercedes limousine showed up minutes before touch down at the VIP area. The Liberians said that the Secretary had to use this vehicle because it was sent by Doe. The Secretary's DS people refused because it was not an armored vehicle, which the chief of mission vehicle was. Doe's protocol people were insisting that the Secretary ride in the president's vehicle because they were afraid of Doe's wrath if we refused to use it. We almost had to wrestle these people to the ground to get them to understand that security concerns took precedent. We compromised and turned the limo over to Mrs. Shultz who my wife accompanied for her program.

The Secretary arrived on a U.S. Air Force executive jet only slightly late. He is greeted by his counterpart, and the airport welcoming ceremonies began. I'm standing there with the Secretary when AF Assistant Secretary Chet Crocker takes me by the elbow and he says, "The Secretary doesn't really feel that he has a very good grasp of the issues here and since he's going to be meeting with the President as soon as we get into town, he'd like to have a few minutes with you to go over what the issues are." I said, okay. I sent somebody scurrying off to the head of the airport to set aside a part of the VIP lounge where the Secretary and I can talk. The ceremonies were completed and we were taken into the VIP lounge where our people were organizing the assignments for the motorcade into town. Apparently the Secretary's problem was that the flight from Abidjan to Monrovia, probably 50 minutes, hadn't been enough time to absorb his briefing papers. When we were by ourselves, I started to rattle off all the key issues in relative importance. I spoke to him for perhaps two or three minutes. He didn't say a word. At the end of my presentation, he said, "Okay." He is well known as a man of few words. He clearly had absorbed what I had to say. I asked if he had any questions, he said, no. So, I said, all right, let's go get you into the right car. Off we went, speeding off to the city. Crowds lined the route, some protesting U.S. policy, some supporting it, probably brought out by the government. We swept up to the Executive Mansion and we're taken upstairs to the President's conference room. There was the usual fumbling around about where everyone was going to sit. I was the note taker for the U.S. side. The President greeted the Secretary, and the Secretary responded. Then Doe launched into his presentation which was basically a tutorial on his view of Liberia's problems. The first words out of his mouth were, "Mr. Secretary, first I have to tell you that your Embassy here in Monrovia lies to Washington about what's going on in Liberia, and whatever they're telling you, it's not true." He took off from there, explaining that all the problems were not his fault. He held forth for almost an hour. His pitch was, the Americans don't understand the complexities of the situation here. He invoked the special relationship insisting that we had to give him some latitude to get things done. He complained about everything that came to his mind; his unhappiness about the American military attachï¿½s during the Quiwonkpa coup, our lack of sympathy for their economic problems and their failure to understand African culture. He wore himself out in the process and finally his spiel petered out. He turned to the Secretary for a response. The Secretary said in about as many words, "Well, I've heard what you have to say and I appreciate your concerns, but I still think it's not working here and you're going to have to try harder." Doe was stunned. He again launched his appeal for understanding for another 15 or 20 minutes. At the end, Doe again turned to the Secretary who said, "Well, fine, but I think we're both going to have to do more. I'm prepared to have the Administrator of AID come back here and work out an achievable program with you." Well, Doe saw this as a positive thing, as it gave his problems a higher profile. The Americans were sending the head of the entire AID organization back to take another look. Doe thought he would be able to persuade AID Administrator McPherson, who had accompanied Shultz, to cut the Liberians more slack. It was left at that, and Doe seemed to be somewhat mollified, at least he had had a chance to say his piece.

As an Africanist, I can tell you that this is basically how meetings with African chiefs of state play out. They usually hold forth at length about the need to understand the unique local situation, their culture and their history, as well as the background of the current situation. Further, they plead that you be patient with them as all their problems are not their fault. Doe had basically played out his role. We then moved on to the massive luncheon they laid on. There were hundreds of Doe's retainers. The lunch began, and as the Secretary had requested, the toasts were exchanged at beginning. As the meal went on, Doe had a very animated conversation with the Secretary. I was thankful that Chet Crocker was available to the Secretary. As the lunch began to wind up, the Liberians dragged out the interval between the last course and the dessert. I buttoned holed of the chief of protocol and told him it is now 2:10 and we are going to be out of here by 2:20. If the desserts are not out here now, I am just going to take the Secretary out of here and it's going to be very embarrassing to everyone." He ran back and they finished up with last course, and the Secretary left on time. We returned to the embassy and met with the opposition leaders who essentially did the same thing that Doe had done, telling him their version of the political situation. He heard them out but had very little to say. He said, "Well, we do support the concept of a multiparty democracy. We would hope that you would have a legitimate role and that you will act responsibly when you do." He said the things he should have said, and they had their chance to talk to the American Secretary of State, and that was fine for all parties.

The Secretary had asked to have a chance to talk to all the Americans serving in the mission. We all massed in the courtyard in front of the embassy building. He and his wife Obie, an absolutely delightful person who regrettably died a couple of years ago, came out on the steps. My wife had taken Obie around town, and she couldn't have been more gracious, interested and pleasant. The Secretary said, "I have nothing formal to say. I just want to tell you how much I appreciate your efforts. I understand something of the hardships that you go through." He then shook hands and had photos taken all around. It was a brilliant gesture. Our people couldn't have asked for more. He made a point of talking to the Marines who made a presentation of a T-shirt because Shultz was a former Marine. . Then we swept out of the compound for the airport where there was to be a presentation of grand Boubous from various tribal groups.

Q: What are those?

WAUCHOPE: They are the ceremonial dress of the paramount chiefs. The robes have elaborate embroidery that signifies the status of the individual. By now, time was running short, and we had pushed the schedule to the absolute limit. I'm radioed to our advance group at the airport because it was a 45-minute trip. I was in the car with the Assistant Secretary, Chet Crocker and I instructed our people how it was going to work. The group that we had agreed to present the boubous would get to gown Shultz and the others can just hand him the gowns and have a photo taken. We are not going to have him take off one boubou and put another one and take that one off and put a third. We don't have the time to do that, nor should the Secretary have to go through that. I suspect that I made some points with Chet by making such command decisions on the spot and having things done properly. We saw the Secretary off in his Boubou, and he turned and thanked us all. We had a great "wheels up" party afterward, as we and we felt a great sense of achievement and relief. The promise to have McPherson return with a team was a tangible result.

McPherson returned in three weeks with a high-level team including Howard Walker representing State. The Liberians sat down with our economic team and worked out an arrangement, which was unprecedented in Africa. Talk about an American ambassador acting the pro-consul, we now set up a system by which we would have financial advisors in every economic or fiscal office of the Liberian government; on both the revenue and the expenditure side. On the fiscal side, they'd be in the Central Bank, not only with access to all of the documents flowing through, but also with some decision making power as well. The Liberians were in a tight spot, and it was understood that, either they cooperated or they didn't get further American assistance. McPherson was with us for about three days and worked very hard negotiating the agreement. We recognized that whatever was agreed to, it was still going to be very difficult to actually implement. The Liberians were more motivated by the fear of losing U.S. support than by an interest in improving their economic and fiscal operations. Initially things went reasonably well. AID hired a former USAID mission director to head of this mission; ultimately 26 fiscal specialists, auditors and financial managers were hired for this team. We called them OPEX for operational experts. They over the next three to six months they took up their positions throughout the government. The Liberian government insisted that the issue was not about expenditures, but rather capturing more revenue. Of course they wanted more revenue because they wanted to have more money to divert for to their own pockets. Inevitably friction developed, despite a good start. In April 1987 I returned to Washington for the birth of my second son, Colin. On my return a month later, I reassumed the role of Chargï¿½ until Jim Bishop, who had been designated to be the ambassador, arrived in July. He had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary in AF for seven years. He knew the Liberia account intimately. He knew most of the African countries, but he knew Liberia in particular. After Jim arrived, we restructured our operations. He was extraordinary good at ensuring that I knew everything he knew, particularly about all the agencies' activities. I sat in on his weekly session with the station chief who was also in charge of the CIA base or communications facility. They had an extensive operation there. Our CIA operation had been in place a long time, and we relied on it very heavily to track local events. The first station chief was a very likable guy, very intelligent and intellectual, and had both perspective and poise. His successor was not as experienced or as balanced.

When Jim arrived the idea was to see to it that the OPEXers were smoothly integrated into their positions in the hope of finally get some control over the revenue inflows and the outflows. We did learn a tremendous amount about Liberian operations in a very short period of time. They reported to their chief who would report to Jim. We learned where the money came from and where it went, and which agencies and individuals didn't pay their bills. For example, the government never paid the utility company which was a parastatal corporation. On the outflow side, we gained a sense of how deals were structured so that kickbacks were obtained. In doing so, we learned a fair amount about the peculations of some of our favorite government officials to include people like Robert Tubman and John Bestman, the head of the central bank. All of them had special arrangements to line their pockets, which was a great disappointment to us, but part of the Liberian reality.

While we were plugging away on the economic side, the political side became increasingly agitated. The opposition insisted that the 1985 election had been stolen. They presented evidence of electoral fraud to us, and the international human rights organizations. They were agitating in the streets and they closed down the national university. The newspapers became more critical of the President. He allowed them to criticize up to a point, and then his people would shut them down, or there would be a suspicious fire which would take them a while to resume operations. It wasn't terribly vicious, but the repression and threat was always there. Increasingly the opposition rallied around Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a forceful, well-spoken individual, who was also a successful advocate for change. She was critical not only of Doe, but also of the United States for supporting Doe. She criticized us for bringing in these experts to try to prop up a crumbling, corrupt economic and governmental structure. We had continuing dialogue with the opposition to signal to the government that we would not tolerate repression against them. Inevitably, the Doe government gave way to its natural inclination toward repression.

Jim liked to take off in the summer months, and I enjoyed those occasions when I was the Chargï¿½. A major flap arose while he was away on his first long vacation. We had heard that there had been some kind of an intrusion in the northeastern part of the country by a group of exiled Liberians, and that two Americans had been arrested with them. We learned through agency contacts that they were detention in Monrovia. Our informants indicated these two Americans had been pretty badly abused. As Chargï¿½, knowing that one of our greatest ongoing responsibilities was the welfare and protection of Americans, of whom there were some 5,000 in Liberia, albeit that two-thirds were Liberians who had obtained American citizenship and returned home. These Americans had contacts with the Liberian communities in places like northern New Jersey, St. Paul and the Minneapolis area, and in Boston, the locations where they had settled. To find out about the two Americans, I went to foreign minister Rudy Johnson, and asked, "Do you have any Americans in detention?" He said, "No." I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Yes, I'm sure." I said, "Okay." What I accomplished by that exercise was to let him know that we knew that they did have them. We did so in hopes of protecting them from further abuse. By signaling to the Foreign Minister we had reason to believe that they had them in detention, if they suddenly weren't to be found, we would know something had been done to them. Two or three days later the Liberians said, "We have found out that, in fact, there are two Americans in detention." They gave me their names and I insisted that we get access to them. At first they hedged, saying that they had been involved in an effort to overthrow the government, but I pressed them hard. It turned out that these two Americans were from New Jersey and they had talked into this venture by Liberian friends. One of them had been fairly prominent in the American civil rights movement in the '60s. I suppose that the other was a friend of his.

Q: These were not Liberian Americans?

WAUCHOPE: No, they were black Americans, African Americans. They had been talked into joining by Liberian exiles in an effort to overthrow Doe's government. They were told that, if they could cross the border the local people will welcome them and would rise up against the government. They were enticed by promises to share the rights to the gold and diamond mining in Liberia. So, these two characters, knowing little about Liberia, get sucked into this plot. They drove across the border in the dark of night somewhere on the Ivorian frontier. They get through the first checkpoint, but were stopped at another checkpoint. The troops thought something was fishy, and detained them all. On learning of the attempt, Monrovia sent a group from Doe's executive mansion staff. They quickly found out what was going on. These intruders were beaten and then loaded into a truck to be brought down to Monrovia. The security officers stopped somewhere along the road at night, dragged all of them out, and immediately shot all the Liberian exiles. They hesitated with the two Americans and decided not to execute them. They threw them back into the truck and brought them to Monrovia. They stripped them and chained them to beds in a cement cell. They were there for several days until such time as the Liberians felt they were obliged to report to the Embassy that they had these two in custody. They had been badly beaten. Eventually I had a chance to talk to these two characters. You could see they had swollen eyes and cuts and scrapes all over. I tried to find out what I could. All they could talk about was how badly treated they had been. I asked what they had done. They explained in general terms. The exiles had told them that if they returned with them they would be able to overthrow the government. So, I asked, "Didn't you think that there might be some downside risk in this process?" They said, "Yes, but we had no idea what the situation was."

I made a presentation to the government suggesting that they release these hapless individuals, as they were not further threat to Liberia, and that they were unaware of what they were doing. The government had one on us this time, and, by the summer of '88, the strain over the efforts of our financial advisors was building. Having guilty American citizen detainees gave them an advantage that they were going to play it to the hilt. The Foreign Minister said he would consider my proposal, but he clearly didn't intend to do anything. They threatened to put them on trial, and that these were crimes punishable by death. We did have consular access and we tried to ease their situation the best that we could.

The next thing we heard from Washington is that Ramsey Clark, Carter's Attorney General, was coming to Monrovia to intervene on their behalf. Ramsey Clark had been involved in the civil rights movement, and he knew the prisoner who had been involved in the movement. He claimed that he was a very significant figure who ought not to be allowed to languish in a Liberian jail. Ramsey Clark arrived and I met with him. I briefed him in detail on the general situation in Liberia, and explained that it was a very tense time because the government was concerned about possible efforts to overthrow it. Clark was clearly suspicious that I was protecting the Liberian government, and skeptical of what I was saying. Nonetheless, I did arrange for a session for him with the foreign minister. I believe he got to see Doe as well. Ramsey Clark, a very soft-spoken, yet determined, individual and laid out the case for Doe. The President said only that he would take his concerns into consideration, but nothing was done at that time. Ramsey Clark left for somewhere else in Africa. About a week later, the government told us that they felt that these people had been properly warned and now better understood the situation, and thus they were released. I must say they did fully appreciate of how lucky they were to survive this adventure.

Another event that occurred while I was Chargï¿½ was the visit of the Director of the CIA, Judge Webster. The principal objective of his unpublicized Africa visit was to read the riot act to Mobutu, who had been acting unpredictably. He would be coming to Liberia because of the size of the agency presence. He would overnight and leave the next morning. The station set up the program with little consultation with me. The station chief told me one of the events was a meeting with the President to which I was not invited. I was very annoyed as I thought that was entirely inappropriate, but I could get no support from the Department. The station chief was a shameless careerist, and of the old school that the Embassy was a nuisance to be tolerated at the margins. He insisted his control of the visit was because the agency was concerned about security. I did host a dinner for Webster and his senior staff. The station arranged the airport arrival, and I would have a chance to talk to the director before his session with the President. I had no idea what he proposed to be say to Doe that I couldn't be a party to, but whatever it was, I was cut out. As I learned after the fact, when Webster met President Doe, the conversation quickly deteriorated from one of substantive issues to a bizarre exchange that was typically African. Doe said to Webster, knowing what a very important official he was, "Mr. Director, do you know that I am bullet proof?" The director said, "Bulletproof?" Doe said, "Yes. I have a special grigri that I wear around my neck and, if I'm wearing it, I can't be shot." The director said, "Oh, that's very interesting." Doe said, "No, no, no. It's really true. I'll demonstrate." He called one of his bodyguards and he said, "Here, give the director this gun and then I have him shoot me." The director said, "No, no, I'm not going to do that." Doe insisted, "No, really." Webster said, "No, I'm not doing that." So, Doe relented and said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I'll invite you over after dinner and we'll sit around and have a few beers, and we'll do a demonstration for you." When he returned to the Embassy it was very obvious that this exchange unnerved Webster extraordinarily. Webster is a very fine, upstanding individual; he was a former judge and Director of the FBI, and now the head of the CIA. His very high level entourage was, by turns, concerned and bemused. His delegation included of the General Counsel, the head of the Africa branch, the chief of covert operations, and the head administrative official. Everybody had wanted to take a trip with the director on his special plane and now they were confronted with this extraordinary problem. I have to admit, I was genuinely amused at the fix that the Station Chief had gotten himself into, and as he didn't know Africa, he had no clue how to deal with Doe's gesture. At dinner at my residence that night, I had a chance to talk to Webster about the session with Doe. There apparently was not much of consequence in the meeting except for Doe's boast of being bulletproof. The prospect of return to Doe's residence weighed heavily on his mind and there was some hope among his entourage that Doe would not follow through. The director kept saying, "I'm not going to shoot that man. I don't care what he says; I'm not going to shoot him." I said, "Well, Mr. Director, I hope we can avoid that." I turned to the Station Chief and said, "Well, you got him into this thing, you're going to have to figure out a way to keep the director from having to shoot the president." He was now very unsure what to do. I said, "Well, you better find a way out because this guy may well invite you back to the executive mansion and you're gong to have to follow through on this thing." I was relishing his discomfort because I wasn't party to any of his closely held arrangements for Webster.

In their consternation, and the Director had his general counsel looking at the legal aspects of this farce. There was a strong sense that Doe was just bluffing. He just wants to show that the head of the CIA, this omnipotent organization, as Doe's knowledge of the CIA comes from Hollywood, that the CIA could not kill him because of his grigri. In fact, there is some history to this belief. There was another member of the Liberian government who claimed to our Admin Counselor that he was bullet-proof. In other parts of Africa this sort of belief also arises. I assumed that the station would be able to send the word back to the President that this is not an appropriate thing to do and that the whole exercise would be called off. So we went ahead with our dinner.

At about 9:15 as the dinner was winding down, there is a knock on our door and the guards said there's a colonel here from the executive mansion guard. Sure enough, he came in and he said, "Well, I'm here to escort the director to the executive mansion to see the president." Good God, how the CIA folks scurried around. Who was going to go, how were they going to handle this? Once again Webster said, "I want to make this clear, I'm not going to shoot him. I don't care what he does. I don't care what he says, I'm not going to shoot this guy." I thought this was incredible. Webster was invited back to the Mansion with any of his delegation he wanted to accompany him.

So, off they went back to see Doe, and I just waited on the edge of my seat trying to figure how we were going to explain all this to Washington if things went awry. They returned in about an hour and a half. I asked what had happened. Webster said when we got there and Doe welcomed us up on the sixth floor which is the private quarters and they sat on the balcony overlooking the ocean. They produced some beers, and everybody had a beer and talked. The issue of his being bulletproof never came up. Anyway, it makes for a great story. To my knowledge, it is not in the public domain at this time, but it might make into Judge Webster's memoirs; or maybe not.

The relationship with Doe's government began to deteriorate as our OPEXers found more and more corruption in the Liberian fiscal system. When they first unearthed the corruption they tried to address at the operational level. The advisor would say to the minister or the assistant minister, his counterpart, you can't continue to do this. You must fiscalize these revenues; you must account for that. The tension resulted from the Liberians unwillingness to conform to the program. The Liberians would push the dispute up their chain, and eventually it would come to Jim Bishop's attention, who would take the issue to the President. Each time he'd see the president and he'd have to remind him that his government has failed to meet the terms of the agreement. The president would respond by saying, his government needed more money and more aid. Jim could offer nothing because it would be rewarding non-compliance. Jim is a very tough guy and he is very straightforward about it. He'd say, no, he wouldn't do it. Well, their personal relationship became increasingly acrimonious and unpleasant, but Jim held the line, as he was obliged to do.

In an effort to rally support and to try to embarrass the U.S., Doe launched a campaign which claimed that the Americans were demanding that Liberia repay all for all the improvements it had made in the country over the many years. The issue of Liberia's debt obligations to the United States, to the international financial institutions became a rallying call synthesized in the phrase, We will pay." The Americans had built just about all of the Liberian infrastructure; the power plants; the dams that provided the water and the power grid. We'd built the roads and bridges, and, of course, the airport and the port of Monrovia. Doe was trying to appeal to the masses by saying, see, as poor as we are and as rich as the Americans are, they're going to make us pay them back for all these things. Of course, that wasn't the case, but that's how Doe was spinning it.

The Liberians would stage large rallies where the president would preside, and kids would come forward with sacks full of pennies that they'd allegedly raised to pay back the Americans. It was really an appalling show, and we tried our best to counter it with facts, but Doe had control of all the organs of the government and kept pushing this case. As part of that process the Liberians then began to raise the prospect of making us pay rent for our facilities. Now, this is an issue we had been able to fend off for many, many years. We deflected it by pointing out how much we had done for Liberia in so many other ways, not just by building all the infrastructure, but also by our substantial assistance programs and intervention with the IFIs. We thought that we could more than demonstrate that they were getting a great deal out of the mission and its activities than they could receive from rents. They continued to raise the rent issue, and we countered that this would reduce the "Special relationship" to a cash exchange, if we became a tenant of Liberia. This argument had some impact on them, but had a sense that it was time to take the offensive. All this occurred as the clouds of the failure of our OPEX program became to loom

So, we decided to calculate what it costs to run the U.S. mission in Liberia to show what we contributed to its economy. We came up with a figure of $32 million a year to operate. This included our local payroll and what we expended for fuel and electricity. The fuel bill alone was over $6 million. We had six big generators at the VOA plant that generated power for the transmission towers. We paid for electricity and for telephone service, whereas the government and all its branches never paid for its utilities. We had to pay for them and we paid in hard currency. So, we informed the Liberians of this $32 million to give them some sense of the tangible benefit of this relationship. To a certain extent it had a beneficial effect. In addition to this valuation, we advised the Liberians of the technological transition taking place, as had been the case in Asmara. The Omega navigational system was being replaced by satellites and ships were now able to get their navigational bearings by satellite. Likewise, the communications relay facility was going to satellite as well, and they didn't need ground stations to the same extent. It was convenient to us to retain these facilities; it was less expensive than having to launch a satellite. We calculated that, as long as could keep these operating, so much the better. There was one irreplaceable, or at least difficult to replace activity and that was the agency diplomatic communications service facility which had technicians on the ground, to service posts throughout the region. They were right in the region, and they could respond quickly, and they knew the area. Of course, it could be moved back to Washington, but there would be a loss of response time.. It would be slower and more expensive, but you could do that if you had to. We told the Liberians, look if you press the rents issue, we'll just shut down our operations altogether. There were hundreds of Liberians employed by these facilities, as well. They hemmed and hawed, and they kept this Sword of Damocles over our head throughout this entire period.

As we tightened up on his government's fiscal operations through these financial experts Doe became susceptible to other kinds of schemes. He became involved in several money-making schemes which was a concern to us because of the potential embarrassment to him and the U.S. One was the establishment of the Meridian Bank which already operated in several other African countries. It was supposedly U.S. based, a U.S. chartered bank, giving them access to help from our embassies. We wondered with the collapse of the Liberian economy, and the inefficiencies and corruption, why would a bank open here and build a very fancy office building in Monrovia? We learned that it was financing a satellite ground reception operation. We found out subsequently that this was about a $4 to $6 million project for which the government of Liberia borrowed $16 million to pay for. The rest of it was to be shared among Liberian government officials and those in the bank. It seemed clear that Meridian was involved in the business of assisting the government in these shady financial transactions. We were suspicious from the beginning.

As a footnote, about three years ago, I was asked to testify as an expert witness about how business was done in Liberia in that period to show that the Meridian Bank was a fraudulent operation as best we could determine. They flaunted the fact that they were chartered in the United States and they asked and, to a certain extent, received our support for their activities. We would attend their functions and they would consult with us about their activities. We just tried to fathom why they were doing any of these things at this time in Liberia. In any event, when I testified as an expert witness the question was how did they do business? I testified that all of these organizations that came to do business in Liberia would have to make some sort of an arrangement with Doe and to the people around him. So, it seemed likely that this was the case with the Meridian Bank. By this time the Meridian Bank was suing the successor government of Liberia for $86 million in repayment of this $16 million loan with interest and penalties. Of course, Meridian was looking for some kind of settlement to recover some money out of this deal. I'm not sure how it came out, but my sense is that with my testimony and that of others, it became apparent to the Meridian representatives lawyer that it was unlikely that Meridian would receive anything. Meridian by this time was bankrupt and it was really their creditors who were trying to squeeze some money out of the Liberian government. It was just one of these corrupt initiatives in this period.

Q: Did you go back to Washington and say who are these Meridian people?

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. They were based, they were chartered out of Delaware or something like that, but their base of operations was the Bahamas and they were operating. I remember one of their locations was in Zambia and there were a couple of other African capitals, but they were always in the fringe states, not the nations with real economic prospects. They were operators who were prepared to take greater risks on loans than most traditional banks would. They charge higher rates in this process as well. Their game was to hike the amount of loan involved and then split the overage with the host government officials, and then whatever the modest real costs were covered by in nominal repayments.

I remember there was a contractor who was to build an underground water line to a facility near Paynesville. They claimed it would cost $4 million to put this line in. Somebody looked at the project and said it should cost $800,000. The markup on these kinds of deals was often 400%; way out of line with reality. The expectation was that no one would look closely at the cost to run a water line for a half mile and a, $4 million? Of more concern to us was an individual named Gus Kouwenhoven who set up shop at the Hotel Africa, a hotel outside of the city along the beach that had a legal casino. He apparently was Swiss. We developed information that Mr. Kouwenhoven was laundering drug money and what better way than in some African casino in a country with a large Lebanese community. The Lebanese loved to gamble, and money was flowing in and money was flowing out and no one knew where it came from or where it went. Kouwenhoven seemed to be very tight with president Doe. It seemed likely that he was paying Doe to allow him to operate in Liberia.

Probably the shadiest deal of all was one we got wind through the station. It was a group that came to talk with Doe and exchange presents. Doe was a great collector of expensive watches among other things. They wanted to set up an illegal drug production and trafficking operation. They were going to make narcotics and then ship them from Liberia to Europe and elsewhere. Once we heard about that one, we had to decide to thwart the plan without compromising our source. We handled it in such a way that we sent the word back through various channels that we'd gotten wind of this scheme. The message was that if the president were even to contemplate this operation that we would blow the whistle and he would completely lose credibility and all the U.S. assistance. We learned that the word got to him and the scheme didn't go anywhere, but this was the degree to which Doe had been reduced to contemplate any kind of activity like that.

Let me just talk briefly about the Lebanese community. It was very strong, very powerful. They had a virtually complete hold on the retail import-export sector in the country. They were a very dynamic group of people. We had good relations with them. We were very close to their ambassador who had a fair amount of influence over his compatriots. Now, the Lebanese in West Africa, and in Liberia in particular, were a microcosm of the Lebanese in Lebanon. There were Christians, Shiites, Sunnis and Druze, and all the different political subsets were represented as well. They lived in peace with one another there. They lived good, even luxurious lives, but they did not live ostentatiously. They were cleverer than the Lebanese in Sierra Leone who maintained a high profile; they built grand homes, and as a result they became targets of resentment by many Sierra Leonians. When the time came they were eventually expelled and they lost everything. Lebanese in Liberia had the sense to live modestly, but maintain tremendous assets outside the country. I once had dinner with one of the more prominent Lebanese. He showed us a photograph of this 250-foot yacht that he maintained in the Mediterranean. He and his family had commercial operations in all of North Africa, and in Europe, and he kept the bulk of his assets there. The Lebanese were making excellent money in Liberia and they had the government on their side. They were making a contribution to the government and to Doe. When Doe was a sergeant, he had been given credit by a Lebanese grocery store owner, and he was fairly well disposed toward them. But they had to pay, too, to make contributions. We had some concern that the Lebanese might transfer their conflict, the civil war in Lebanon, to Liberia. This was an increasing concern to all U.S. overseas missions. In part, this was because they'd taken American hostages in Lebanon. We knew that the Lebanese were sending their fighters from the civil war in Lebanon to Liberia for R&R, to recuperate and to get their heads back together. Every faction, even the most extreme factions, had representatives in Liberia. Both the U.S. and Liberian governments made it very clear to the Lebanese there if you carried on a civil war in Liberia, they would be expelled and the good thing they had there would be gone.

For example, at the American high school, one of our school buses was being followed by some Middle Eastern looking individuals in a car. That same afternoon, we reported the incident to the police, to the Lebanese ambassador and to the head of the Lebanese community. Who are these people? Well, it turned out to be some lovelorn teenager whose girlfriend who was an American teenager who was on that bus. He was trying to get her attention with his flashy car. Well, before the day was out he was hauled up before the leaders of the Lebanese community and read the riot act. That was the end of that nonsense. That's the degree of control the Lebanese community maintained over its own people. There would be no threat against Americans. It was not in their interest to do so and they certainly didn't need the wrath of the Liberian government coming down on their heads.

As my tour closed out, the relationship is now very strained over the economic reform process, which is basically not working. Jim's relationship with the president was deteriorating, and ultimately the whole operational expert process was beginning to come apart. I left Monrovia in August of 1989 and by that December the Charles Taylor group came across the border and started what was to become the process that led to Doe's overthrow and death. What did we know about Charles Taylor? The fact of the matter is we had some knowledge of the fact that there was a group of exiled Liberian former political figures in Burkina Faso, and that they were being supported with arms, training and money by the Libyans. We had fairly extensive information dating back to the mid-'80s. Taylor was a late comer to this process. Taylor had been the head of what was the equivalent of our GSA in Liberia and he was. . .

Q: General Services Administration.

WAUCHOPE: That's right. Basically it was the procurer for the state of real estate, materials and services. He was, like many of Liberian officials very greedy, and he dug his hand in a little too deep and got caught at it. He was arrested and charged with having stolen at least a million dollars through several corrupt deals. He fled Liberia and turned up in the United States. He was in the United States for a year or so and was arrested in Massachusetts on some petty charge, but they didn't grant him bail. The authorities checked with the Liberian Embassy in Washington, who said he was wanted in Liberia as a fugitive. We didn't have an extradition for his particular crime, but the process was being worked out when he somehow got out of jail. His welcome in the United States was worn out and he pitched up in Burkina Faso, joining a bunch of other former politicians who were plotting against Doe. There, they received backing from the Libyans. The estimates were that the group was never more than 50 or 100 people. It was unknown if Libya was acting on its own or as an instrument of Soviet policy with the objective of undermining the U.S. presence and assets in Liberia which were still of importance to us. In either event, Libya was a very determined opponent of ours and this would be an excellent way of creating problems for us.

We followed their activities, but the conventional wisdom at the time was that they couldn't mobilize enough people to create a real problem for Doe. What ultimately happened is that when Taylor and his cohorts came across the frontier from the Ivorian side in December, 1989, Doe's forces over-reacted. The Ivorians intensely disliked the Doe government. Among other things, it was because the Liberians had invaded the Ivorian embassy to take a fugitive from the Doe government out of the Ivorian embassy, thus violating their diplomatic immunity. Doe's people had also killed Houphouet-Boigny's son-in-law, and Houphouet never forgave Doe. So apparently, the Ivorians were more than happy to cooperate with these exiled Liberians coming across his country from Libya to move against Doe. In any event, the conventional analysis would have held true except that when Doe's military overreacted. When Taylor's 50 or so people came across the border the word went out that they had arrived, the military spread out into the region. They started by destroying villages and dragging people out and shooting them. The victims were from the Mano and Gio group, the old Quiwonkpa supporters back from the 1985 coup attempt. As a result of these actions, within three months of Taylor first crossing the border, there were over 5,000 people who were now backing Taylor.

When Doe's troops began ravaging the region, Taylor's group went from 50 to 5,000 and it was just a matter of time before the government lost control of the north and northeast. Our military advisor, Col. Staley, told the Liberians over and over again, if you keep this up, these groups will rise up and they'll overthrow your government. You cannot continue to carry out these depredations against your own people. Of course, they did exactly what he warned them against, and eventually it resulted in Doe's overthrow and death. So, Doe in particular, and his military leaders were the cause of their own undoing, the way in which they handled the incursion led to their own downfall. The nation broke into factions, an extenuation of the ethnic conflict that became even more intense during this time. The people of Nimba in the Northwest didn't want to be part of this process. The Krahn were now under siege. Eventually when Doe fell, the Krahn became the outcasts and were driven back into the interior. Only recently have the Krahn been able to re-establish the faction that represents their interests. The country crumbled into its ethnic divisions.

In terms of what happened with American investments, on the commercial side, they held on as long as they could. Firestone had been bought out in 1988 by Bridgestone a Japanese company. As things got more difficult and problems arose, their officials turned to the American Embassy. We said the Japanese embassy is now responsible for you. Of course there were American citizens working there and did what we had to for the American citizens. That had been the single largest investment we had In Liberia. The successor to the Uniroyal, a group of private American investors, continued to operate as long as they could, but again had to pay the insurgents to get their rubber to the port.

Q: Uniroyal is that British?

WAUCHOPE: No, it's American, but it's now been taken up by Goodrich. When they were bought out, but the Liberian plantation was bought out by this group of investors and they were making good money, as was Firestone. Firestone was making excellent money. They were producing not only hard rubber, but they were also producing latex as well. During the time of the AIDS crisis and there was a real boom in latex.

The iron ore companies were having increasing problems. They were being squeezed for more taxes and revenue. They were located in the Northern most part of the country and the insurgent activity in that area became particularly active and as a result they had continuing problems. A fairly common occurrence was finding mangled bodies along the LAMCO iron ore rail line. It was revealed late in my tour that, as part of the historic Liberian culture, there were secret practices that would curled your hair. The Liberian Minister of Defense, no less, named Graham Allison, was involved. Allison had studied in the United States, and was a reasonably polished individual with whom we were in constant professional and personal contact. He was charged by the Liberian authorities of having committed ritual murder. When we heard of these charges, we thought he'd obviously run afoul of Doe and they're trying to trumping this up. We learned to our astonishment that it wasn't a set up, it was all true. He had, in fact, participated along with his wife, in the murder of a police sergeant. He and his cohorts had abducted the policeman, took him to a property that he owned. They slit his throat and they hung him upside down and drained his blood and drank his blood. Then they did what had been done in other cases; they'd take the body and lay it out on the railroad line. As these ore ,trains would come by of course they'd mangle the body beyond recognition, and the severed head would be just taken as another part of the injuries from the train.

I spoke with LAMCO, the Liberian American Mining Company representative and they said, this was a fairly common thing that every year there would be several dozen bodies that were allegedly killed by the trains who were actually the victims of ritual murder. Sure enough they were able to prove their case against Allison and he was executed for ritual murder. The concept behind ritual murder is that the more important the victim that you kill the more power and influence that you attain. So, a police sergeant was reasonably important. Unfortunately, most of the victims were small boys, as boys have more power to convey than girls do. We were flabbergasted at those kinds of events because as I say they implicated some of the most senior Liberians. The death of several boys in Harper in the southeastern part of the country was attributed to the mayor and the police chief. They had been performing ritual murders, but eventually were caught and executed. These that apparently went on under the table for a long time, and some people in power probably got away with that. You might ask, would the Americo-Liberians participate in that? I think most would find it as repugnant as you and I, but some with closer roots to the indigenous culture might conscious something like that.

Another area of a great deal of focus was the American community. As I said, it was quite large, some 5000, and the community harbored a continuing concern about the breakdown of civil order. Political agitation was frequent in the form of demonstrations or political action against the government or one another. We had set up a warden system that was really quite effective and, even when I was Chargï¿½ before Jim Bishop arrived; we conducted town meetings in several different sections of the city so the people would know our assessment of the situation and we could refine procedures and communications. We also had missionaries in the interior. They had representatives in Monrovia and they had a pretty good radio network. We just had to make sure we were in touch with them. We succeeded in making people feel reasonably secure, and aware of what the embassy could and would do for them, how to get in contact with the embassy and what would happening the case of a crisis. When the crisis did occur in late 1989, it unfolded at such a pace that most people were able to get out of the way before the complete collapse of the Doe government. We had an excellent team on the consular side. When you have that large an American community and many close ties between Liberians and Americans, you had Americans with problems popping up all the time. They would run out of money and become destitute, or they'd had mental problems and we would have to repatriate them .

Of course, underlying all was visas. Visas were a constant headache. No matter whom you dealt with, at some stage or other, the Liberians would importune you to help them with a visa. They used to say, Liberia is the 51st state of the United States., why do we have to have visas at all? We're the same as you. Why can't we just go to the U. S. whenever we want to go? I replied that Liberia is a sovereign nation, as you always insist when it comes to issues that are to your benefit, so you can't have it both ways. There was all manner of visa fraud, needless to say. Jim Bishop adopted the position that whenever anybody even mentioned visas, he said "I don't do visas," and that was that. I would defer to the consular officer whenever visas came up. If she said no, that was no, and I would never even contemplate overturning her decision Visas generated a vast amount of acrimony, and a visa refusal was a very bitter pill, especially for members of the leading families. One of the more effective sanctions the United States invoked against the Taylor government because of its support of the insurgents of Sierra Leone, was to stop granting visas to the United States. This proved to be a very telling form of reprisal against them.

In any event, I wrapped up my tour in Monrovia in July of 1989. That spring, I was approached by the AF Bureau about several different chief of mission possibilities. One of the early ones was the Central African Republic. I was unenthusiastic about it because the limited educational options for my sons. I had two boys, the older one was in elementary school and he needed some extra help, and there was no English speaking school in Bangui. So I indicated that I didn't think that post would really work for me. This was not taken well in the Director General's office, but I held my ground. Then there was Mauritius. I was told that one of Bush's supporters from Texas (a woman of the "you can never be too thin, too blond or too rich" school) was in line for that appointment, but it hinged on whether her husband, a lawyer, could find work there. It turned out that he could, and that job slipped away. Finally, Jim Bishop went to bat for me, and another option was offered in Gabon. There was an international school there because of the American oil companies. I said, "That sounds good to me." I knew that things in Gabon tended to work, which would be a nice change from where we had spent in our other tours in Africa.

Q: Okay, a couple of things, going back. Did you find that you had a problem with the Peace Corps when you arrived there because of fraudulent elections? You know, the Peace Corps is idealistic people and I mean as things went, I mean the corruption and all this. Could you talk a bit about this?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, that's a good point: I should have elaborated. The elements of the U.S. mission that were strongly anti-Doe included the U.S. Information Agency, some in the embassy political section and certain Peace Corps staff, and to a lesser degree, the Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps held the view that to support Doe was to encourage the misuse of money that was intended for the development of the country. They expressed a fair amount of resentment about this. They know the people better than we did in the embassy and they, the people, were unhappy with Doe. The people knew about Doe's shortcomings and the corruption of his regime, and they resented the Americans supporting Doe. Peace Corps volunteers would bring to our attention Doe's abuses as well. We had a strong and balanced Peace Corps program and an excellent director, Bob Jackson, and he would try to keep their eye on the prize while trying to keep the volunteers on task and out of politics. The object of the exercise was to see what you could do to within the constraints of our program, working with our counterparts to achieve our agreed goals. The Peace Corps was always well received in Liberia. The Liberians appreciated what the volunteers could do, and they understood that these volunteers were not only an asset to them, but that they offered a form of communication to the American public as well. They wanted them to have a valuable experience. There is an organization, Friends of Liberia, that was founded by former Peace Corps volunteers and they try to help Liberia; its people, not its government. There is a strong sense of residual commitment in this group. Their PC programs were not that badly affected by their distaste for the government, but they were being harangued by their local counterparts about the failings and the corruption of their government.

Q: Well, speaking about this, the Peace Corps in a place like Liberia, is out in I don't know if you called it the bush in those days or not, but you know, out in the up country. Did you all get out there much? Was there in a way much to do out there except to show a presence?

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. We tried to get out there because both Jim and I had a strong sense that we had to show the flag in the interior, as well as to find out what people are thinking in the outlying areas. Our volunteers were mostly involved in teaching, rural development and agriculture. We had a training facility for volunteers from other African nations where you had created an integrated agricultural scheme. The Peace Corps bought trainees and lead volunteers to observe this process. It was a pretty basic operation, which included pig and chicken production. Their waste was then used to feed a series of fish ponds, and then these fish, Tilapia, would develop. If properly managed, this scheme would add fish to the diet of Africans living in the interior. It was a sort of self-perpetuating project because participants would also raise crops to feed the pigs and chickens. It was really quite an impressive operational concept, and Peace Corps used to run groups through there on a set schedule. Jim or I would go up there for the graduation ceremonies or to welcome the trainees. We also went out to the more remote areas as well. As the bilateral relationship began to unravel; we were a bit more careful about sending volunteers into areas where there might be trouble. In point of fact, the Krahn region, which was Doe's tribe, there was a longstanding history of brutality and violence. We kept our volunteers out of those rural areas because they were more susceptible to violence than in other parts of the country. Some tribal groups were further evolved than others and the Krahn were probably the most backward in Liberia; ironically. Doe was from that group.

Q: What about AIDS as, that's Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which is now plaguing the place. Had that started?

WAUCHOPE: It had just barely started to be acknowledged, but we were able to do was work on education and training. We would make funds available to produce videos and shows on television so that they could get some sense of the threat. We focused on the basics of how AIDS is transmitted and the use of prophylactics. We imported prophylactics and ensured that they were distributed. I have to be honest about it, as was my experience also in Gabon, we did not get the sense that the Africans appreciated AIDS as a real threat. They just could not seem to get their minds around the fact that this could really threaten the existence of their country, as it has since proven now to have done. The irony is that most victims were from the elites because they had the mobility that was an essential element in spreading the disease. In terms of their sexual conduct, the level of promiscuity was not significantly different than any other part of Africa. We never really got the sense that the government did more than pay lip service to the threat at that time. I remember that the videos had a little tree with inflated prophylactics attached to it, the relevance of which I could not fathom. Generally, Africans were unwilling to talk about sexual practices with us as it was a private matter, prophylactics, you know, this is part of human nature, but in order to stop the spread you had to use them. I have to tell you they did not take it very seriously.

Q: What about diamonds? Were diamonds a big deal there?

WAUCHOPE: Not really. Most of the diamonds that surfaced in Liberia came from Sierra Leone. The diamond trade there was then controlled by the Lebanese, and most of the diamonds were in fields where the Lebanese controlled production trade. There was artisan mining, which is to say they carve into a hillside or dig into a pit to try to find the diamonds. They are not of the highest quality or value, and were used in most cases for industrial purposes, but they still have value. There are some diamonds in Liberia, but not really of any significance.

They do have gold. While I was there, Broken Hill Proprietary, the largest company in Australia had one of its American subsidiaries negotiate for a gold mining investment. They thought that they had a very good prospect in Liberia.. They were unnerved at the corruption they learned about. I was at the reception when the deal had been signed and David Farhat, the Minister of Commerce at the time, arriving late, said, "Did I get here too late? Has everybody already been paid off, or is my share still there?" He was half-joking and half not.

Q: Speaking of corruption, was the money being peeled off going out of the country or was it being recirculated?

WAUCHOPE: Probably both, as best we could tell. They were sending a certain amount of it out through a very porous banking system. One problem they had was that the Liberian dollar, through mismanagement and political uncertainty, and because of corrupt practices was becoming increasingly worthless. Theoretically, it was in parity with the U.S. dollar, but in reality it was trading at about five to one during this time. Then the government went a step further and introduced higher denomination coins. It felt that paper money was too easy to devalue, so they went to coins figuring they would be more solid, but it didn't fool anybody. Corrupt payoffs had to be in foreign currency, U.S. dollars in most instances. Then of course they could have it deposited into offshore accounts. But leaders needed a certain amount of assets in Liberia like their SUVs and fancy gear, and home improvements. Where the Lebanese had the good sense not to flaunt their wealth, the Liberian elites did not. It caught up with them eventually because everybody recognized who was getting the kickbacks.

Q: You mentioned there were a whole number of embassies there from all over. Obviously I can understand why we were there, the Lebanese and all, but what were all these other people doing?

WAUCHOPE: Right. That's a good question. The British chancery was right next door to us on Mamba Point. They had a large physical plant, but a small staff. The French were across the street from us, again small staffed, but impressive operations. The Italians were up the street. Most of these European nations were there because the Americans had encouraged them to be represented in times past, and Monrovia's infrastructure was relatively good. The Swedes were there because Electrolux owned the LAMCO iron ore mine. That made sense. The Japanese were there because they wanted to be engaged in economic assistance. The Soviets were there for political reasons, a hangover from the bipolar world, and they were joined by the Romanians. Their sense was that this had been an important place for the Americans. The West Germans were there because they had a large mining operation, Bong Mines. The Italians and French had very little real involvement. They had some export business and they did buy some of the rubber, but nothing really significant. I think they were there primarily because of its past history under the Americo-Liberian regime. Monrovia was a nice place to operate out of and to look out for their interests in other parts of West Africa. It had good communications and, when the Tubman government was operating, the Americans made sure things ran well, reliable power and water. So, they'd set up their operations in those days and monitored their regional responsibilities from there. They stayed on basically because the Americans wanted them stay. They stayed for as long as they could tolerate the situation. The British closed down soon after the trouble started in late '89, and we took over their chancery compound.. The Italians and the French saw no reason to hang on and closed down. Then the Eastern Bloc countries left with the collapse of communism.

Q: What about life for you at the embassy, you know, I mean, the people there, was there much social life? How did things progress?

WAUCHOPE: It was really quite excellent, in fact. It was remarkably good, like the last good this before the Fall. The Embassy was well organized to provide support services to the American community. Most of us were in the Mamba Point area where the embassy is located. We had three large apartment buildings immediately adjacent to the embassy compound. My own circumstances were really extraordinary. My predecessor Len Shurtleff had arranged to purchase the combined Dutch embassy and residence. The Dutch had closed down in the mid-1980s and so we took it over their complex. It was just around the corner from the embassy. We had more space than we could use. We could host a reception for 600 people, which we did on two occasions when we I was the Chargï¿½ and hosted the 4th of July reception. We could easily put them all under cover. There had a large dining room and living room area and then we could open doors onto a big terrace with an awning over half of it. The Dutch, being as thorough as they were, had an air conditioning system for each level, plus a back up unit. The lower level had been the chancery and the upper level was the residence. These air conditioning units were about half the size of this room. You'd push the button and these things would roar into action. As we had increasing problems with electricity, the GSO put up a building for a massive generator that could run everything in the house. You had seven refrigerators because we had to do a lot of entertaining. I had a household staff of 5 people, probably one of the best cooks in town and after I left he opened his own restaurant. He did well enough to make his living as a restaurateur. There was a big pool at the Voice of America compound, and there was a pool on the embassy compound. There were all kinds of mission activities; there were the hash house harriers, the marine house was a great center of activity and life for the Americans was really quite excellent. With a large American school, we had just about everything. One source of concern was the CIA telecommunications base, it was one of five in the world. The other four are all co-located with military facilities. The communicators were a group of people who rotated among these five bases, and Liberia was the most backward. There was no PX or commissary, no American recreational facility, no officer or NCO clubs. This group was always disappointed at the lack of support services and facilities. We were told about that this was a select group of technicians and communicators; only one applicant in 20 was accepted, and they were virtually all former military. Despite this selectivity there were no lack of problems; employees sleeping with each other's wives, etc. One family was thrown out of country when the wife discharged a shotgun out on the balcony of their apartment in frustration over a husband running around with somebody. I must say the agency didn't hesitate to apply its rules in this case, the whole family was gone within 24 hours. Not only did Monrovia not have the expected perks, there were Africans all around these newcomers, which unnerved some of the more insular ones. This resulted in substantial adjustment problems. We had to work with these people and try to bring them into the process and we appealed to their sense of adventure. Some responded well, some didn't.

Q: How about relations with the Liberians?

WAUCHOPE: They were generally excellent. The Liberians have a great affinity for the United States whether it's for real or not, which is debatable. They were persuaded that we can do anything we want to do. Of course, they all would go to the United Stats in a flash if they were given an opportunity. This attachment to the U.S. was not unfortunately taken into account when Liberia collapsed in turmoil, but the Bush Administration was unprepared to put American military forces into restore order. When the killing started in December and into the early part of 1990, there were five U.S. ships off the Liberian coast and this task force had as many as 2,200 American marines aboard. If we'd just put 500 American marines ashore, the Liberians would have done whatever the Marines told them to do. They had that high a regard for the American military. A certain number of Liberians had served in our military at one time or another. Our troops could probably have kept the Liberian factions apart and had some real impact on the situation. I'm not suggesting it would have been a miraculous solution, but Jim Bishop told me that the Bush administration didn't want to be in a position to be seen to be supporting either Taylor, who was a fugitive from justice in the United States, or Doe, a man who presided over terrible repressive actions against his political enemies. It seemed like a no win situation, so Bush didn't order them in. The perception of U.S. power, influence and ability of Americans would have been a very important restraining factor on later violence that occurred in Liberia. It's unfortunate.

On a personal basis, we really enjoyed the Liberians' company. They had a special handshake which we all mastered so we could be part of their group. They were good company and a lot of fun, and they really enjoyed life. They really knew the United States well. They knew we were open and friendly and they really appreciated that in us, and we enjoyed it in them.

Overall, I think that, while my tour as DCM in Monrovia was professionally rewarding and personally enjoyable for me, it also marked the end of an era in Liberia. In the months following my departure a process began that brought down the last vestiges of the Americo-Liberian heyday, and replaced it with a failed state that is only now beginning to show the first glimmers of hope of some degree or stability. Reflecting on our role in this period, I think we sincerely tried to make Doe and his government into a responsible and effective organization, but we learned that there are always limits to reforming such flawed individuals. If there was any error made by the U.S. government it was probably to permit Doe to run as a candidate in this election. Once we acquiesced in that decision, the game was essentially over. Doe made certain he would win, fair or foul, and then his greed and stupidity that of his supporters ensured the corruption and mismanagement that we strove to correct. Corrupt regimes breed their own undoing, and just as Amin's army proved to be no more than a gang of thugs and thieves that proved incapable of facing the questionable military prowess of the Tanzanian army, so also did Doe's army revert to thugery to suppress Charles Taylor's 50-man incursion transforming it into a 5000 man insurgency in three months. Again our advice for a moderate and disciplines response was brushed aside and Doe was tortured to death less than a year later. The tragic descent of Liberia into chaos and death could only have been prevented by an intensive and timely intervention by the U.S. with all the longer term consequences that such interventions entail. Our leaders of that time were not prepared to make that investment of American resources and prestige, but ironically, it perhaps one of the few places in the world where such an intervention would have been both welcomed and very likely hugely successful.

Q: Okay, well, we'll pick this up next time in 1989 when you're off to Gabon?

WAUCHOPE: Off to Gabon. That's right.

Q: Today is the 4th of October, 2002. Keith, let's start, how did you get assigned to Gabon, or appointed to Gabon?

WAUCHOPE: I was interested in an ambassadorial appointment, and the folks in the AF Bureau, colleagues and friends, said that they would pursue a mission for me. I was considered for the Central African Republic. And at one stage for Mauritius, and the latter had a certain appeal for me. While it was not an area that I knew, and I thought it would be an opportunity to experience a different part of Africa. At the last minute the first Bush administration put forward a woman named Penny Korth for Mauritius. Her nomination revolved around whether her husband, a lawyer, would be able to find gainful employment. Apparently he could and that job fell through. Then they pressed me for the CAR and I was concerned in particular that my older son who was nine years old at that time would be disadvantaged because there was no English language school. I interjected that concern into the system and the system apparently didn't like it. Even people who knew me well and who were favorably disposed toward me, took some offense that I would turn down an offer of an ambassadorial mission. Nonetheless, Jim Bishop weighed in on my half, and they took another look. Gabon opened up at that point and there was an English-language school the oil companies. There were six American oil companies operating in Gabon. I was put forward as the Department's candidate. My nomination went to the White House and passed through that process. We left Liberia in the latter part of July and returned to the States in anticipation that the appointment would come through. As happens with many of these appointments, it got caught up in other legislative activities, and it became a question of whether I was going to get my hearing before the Christmas recess. Fortunately, there was a small envelope of time, which permitted them to schedule my hearing. The Department ran six candidates through at one time. I went up to the Hill, and there were only two senators present at the hearing. One of the other nominees was Smith Hempstone who was going to Kenya. Senator Sarbanes was leading the questioning. He went from one of us to the other. His principal question that he asked each of us was, "How come you were nominated to be ambassador to so and so?" So, when they came to Smith Hempstone, he said, "Well, I was at a cocktail party with the then Vice President Bush and I said to him, 'If you become President of the United States, as I expect you will, I hope you will appoint me to be ambassador to Kenya.'" He told it right the way it was. This approach pretty much disarmed the senator. My questioning was relatively gentle, and I was pretty well prepared and informed. The senators were also concerned about nominee's ability to speak the language. I said that I had a full working ability in French, and that seemed to assuage them. In any event, the confirmation process dragged on, and we didn't arrive in Gabon until early November, by which time there was already some political agitation in the country.

Q: This was in November of '89?

WAUCHOPE: November of '89, correct. There was a developing situation, which became quite extraordinary for Gabon over time. Before I get into that, perhaps I'll talk a bit about Gabon and our interest and our relations with Gabon. What is most striking about Gabon is that it's probably the most French-oriented former French colony in Africa. This residual French influence was really is extraordinary. The French are installed in command positions in the military, in the police, in the intelligence services. They run the power and water plants. They have advisors, "consignee technique," French government employees in every ministry of government. The result is that they simply make sure that the ministry works for the benefit of the French. In addition, there were some 35,000 French nationals in Gabon. At that time, the French population was increasing during that time rather than declining as elsewhere in Africa, and this was 30 years after independence. Historically France had a played very active role in Gabon. In the post-independence period, in 1964, there was a coup which unseated Leon Mba. His opponents took over the presidential palace and detained Mba. French paratroopers put him back in power citing the mutual defense treaty.. The French made it clear they weren't going to tolerate a leader that they did not control. The French were concerned about their oil revenues from the very substantial operation of ELF, which in that country is known as ELF Gabon. There were Frenchowned uranium and manganese mines as well. They also had a very active timber industry. These were very lucrative activities and they were not going to have them jeopardized by untried people that they didn't know. Mba was their man. The he got cancer and died in 1967. When Mba demise was inevitable the French began to groom his successor, Omar Bongo, a former sergeant in the French army. The French knew Bongo reasonably well and he was essentially anointed by the French to become the president. He's been the president ever since and is to this day, but from my perspective, it wasn't a bad choice. Bongo is from the Bateke group, from the southeastern part of the country. It probably has less than one percent of the population, and the larger part of his tribe were over in the Congo Brazzaville. As a result he didn't bring with him any of the animosities that the tribal divisions cause. The dominant tribe, the largest single group, was the Fang, who are about 38% of the population. If the Fang controlled the government, there would have been a intense resentment by the minority tribes in the middle and southern part of the country. In many ways Bongo was an ideal candidate from that perspective. Before my departure for Libreville I spoke with for of my predecessors about Gabon. They all said that Bongo was "the only game in town;" the power source of the whole government. They were absolutely correct. When you visit the Presidential Palace when Bongo is in town, people are scurrying around with dossiers under their arms, everybody's alert and active. When Bongo is out of the country or out of the city, people are literally asleep at their desks, and everything seems to come to a halt. Bongo is a very bright, street-smart leader. He long ago learned that Gabon's petroleum the resources, some 300,000+ barrels a day, are the primary source of his leverage on the world stage. Although Gabon is one of the smallest members of the OPEC, Bongo still has the money to co-opt his opponents. If they get out of hand or become obstreperous, his first inclination is to try to buy them off. He will either appoint them to posts overseas or he'll just give them a sum of money to keep them quiet. That approach had worked for many, many years.

By 1989 this approach was beginning to wear a bit thin. The pressure for greater political, which was going on throughout Africa to a certain extent at that time, emerged in Gabon in the classic manner. Agitation started at the university over the deteriorating campus and the students' inability to petition the government for redress. The urge toward democratic reform was a process that, in part reflected what was happening in the USSR and in Eastern Europe. How this movement infected the Gabonese body politic was exceptional. Bongo is something of a techno-freak. One thing that his money had bought him was a nationwide satellite television service installed by Scientific Atlanta. There was live, direct satellite television broadcast to all the nine regional capitals. They received live feeds from all over the world. One of these feeds in the latter part of November was the overthrow of Ceausescu in Romania. You may recall that Ceausescu was first challenged when a support rally he had organized turned against him. He came out on the balcony and everything and raises his hand expecting the crowds' adulation and instead of the cheers, he gets boos. He was flabbergasted, and quickly withdrew from the balcony. He immediately faced major strikes and demonstrations. He was then deposed and executed within a matter of weeks.

The Gabonese looked at these events and saw an extraordinary irony in that Ceausescu had been in power about the same period of time that Bongo had been in power, some 23 years. They thought to themselves, if the people in a police state like Romania can overthrow their ruler, why couldn't they do the same. By contrast to Ceausescu, Bongo was a relatively benign ruler. Why did they have to put up with a single party government? It really did inspire them to test the system. As I say, they decided that this was a time to challenge Bongo's hold on the country.

Shortly after I arrived this issue was becoming acute. Bongo kept saying, it's okay, we can work it out, we can accommodate all these different perspectives and points of view without having to revert to violence or street demonstrations. This approach worked for a while, then the university students defied him, and he closed the university. The university students then went to the lycï¿½e students, the elite schools from where most of them had graduated. They persuaded those students to walk out and go on strike. They shut the lyceï¿½s down and went out into the streets. Then the kids from other secondary schools, even primary schools were out on the streets as well. The ambassador's residence at that time, as it had been since the time since we opened our Embassy in Gabon, was located above what was called the Carrefour de Rio. It was like the peoples' area. It had been developed first as a squatter area, now it was a commercial residential neighborhood. The main street below our residence was the primary route out of the capital into the interior of the country. These students and local kids, unleashed from school, installed themselves on the hillside just below us. They looted first a soft drink truck, then a beer truck, which was worse. They started throwing bottles of soda and beer at passing cars and trucks which had to run a gauntlet. From a kid's perspective, this was the greatest possible sport. We were observing this from up above them. We could see this whole process evolve. For a high school kid you can't imagine a more enjoyable time, especially seeing these cars weaving around below them dodging the bottles they were hurling down. Of course, they were taking a swig of beer from time to time.

Bongo was apparently stunned. He'd run a very efficient and tranquil regime for 23 years and he'd never really been challenged, certainly not by widespread street demonstrations.. At first he sent the police out to restore order. The police looked at the numbers of people on the streets, and realized that they could not handle this crowd, so they backed off and monitored the situation. This emboldened the rioters. During the daylight hours, they were mostly these high school students. They started getting rougher stopping car and sometimes dragging out the drivers and beat them or chase them off. Then they'd set the cars on fire. That became a more serious proposition. That first night was when events began to get out of control. They set fire to trucks that had been parked or that were stopped by the rioters. There were three trucks down below the residence that they set on fire. They burned all night long. At night he rioters were no longer high school students, but rather the indigent and underclasses who wanted to take advantage of the turmoil, especially because the police were not intervening. Bongo had mobilized the gendarmes as well, but they also kept their distance. We followed events from the residence on the hill above the crossroads and could see both the rioters and the police. Libreville is a very sophisticated town. There were mercury vapor lamps along the roads, and everything was still functioning. You could see the police massed on the far hill and all these vehicles burning below us. The rioters then started looting stores across the street from us. The first shops looted belonged to foreigners, Senegalese and Guineans. They were a small merchants and tailors. This attack on other Africans reflected the fact that Gabon, a country that claims a population of about 1.2 million people, in reality has probably no more than 600,000 to 800,000 Gabonese and the rest are other Africans who came to Gabon for the high wages. They kept the country going. Nonetheless, they were resented by the Gabonese who claimed that they took jobs away from the Gabonese, and as merchants, they became the creditors. So this unsettled time gave the Gabonese a chance to strike back against the foreign Africans.

The rioting that first night came to an end when a hardware store just down the street from us was set on fire. The fire ignited paint and turpentine, and the flames rose three stories into the air. Finally, the gendarmes and the fire department moved in before the entire neighborhood was destroyed. They brought the fire under control. It didn't pose a real threat for our compound as we had over seven acres, plenty of buffer between ourselves and the fire. The rioters had no animus toward the Americans. They knew that the Americans were there on the hill. I said to our the household staff and the family, let's not show too much interest in these events, just be discreet about our interest in it. I was radioing information in to the marine guard at the embassy and the security officer. Most of the activity that night was in our area. The first night wound down after the fire was extinguished. The next morning, it seemed to quiet down, and the military were out in force patrolling the roads. I went to work, and my older boy was at the American school, and my younger boy was in daycare. My wife went down town to do some chores. The trouble started again in the early afternoon. It really began to get out of control, so they closed the American School. My son was brought to the embassy and my wife had already picked up the little boy and took him home. She returned down town to bring home the older boy. The three of us were all at the Embassy, and the rioting was spreading. We waited as long as we could, but as the Libreville is just north of the equator, the sun sets at 6:20 and its completely dark. The movement would be impossible. At about 5:00 we decided we had to choose what to do. We didn't want to spend the night at the Embassy because our younger son was home with the nanny, and we certainly didn't want to make the trip at night. Our RSO kept saying.. . .

Q: RSO is Regional Security Officer?

WAUCHOPE: Right, she was a former DC police officer.. She said, "Well, if you have to get back there, you take the lightly armored vehicle." The ambassador's vehicle had bullet-proof windows. It was a big Impala with a bomb proof on the bottom. She said, "Here take my pistol." I said, "What am I going to do with a pistol? Who am I going to shoot for God's sake? I'm not going to take any pistol." I told her that security of the American diplomats is the responsibility of the government of Gabon. She was to call them through her contacts and tell them that I have to return to my residence and I need whatever they consider to be an appropriate escort. Sure enough at about 5:30 the gendarmes showed up with an armored car and a van with wire covered windows. They said they'd get us back home.

Q: You were saying the streets were either quiet or?

WAUCHOPE: Well, there were groups of rioters looking for trouble, and there were tires burning in the streets. We headed out in the direction of the residence and then we detoured. The next thing I know we're up at the headquarters of what was known as securitie mobile, the elite mobile security unit. I was surprised because I didn't see any French advisors. There was a Gabonese lieutenant colonel who said I should not drive to the residence in our own vehicle. Saying the vehicle will get all banged up. They persuaded me to leave the vehicle there and to drive in his vehicles that are designed for riots. At this point I was thinking that historically Gabonese had never faced a challenge to its security to this extent. If I threw my lot in with the security forces, am I not seeming to be taking sides with Bongo. At the same time, of course, I've got my family with me. This was a time that the family had to come first. I did want to get back to the house. My two year old son was at home and he wouldn't be able to understand that his mom wasn't there. So, I grilled this colonel to be sure he knew exactly where I lived. I made him pinpoint on a map where I lived. I then asked him to tell me what was going on there. He said, "Well, it's not unlike it was last night. There are rioters all over that area. They're looting the stores and our gendarmes are drawn up on this hill on the opposite side of the road, but we will come in an adequate force if necessary, to make sure that they don't harm you." I figured that at least the guy knows what he's talking about, and he did have radio communication with these vehicles. We were put in the van with the wire over the windows following a French-made six wheeled armored car. The troops were standing in the hatches with their rifles. We went down from the hill and around what we called the beltway west of the city and exited near the residence. We came off at the interchange and at the top and you're in the commercial area across from the residence. Everything had gone reasonably well to that point. There had been some burning tires along the beltway, but when we came up the ramp and it was like Dante's Inferno. There were fires everywhere. There were buildings on fire and tires burning in the street. There were rioters by the hundreds if not thousands, and they were now looting the Lebanese stores. It was one thing to steal from the Senegalese, but the Lebanese had the real good stuff. They were smashing in the steel doors were trying to get into their stores. As, we came roaring up the exit ramp the armored car in the lead the rioters were startled and scattered immediately. But as we came out onto the street, there was a burning obstruction in the road, a combination of burning tires and junk. The armored car stopped and the driver tried to figure out how to proceed. The gendarmes had the good sense not to fire risking creating martyrs. When the rioter realized there was only one armored car and a small van in our convoy, the quickly regained their courage and moved forward stoning our vehicles. The troops in the armored car buttoned it up, closed the hatches. The stones were hitting our vehicle and it was getting a bit dicey. The officer in command in our vehicle radioed to the armored car, "Just push that junk out of the way, for God's sake." The armored car backed up and then hit the gas and banged through the barricade with us following close behind. He then charged up toward our driveway. Our driveway ran parallel to the road and was a fairly steep incline. When we roared ahead, I was afraid they'd run over somebody, and we'd have a martyr. The Americans would then be implicated in killing some hapless rioter. When the armored car got to our gate, my guards wouldn't let it in. There was an obvious screw up as our staff had been told about our plans. There was a brief brouhaha about that, while the rioters began to pull in behind us. Finally the gates opened and we rushed in. I thanked all the gendarmes when we got to the house, and they immediately turned around and headed back out. They plowed through the crowd without incident, but did nothing about the ongoing looting. I guess the Gabonese thought that, as for the Lebanese, you pay your money and you take your chances, and that's the way it goes. The rioters thoroughly looted all the stores and took everything they could carry off.

This situation continued for a third day and by which time Bongo had obviously realized that he had to deal with the new reality. As I say, he is a very street-smart fellow. First he let the mob satiate itself over a period of time and work out its frustrations, all the while exhausting itself in the effort. Finally on the third day he brought in his military in unparallel force. That opened the streets and drove the rioters into cover. He established a curfew and brought order back in the capital. At this same time there were problems down in Port Gentile, which is the economic heartland of Gabon. At the center of the oil industry with it's large port for the export of oil, especially for the onshore oil. The French have a very substantial presence there. By contrast, ours was modest, but also in the oil sector. The French of course were the dominant presence. Ironically, Gabon was the mirror image of what we were in Liberia. They were the absolute end all and be all in power and influence in Gabon. We used to say the number one man in Gabon was Bongo, and the number two man was the French ambassador, closely followed the Elf Gabon representative who had vast amounts on the money to throw around. With there network in the ministries, the Presidency and the security forces, they knew virtually everything there was to know in Gabon.

We knew that the French technicians had bugged all our phones. When I say the French, I mean the French who worked for Bongo. He had hired former intelligence people at the suggestion of the French government, and he had an extraordinary effective and well financed intelligence network as a result. They knew everything that was going on in the diplomatic community at least that went over the public lines. The French ambassador was sort of a potentate in his own little empire there. Prior to the riots, he had been proper in his dealings with me, but somewhat distant. When the French were in trouble in Port Gentil, and it became apparent that the French were going to have to intervene, my status rose sharply. The French had 600 paratroopers in Libreville, as they have to this day. They also have a small air transport unit there. The question was long range transport. Out of the blue the French ambassador calls and asks if he could come by to see me. Now, this is almost unprecedented. If there were any contact with the French Embassy, the American ambassador would always ask to see the French ambassador and go to the French embassy. He began his conversation with, "We have a common problem here." I thought to myself, well, yes, I've got about 350 to 450 Americans, and you have 35,000 French. "Our common problem" was not an issue of the numbers, but the threat.. He said that "we" may need American air transport capability to get our nationals out if the situation deteriorates further. I promised to let Washington know and to see what they could do for you. He did send about 100 paratroopers to Port Gentil to protect his citizens and their interests. They quickly freed the French Consul who had been forcefully taken from his office which was then burned. They threw a cordon up around European housing and gathered together the French citizens, in particular. I was in contact with the American representatives there as well. I asked about their situation and about their plans. There were about 50 Americans in Port Gentil. They said they had talked to the French authorities there and were told that the priority for evacuation would be the French first, then the British, because Shell was there, and then the Americans third. These guys were from Texas and they weren't going to be third in anything. If it comes down to evacuation, they would get themselves out, thank you very much. And they did. They arranged for one of the oil service boats that they used to supply their offshore rigs, loaded all the Americans aboard and took them over to Sao Tome and out of harms way.

It turned out that, with the French paratroopers in place, the looting and destruction wasn't too bad. The French were so closely tied to Bongo that the rioters felt that they were getting back at Bongo by going after the French, whereas the Americans were not viewed as being implicated in this whole exploitation process. As the Port Gentil situation subsided, Bongo had to figure out how to deal with the overall situation. He acknowledges that there clearly were going to have to be some changes made. His first approach was to say that the single party can accommodate different positions within its ranks of the party, the Parti Democratique de Gabon. He took the position that he could manage this challenge to his authority. The response of the people and his opposition was unenthusiastic. They demanded a multiparty system. He resisted and resisted, proposing several alternatives along the same line. As the agitation continued in the form of demonstrations, strikes and boycotts, he decided that he had to go a step beyond. So, he agreed to permit said, okay, here's the deal, any three people can form a party. They've got to get another 500 signatures or something like that and they've got to have a charter and they've got to make a statement. They can form their own political parties. This was unprecedented in Bongo's era. His opponents, tasting victory over Bongo, Immediately started to organize. They organized a bunch of friends and obtain the 150 names needed for a petition and raised the nominal amount of money to establish a party. In a matter of weeks seventy-three new parties were formed. Obviously this was part of Bongo's plan, to fragment the opposition thereby making it impotent by setting the diverse groups against one another. On top of this ploy, Bongo pulled off perhaps the greatest coup of this exercise. He offered 10 million CFA, worth approximately $75,000. to each party that met the criteria to be certified. The money was supposed to fund their campaigns. Of course, they all greedily sucked up the money. Among the 73 parties that qualified, there were all manner of minority elements represented.. There was one called the Party of God. Bongo's supporter gave great play to the fact that this group alleged that it represented God. There were several other bizarre fringe groups. There were a significant number of groups that represented ethnic or tribal elements. Bongo knew that would happen, and that they would fight among themselves for power. In any event, he gave the parties the money, and a number of them immediately went out and splurged on material things they craved. For example, the party leaders started remodeling their homes, they bought themselves a big SUV and expensive gear. Bongo continued to control the media, the television, radio and the newspapers. On instructions, they sent out their investigative reporters to find out how this money was spent. The reporters took pictures and wrote stories about how the recipients used the money Bongo had given them to campaign. These exposes played into Bongo's hands and he said to the public, "They accuse me of misspending the nation's resources. Look at this. I gave these people money to run a campaign and they went out and bought cars and rebuilt their houses." So, he is able to turn this corruption issue back onto his opponents. While this proved a good ploy, they had plenty to attack in Bongo's tenure, and there was a good deal of conflict at all levels. Bongo and his party hung together because they had a vested interest in keeping things the way they were. In early 1990, Bongo did agree that there would be legislative elections in the fall of that year allowing these people an adequate time to get themselves in trouble and into conflict with one another, which they inevitably did. He at least brought the disorder under control. The kids returned to school, the university was eventually reopened. The university's opening and closing was of great concern to us because we had two Fulbright scholars there. These problems disrupted our program not only for the people at the university, but whether we should bother to bring another scholar out next academic year. We had close ties with people at the university as well.

This is a good point to talk about what out interests were in Gabon. The principal one was to support the American interests in the oil sector. Again, Gabon produced 300,000 barrels a day, not an overwhelming amount, but there were those who believed that there was a substantially larger amount of oil both onshore and most particularly offshore. The big producing field onshore was the Rabi Kounga field that produced about 170,000 barrels a day. This was a pretty good size; it had been the largest onshore find in the preceding five years. The sense was that there probably was more oil nearby that field. The leases for the surrounding areas were coming up for sale in '91, and the American companies were trying to position themselves to compete for those leases. Of course Elf Gabon had been in Gabon since before the Second World War. It had greatly expanded its operations in the postwar period. Elf was the dominant power, by far in the local oil sector. In point of fact, Elf's role in Gabon is still a hot issue. I saw a piece on the Internet about ELF and French officials continuing to be investigated for payoffs.

Q: Very much so.

WAUCHOPE: It's been going on at least since the early '90s.

Q: Including a lady, the mistress of the republic I think she wrote a book about her use of her prominent attributes in order to advance the cost of oil.

WAUCHOPE: There you go. Well, they advanced it very well. Elf obtained preferential contracts with the government again and again. It owned the Rabi Kounga field with Shell. Shell was the operator of that field, but Elf had both onshore and offshore operations. They controlled the oil terminal and the shipping and the storage. The Elf Gabon head man, Mr. Chabet was a no nonsense fellow and a very powerful and influential player in Gabon because he had a lot of money to spread around. Elf's largesse was possible because it was paying the Gabonese about $2.70 a barrel for the oil in the ground. That was the lowest in the world except for Congo Brazzaville, which was about $2.50/ barrel. In any event, with that spread between what Elf was paying and what oil was selling for, they had a tremendous amount of money to spread about. An example was the hospital in Port Gentil. The government lamented that there was no proper medical facility there, and Elf stepped forward and build the hospital and then presented it to Gabon as a token of its generosity.

I developed a fairly close relationship with President Bongo's son, Ali Bongo. For a year or so he was the foreign minister until the court found that constitutionally he was too young to serve as minister. He had to step down in favor of his older sister. Ali Bongo had been to the States, and he was a pretty savvy guy. Even after he had stepped down we would have long conversations at the Presidential Palace lasting as much as two hours. I knew he was a reliable conduit to the president, and we had a good rapport. On Elf's "generosity" I said, "Why do you think Elf is building hospitals in Gabon? If the Americans are involved in your oil sector here, they're not going to build you hospitals, but they'll pay you a market price for a barrel of oil, and you can build your own hospital, if you want to. Elf is building a hospital and taking credit for it. But you know what this is all about, don't you?" He said, "Yes, well, you know I guess that's right." Of course the Gabonese had been so accustomed to Elf providing them these benefits from Elf that many thought of it as being out of the goodness of Elf's heart. It was because Elf received such an incredible margin on their oil in Gabon.

In any event, U.S. firms were competing for Gabon's oil reserves. There were six American oil companies present in Gabon. Conoco was the biggest in terms of personnel and range of activities. It was exploring in three different areas. Exxon had partnership arrangements, but no active operations. Arco was drilling test wells offshore in the southwest coast. I visited one of its test wells which was then at 13,000 feet in some 2000 feet of water. Drilling at this depth reflected the cutting edge of offshore technology Sun Oil had a joint operating agreements and interest in exploration with other companies. Mobil actually had a production operation offshore of 15,000 barrels a day. Hess was a story unto itself. Hess is mostly a gasoline refiner and seller in the United States. Leon Hess, the CEO, apparently decided that Hess Oil should get into the production business. So, Hess sent out a representative who was a Haitian American, who was really sharp and very aggressive. He analyzed the overall oil situation and obtained extensive technical information. God knows how he did it; that was not mine to know. He learned that the Rabi Kounga field probably had a lot more oil reserves than Elf was willing to acknowledge. Hess estimated that this field had some 800 million barrels vie the 350 million that Elf/Shell said publicly. Also the technology being used was not the most modern and that there were ways in which they could get a good deal more out of this field if they exploited it more effectively with modern technology. He set up a company, Hess Gabon, and he appointed the president's daughter, who also happened to be the foreign minister, to the board of directors. He selected several other well-connected Gabonese leaders for his board. He learned that there was a 15% share of this field that was not owned by either Elf or Shell the ownership of which was vague. He researched this surreptitiously and found out that this 15% was split 10% to the Bongo family, and the remaining 5% was owned by Bongo himself, both under various levels of corporate cover. These were a form of operating slush fund. Once he learned this, he explored how to make an approach to buy the 10% share. He probably worked through Bongo family members. Having obtained approval from Hess U.S., he offered $7.50 a barrel in the ground for this 10%.. This is almost three times what Gabon had been paid by Elf. This came to $300 million. Immediately Elf Gabon found out about the offer because everybody's phone is bugged and they had their informants everywhere. Hess was offering President Bongo, who was in the midst of this political turmoil and facing legislative elections that fall, a $300 million check right now, cash on the barrel head. This $300 million looked awfully appealing to him at that moment. Bongo is clever enough to temporize to see how Elf would react. The Elf representative and I believe the French ambassador intervened, but their message was confused. Elf took the line the Americans could not possibly pay this amount as it was way overvaluing the field. The Ambassador's line was more like, this would be a blow to the special relationship that Gabon has with France. . But the $300 million was just too good fro Bongo to pass up. Leon Hess, in person, came out with the $300 million check, and the deal was signed before the TV cameras in a ceremony at the presidential palace. The $300 million check is passed to Bongo. We were all there for the signing event and the later reception. This was good stuff; Americans 1 French 0. But, of course, there was a lot more to this deal.

Among other repercussions, this coup resulted in the Elf representative being canned. Actually he was recalled to Paris and kicked upstairs to a job in charge of cultural and educational affairs for Elf Aquitaine. He was held accountable for not being aware of the deal in advance, and not being much firmer with the Gabonese in keeping the Americans out. Before he left the country, however, he invited the Hess representative to a dinner party with some French colleagues. Nothing but the finest food and wines were flown in from France. He laid on a beautiful dinner, at the end of which, the guests went for cigars and brandy. The Elf rep asked the Hess rep to come into his private office in the house. He said to him, "You know you have had great success in a very short period of time. That must be pretty heady stuff for you. But you know, you really have to watch out if you're move too fast in this country. Things can happen." There could be no linguistic misunderstanding because the Hess rep was a Haitian fluent in French. The Hess rep jumped up out of his chair and he said, "Are you threatening me? Is this like a mafia thing? Are you threatening my life?" The Elf rep immediately backed off and the subject was dropped.

Q: This was, who was talking to him?

WAUCHOPE: The Elf representative is talking to the Hess representative. He claimed he did not mean his statement as a threat. Ironically and probably not connected to this obvious threat, about six months later the Hess rep was in Miami and was hit by a car and very seriously injured. It broke both his legs. Now, whether it was a connection one may never knew. But the next phase of the Elf effort against Hess was not to permit Hess Gabon reps sit in on board meetings of the joint venture. They refused him to allow to attend the board of directors meetings. He went to the president and he asked, "What is this nonsense? I bought 10% of this field I'm entitled to participate." Elf's position was that Hess was not a significant player. Bongo overrode Elf and Hess did attend meetings. What Hess had done was to analyze the data that they could get their hands on and established that the Rabi Kounga field probably had 800 million barrels rather than 350 million barrels Elf and Shell had claimed. Two and a half times or more than what it was originally thought. By using horizontal drilling technology, Hess knew how to do, it figured they could get a lot of more oil out. So, $7.50 a barrel didn't seem like it was all that crazy. As it turned out, in order to protect itself even further, Elf immediately bought up the remaining 5% that Bongo owned for $7.50 a barrel as well, despite having told the Bongo family this was an insane figure that had no basis for reality. Hess had had great success and they began to move people to Gabon in significant numbers. Having gotten into one of the existing fields, they were thinking of trying to invest in other potential fields.

Gabon's geological structure is such that there is thought to be more onshore oil and even more significant amounts offshore, but the latter required drilling at extended depths, through the sloping continental shelf. Along the coast in Congo and Angola there is a tremendous amount of offshore oil. They have since found a substantial amount of oil in Equatorial Guinea as well and apparently in waters between Nigeria and Sao Tome. I'll talk a little bit about Sao Tome later, as I was also accredited as ambassador in Sao Tome, as well.

In any event, the jockeying for position over oil continued, and it was my job to try to persuade the Gabonese that, when future oil leases became available for bidding, they should give the Americans a level playing field. The U.S. was not promising anything under the table, or any hospitals or any sweetheart deals. I said Americans would give them the best price for their oil, and would import world class technology to exploit it. The contracts would be open and above board, and Gabon will benefit and our companies will generate employment and revenue. That was my line. I remember returning from an ambassadorial conference in Washington where Secretary Baker gave us a long spiel about promoting American business. This is what I spend most of my time doing for the American oil companies. I spent an awful lot of time and effort to support these firms. I used to meet with the oil reps, all six-company reps about once a month. We'd have a sundowner, where we would talk about the security environment and the situation in the oil sector. It's may have been against the law regarding collusion in the restraint of trade but it could always be justified based on our concern about the security of their people, and an on operational problems such getting their offshore workers in and out of the country. In any event, my team and I continued to press the government to ensure us a level playing field, and I would keep them informed on what the embassy was trying to do on their behalf.

I'll talk about how this situation played out, but I have to go back chronologically to explain. In the fall of 1990, Gabon was preparing for parliamentary elections, and then the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. Our focus shifted to follow instructions from the Department to pressure our host government to condemn this action and to call for the Iraqis to withdraw from Kuwait. I went to the government and made this case. They understood what we were saying, but there were two problems with our position from their perspective. One was that Omar Bongo had converted to Islam and became Omar Bongo because he wanted to curry favor with the Arab members of OPEC, and thereby increase his clout in that organization. There were several prominent Arab nations represented in Libreville as an earnest of Gabon's relation with the Arab world. So, Bongo felt that he could not be directly identify with the U.S. and the West on this issue. Second, there was the question of what happens if the efforts to get Iraq out Kuwait were not successful. Would there be retaliation against Gabon which could ill afford OPEC's animosity as it was the smallest producer in OPEC? So, there were both the religious and economic concerns. Gabon made a very tepid statements about territorial integrity in general. As the U.S. and it allies built up our force in Saudi Arabia to take back Kuwait, Gabonese officials offered warnings of disaster. Then the air war began, and while the level of criticism of the U.S. increased, Gabon responded by reprinting what other nations were saying. The Gabonese had a general ill ease at this phase of the war as we all watched the bombings on CNN. Then when we launched the ground attack and quickly knocked the Iraqis out, driving them out of Kuwait, all of a sudden everything changed. We became the heroes of the moment, and the Gabonese could not say enough favorable things about the Americans. By this time the Soviet Union was coming apart at the seams and we were the only remaining super power. Thank God, we were allies with the French who had made a respectable contribution to that effort, and they were not in a position to criticize us. It was widely acknowledged that the American military technology was head and shoulders above everybody else's. Now, all of a sudden the Gabonese were congratulating us and saying, "We were behind you all the time." They were behind us, way behind us.

Anyway, as the sole remaining super power and so recognized by early 1991 even the French were now much more responsive to our interests and concerns. As was the case globally, there was now more interested in buying American military technology, not that the Gabonese had any need for it, but their military always wanted to buy the best new toys. So, we were riding high, and I wanted to try and translate that into benefiting some of our other interests in the country. Beyond the petroleum sector our other interests were primarily in economic development and the environment. Gabon's per capita GDP was about $4,600 well above any other Sub-Saharan African nation. So we didn't have a direct AID program, but we had about 100 Peace Corps volunteers many of whom were involved in rural development. We were trying to persuade them to shift more of the nation's resources to the rural areas. Up until the political upheaval in 1989-90, the system had been that Bongo designated two prominent people from each of the nine provinces, to represent the interests of their provinces. They were known as the "barons" from those provinces. They were senior political figures, usually with strong family and ethnic ties to the people of those provinces. They would take up residence in the capital and they would argue the case for their province. Over time, they found life in the capital to be so good and so much better than it was in the provincial capitals that they seldom returned to their provinces. Therefore didn't know the problems of the people and lost touch. Gabon is extraordinary in another way because it received an average of 400 inches of rain a year and roads were very difficult and expensive to maintain. In the rainy season the roads washed out and road communication was cut off. To compensate, Gabon constructed a large number of air fields, something like 45 air fields, so internal air connections were good. Even at that, these barons were less and less inclined to return to the countryside. So, when Bongo was pressed for multiparty democracy, he realized that the baronial system had collapsed, that it wasn't fulfilling the role that he had intended. He peremptorily eliminated their positions and moved them either to ceremonial positions or out altogether. He did change his cabinet and brought in people who were a younger and more responsive to the changed political realities. The U.S. was trying to promote that concept and practice of democracy. What was happening in Gabon was being mirrored in other countries like Benin and Zambia, moving to multi-party systems. We wanted to promote the democratization process and I felt it was my responsibility to be in the forefront of this effort in Gabon. Working with the Country Team, we recognized that there was real change going on, and we wanted more programs to bring in Americans to talk about a free press, the democratic system and representative government. We wanted journalists, political scientists and other experts to help us promote responsible democracy.

We had these multifaceted objectives. We were interested in expanding American participation in the petroleum sector. We were promoting democracy with a government that was very suspicious of that process. Real democracy would mean breaking down a system that had worked very well for all those around Bongo, and had been for many, many, years. He had been buying domestic tranquility by paying off people handsomely since he assumed power. I would invite Gabonese involved in the democratic effort. We sponsored high profile events for our visiting experts. I would call on Gabonese ministers and other officials to discuss the evolving political liberalization. At the end of each such meeting, I would be set upon by the local television crew. The reporters always asked the same questions, and I had plenty of practice shaping our message of promoting democracy. I was on television so often that there was some jealousy from other ambassadors in Gabon. There were 44 other diplomatic missions in Libreville when I arrived which is amazing for a small nation with barely a million people. I would be on television three or four times a week because made a point of meeting with ministers to seek their views on the political process. The other Ambassadors asked why I was on TX all the time, and I'd say because I go out to meet the Gabonese leaders, and there's always a camera when I come out. Some of the other Ambassadors did arrange such meetings, but I had a decided advantage. After the Western victory against Iraq, the American Ambassador had heightened stature and as a result, it seemed that my activities were deemed always to be newsworthy. While there was some resentment in the diplomatic community, more importantly, my efforts did arouse considerable resentment and animosity among the people around Bongo. Clearly, those who had most at risk and were the least able to function outside their relationship were my most intense critics. Since Bongo's party still controlled the press, there was a fair amount of criticism about the American ambassador. There was a political cartoon which I particularly enjoyed and which I've saved. It depicts me with my mustache as a cowboy with my guns drawn shooting in all these directions. Clearly, it's meant to be the American ambassador, but, under the circumstances, you have to expect that.

I was concerned that my efforts in support of the democratization process could work against our interests in the oil sector. That was yet to be determined, but I continued to do all that I could to support the American companies as they positioned themselves to bid on new leases that were expected to open in the second quarter of 1992. These firms were all very well represented by experienced and capable people. There was a great deal riding on the outcome of this bidding process, and the American oil reps were on the edge of their seats on how this would play out. Sure enough, in April 1992, out of the blue, the government announced that a number of tracts around the Rabi Kounga field had been granted to Elf Gabon after secret negotiation. That was the ballgame. These were the tracts that generated most interest among the American oil companies. There reaction unfolded fairly quickly. With this insider deal, they saw that the handwriting on the wall. Our best efforts had come to naught. The Americans could not compete with a company that is willing to make deals under the table. The arguments that I was making were the classic American arguments, but these arguments apparently said all the wrong things to the Gabonese because this approach would upset the process in which they had entrenched interests. Sure Gabon would receive more revenue, but they'd have to account for it. It would now be transparent and the transparency was never something they were that interested in.

Within a matter of weeks after Gabon's announcement, Conoco's senior vice president for operations came out to meet with the President. He alerted the head of Conoco Gabon, an old-time Texas oilman who had some 50 or 60 Americans working for him in three different exploration projects. He asked me to meet with his VP, but he had no idea what the VP's plans were at that time. When he arrived, we had a ceremonial meeting and a briefing, and then the VP went directly to see Bongo. According to the Conoco rep, he said to Bongo in just about this many words, "How much would it cost us to buy ourselves out of Gabon?" By that, he meant how much it would cost Conoco to buy itself out of its commitments. As the result of signing agreements, Conoco had certain obligations like its project to computerize the ministry of petroleum. They were training people in the United States as well as installing equipment and systems in Gabon. Bongo and his advisers thought about it, and then said $25 million. "Done," said the VP. The $25 million changed hands shortly thereafter, and the Americans in Gabon were told they had six weeks to shut down, pack up and leave. It was a good object lesson on how a U.S. corporation can operate, and how its employees are guaranteed nothing. Conoco said it would try to reassign those it could, and the others would be let go. That was it; the closeout began immediately.

In the meantime, Arco, which had been drilling offshore in the southeastern part of Gabon near the Congolese border, had come up dry several times. With the announcement of Elf's success, it decided to pack out as well. Exxon in Libreville was mostly involved in both Chad and Angola. The Exxon rep was spending less and less time in Gabon and again could see where things were headed in Gabon. Hess was there for the duration and Sun, well, it had some marginal partnership operations. There position was, if anybody wanted to buy us out, we're gone. Mobil had the actual production operation, some 15,000 barrels per day offshore. Its production was declining however. Without the prospect of larger operations it didn't make economic sense to continue. Mobil went to Elf to ask if it was interested in buying Mobil. Elf did so, probably at a minimal price. So, four of the American companies just closed down. So much for the level playing field, and the promised American technology. It was a real setback. I felt very badly about this development, but you know, there are things you can do in this life, and there are things that you can't do anything about. This was one of those cases. American companies could not complete with Elf in this environment because of the constraints of the SEC rulings on bribery. This would also violate American law, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and American companies knew that. Their attitude was relatively philosophical. They said, Elf wins here, but we'll get them somewhere else in the oil world. And that was the way it was left. Elf was, of course, very pleased with itself, but the corruption was now very transparent. It was soon thereafter that Elf's activities involving French and foreign leaders were suspect. In 2002 Mr. Le Floch-Prigent, the head of Elf, was convicted of bribery and fraud during his tenure from 1989 to 1993, and sentenced to five years in prison. The press reported that, in addition to major bribes to all of France's leading political parties, during this time, Elf was also paying Omar Bongo some $15-20 million annually for his cooperation. In retrospect, I realize that the American companies and I had little chance competing against such unbridled corruption

Q: Franï¿½ois Mitterrand was the president at this time.

WAUCHOPE: Right.

Q: Had he had his sort of his own son was probably Mr. Africa, wasn't he?

WAUCHOPE: He was a key player in French policy in Africa. The press termed him Mr. Africa, but he wasn't Mr. Africa in the traditional French sense. Charles de Gaulle's henchman and fixer Jacque Foccart was the real Mr. Africa, although he would shun that title as an anathema to his low-profile style. He was thoroughly unscrupulous and he knew where all the bodies were buried. He did all the payoffs and he put the squeeze on recalcitrant African leaders and disposed of troublesome opposition figures. Young Mitterrand used to travel around to represent his dad. Of course, as the French president's son, he clearly did have the ear of the president and African leaders received him with respect. As we discussed before, competing with the French in former Francophone Africa was virtually a no win situation for the Americans. French diplomacy in Africa has always been personal, which is to say it revolves around the relationship between the French president and the African leaders. African chiefs of states can call the president of France anytime and can expect to speak to him directly and say, "I've got a problem that needs to be addressed immediately." The president can react without any constraints from a Congress or a bureaucracy, and he usually did something for them. He doesn't have to worry about the chamber of deputies or about the French public. That's how it worked. The Americans can't compete with that approach. I know of cases where African chiefs of state tried to call the White House, and even the fantastic White House switchboard didn't seem to know who they were or what to do. The White House would pawn them off on somebody in the State Department. Chiefs of state want to talk to other chiefs of state, which is understandable. We never could compete with the French in that regard.

Q: A significant portion of the money that Elf was producing ended in the coffers of the French Socialist Party.

WAUCHOPE: True, but largely because the socialists were in power and were in a position to be helpful to Elf. Apparently, Elf favored the conservatives, but they spread their payoffs widely. I can give you some sense about how the money flowed in Gabon. Bongo divorced his wife of many years. Remarkably, we had in our files visa applications for both Bongo and his wife, including their marriage certificate. These documents were related to their daughters having studied in the United States. Mrs. Bongo was described on the French marriage certificate as a menaguese, which is a housekeeper, and he was an army sergeant. They had been husband and wife for a long time and produced at least four children, although Bongo was rumored to have sired some 50 children. By the late 1980s and he decided he wanted to be rid of her. By this time, she was spending a great deal of her time in Los Angeles where she owned a big mansion. Bongo had decided, apparently for "reasons of state" to marry the daughter of Sassou Nguesso, the President of Congo Brazzaville. This decision raised all kinds of questions in Libreville: Why does he have to go outside his own country to get a wife? Was it right to divorce his first wife? Does this show that he's not really Gabonese, he's really Congolese because most of his tribal group is located in the Congo. Despite the heat, there was a big marriage ceremony. In anticipation, Bongo built her a grand mansion just outside of the Libreville beltway near the airport. A member of our embassy knew somebody who was an architect/contractor for this mansion. Bongo bought the best of everything from throughout the world. The mansion had gold bathroom fixtures and marble spa baths and indoor fountains. They installed extraordinary antique wall hangings as draperies and enormous Italian chandeliers. Bongo willingly paid for all these elaborate decorations that the designer proposed, but on the condition that he be given, one fully appointed room as a cadeau, as a gift, for free. Of course the decorators just jack up their price on everything else and gave him his "free" room. Among other features, there was a half-mile tunnel that ran from this mansion to the French military compound at the airport. Should the political situation turn against him, Bongo could always rely upon the 600 French paratroopers that he knew the French would deploy to protect him. Now, what other nation represented in Libreville could compete with that? Bongo knew that the Americans were not going to save his skin if events turned against him. Unfortunately we, as a nation, failed in our mission of economic reform and political in Liberia where, if we had the political will, we could have made a difference, but we did not. The French would have shown that political will as they had when they Bongo's predecessor, Leon Mba, back on the throne, but the Americans would probably not have done so, and Bongo realized that.

Q: Were you getting heat from Washington or pressure groups saying get out there and change the whole attitude and all that?

WAUCHOPE: One of the really great things about being an American ambassador in Africa, especially at that time following the decisive victory in Kuwait demonstrating that we were the only remaining super power, we could pretty much write our own ticket. This was true both in country and from the Washington perspective, as long as we didn't go way off the track. We were promoting democracy and a free press, and we carefully reported on what we were trying to achieve. In part this was to generate support for more USIA grantees to come to make presentations on issues like a free press. Ambassadorships in the AF bureau were particularly rewarding because you had considerable latitude to set your own agenda and experiment with initiatives generated within the Mission. I would call on the country team to come up with ideas for such initiatives and we would work out how to make them work. .Perhaps the only area which we didn't do as much as we might have was to use our public affairs capabilities to promote the positive benefits to Gabon of working with the American petroleum companies. That said, I'm not sure how much influence this effort might have had to offset Elf's hefty payoffs.

Q: It's not a people thing.

WAUCHOPE: Exactly.

Q: What about your relations with Bongo? You didn't mention how you presented you credentials and that sort of thing.

WAUCHOPE: Yes.

Q: Let me flip the tape over at this point. This is tape nine, side one with Keith Wauchope. Yes.

WAUCHOPE: Concerning my presentation of credentials, the Gabonese are much given to ceremony and such formalities. Obviously they took this from the French. On the day of the presentation, the chief of protocol came to my house with a big black Mercedes with the American flag on it to use for the ceremony. We were escorted by a phalanx of motorcycles. This is a wealthy country, and Bongo wanted to flaunt it. Such ceremonies gave him the chance to impress both the foreign representatives and his own people. We sweep up to his palace, which overlooks the estuary, the inlet from the sea. On the vast ceremonial plaza along side the palace the troops all lined up on the side, came to attention and both national anthems were played. I entered the palace and the chief of protocol escorted me and the country team into a beautiful reception area. The amount of money Bongo spent on his various palaces just boggles the mind. He had a penchant to Moorish tiles and woodwork, and the reception room was not unlike what you might see in certain parts of Spain in the days of the Moorish Empire. The TV camera lights went on and I presented my letters of credence and recall, and then gave my speech. Bongo responded warmly and we were ushered into a room fro a brief chat. Bongo as an individual is a really intriguing guy. I used to call on him about every other month. I didn't want to overdo it, and I knew I had a channel to him through his son. He was always cordial and relaxed. He could be ironic, and he seldom showed irritation. He had a reasonably good sense of humor. He maintained his perspective and projected that he felt secure and in control. Once he had gotten the political process back under control by agreeing to a multiparty system by fragmenting the opposition and thereby ensuring its ineffectiveness, he had nothing to fear.

As an example of that, a congressman from California, Ron Dellums, came to Libreville for some unspecified purpose. We received communication from Dellums' office in Washington that he would be coming about this time, but they were very vague about the purpose. I pressed them, and they deflected my inquiries, but they did agree I would meet him at the airport. When I met him at the airport, and later briefed him at my office, he still wouldn't tell me why he wanted to see Bongo. I expressed appreciation for my background briefing and was ushered off by the Gabonese who looked after his accommodations. He had a private session with Bongo and I was invited to join Bongo and Dellums immediately after their meeting. During the very convivial lunch in which we discussed Gabonese politics, I explained to Dellums who didn't speak French, about Bongo's ploy of granting each opposition party 20 million CFA. Dellums immediately grasped the genius in this move and admired Bongo all the more for it. He said this shows a high degree of finesse. As an ambassador or as an FSO, you have occasion to observe how American and foreign political leaders interact, and you learn that politicians get together, no matter what their background or linguistic obstacles exist , they understand one another better than we'll ever probably understand them. Dellums could instantly understand the brilliance of Bongo's ploy, the object of which was to stay on top of the pile. Bongo had assured himself that that would be the case.

Bongo was always quite decent to me, even while those around him were instigating stories critical of our democratization efforts. He was a very down to earth and seemingly candid on the issues I raised. I tempered my requests to call upon him as I knew that it always caused consternation among the ever-suspicious French. The French were beginning to disseminate rumors that the Americans were trying to displace them in Gabon. In fact, it was the furthest thing from our minds. I tried to persuade the Gabonese that this was not the case. I made clear that we would like to be a cooperative partner in a variety of areas, but I had no intention replacing French influence or presence. Clearly the American people had little knowledge of the country and no interest in getting further involved there. I'm not entirely sure how Bongo saw it. I think he was probably more realistic than most Gabonese elites. I spoke with the French ambassador about it. I said, "You know enough about the United States to know that you can't get the Americans to think even for even ten minutes about Africa for God's sake, never mind about replacing the French in Gabon." I think he himself understood it, but it was in his political interest to keep the idea afloat; so we had to deal with that reality.

Another one of our objectives was to try to persuade the Gabonese to be more environmentally sensitive. I made a personal trip to Lope, one of the major game preserves in the center of the country. I met there by chance an English woman zoologist and a French scientist who were studying primates. Gabon has probably more primates and a more diverse primate population than anywhere in the world. They had been studying primates for several years in this preserve. They were very dedicated to their research, but were outraged that the ecosystem in the preserve was being transformed by logging operations. They said, "Can you believe they are logging this game preserve? They've allowed the French logging companies to come in and take out the high value species." Gabon is a major exporter of tropical hardwoods and has been since colonial times. It exports not just mahogany and mahogany veneers, but some of the most extraordinary tropical hardwoods which are sold to Europe and the Far East to be used for furniture and paneling. The loggers first send in trained locals to identify the high-value trees. Then they plot them on a map and bulldoze roads that take them closest to the identified trees. They fell the trees, drag them to the road and them truck them to the rivers to float down to the ports. The logging of these trees obviously changes the ecosystem for the primates. The idea that the Gabonese would maintain a game preserve and try to promote themselves as being concerned about the environment, and then to allow logging was clearly ridiculous. As I promised the researchers, I spoke to the president about it. I explained my experience and pointed out that logging game preserves undermines Gabon's environmental credibility. He claimed to be surprised about the logging, saying he had not been to that preserve himself in 20 years. He claimed that many of these logging concessions dated from the pre-independence period. Obviously, as chief of state he could demand a renegotiation of the terms if he chose to. I continued to lay it on, pointing out Gabon's tremendous potential for ecotourism. Gabon has extraordinary biodiversity and there for great potential for tourism. He replied, "Well, I'll look into it." Ironically, Gabon today touts its ecotourism and biodiversity, and apparently now earning considerable revenue from it.

I don't know that anything ever came of my approach in this instance, but recently Secretary Powell was in Gabon and he went to the Wonga-Wongue game preserve just south of the capital to be shown the forest elephants. You have to travel there by helicopter, and at dawn you can see the elusive rain forest elephants. This particular visit is especially ironic because late in my tenure I learned that a senior Gabonese police official had been going out with his buddies and shooting forest elephants from helicopters. When it was brought to my attention and I went to the president's son to complain about it. I said, "You know if this incident gets out to the international community, Gabon is going to become the laughing stock of the world in terms of its commitments to environmental issues." That activity at least did come to a halt. Unfortunately when the Secretary went to Wonga-Wongue he didn't see the rain forest elephants apparently they didn't get there just at dawn when they come out of the woods but when the sun comes up they retreat back into the jungle.

In any event, I did bring environmental issues to the president's attention, and tried to persuade him of the tourism potential that exists. Like most African leaders and I don't mean to denigrate him in particular, his sense of time horizons and the vision was simply not there. Of course he was deeply engaged in his effort to maintain control over the restive political environment. Tourism revenues could serve to replace some of the revenue from its other resources. While the manganese industry was going well, it was still not price competitive with manganese from Russia. Uranium was under a cloud from the Chernobyl incident, as a source for power generation. So, uranium operations were winding down. The logging interests were increasingly subject to a range of restrictions by environmentally concerned governments particularly in Western Europe So, Gabon was looking for alternative revenue sources.

Q: AIDS. Did AIDS come up?

WAUCHOPE: AIDS was an issue and, not surprisingly, it was not being handled very well. It was not a terribly serious problem at that time, but knowing how explosive the disease can be, more action was indicated. Knowing that one of Kenneth Kaunda's sons had died of AIDS and another one was is HIV positive, Africans were beginning to feel some discomfort. The elites are most susceptible to AIDS as they are the most mobile segment of the population. AIDS is being brought into the Gabon's cities because the elites had a insatiable taste for "bush meat" which included monkeys. I remember one time biking around the city and seeing four or five monkeys quite large monkeys laid out on the sidewalk for sale. I tried to take a picture, but the vendors became very exercised. When you drove into the countryside, there were all kinds of game for sale on the roadside from crocodiles to small deer, and occasionally monkeys. Ideally, buyers got there early enough before it got too ripe in the sun. An American primate researcher told me that the Gabonese were shooting every animal within 20 miles of the roads, and poachers were then killing everything along the rivers as well.. Having wiped out all the game it was becoming increasing difficult to meet the demand in Libreville. Bush meat was selling for more than air-freighted filet mignon in Libreville. Libreville was well known from having some of Africa's most spectacular grocery stores where you could buy 500 different French cheeses and all kinds of cuts of meat. Nonetheless, the elites preferred loved bush meat without regard of the price.

Q: Speaking of finance, at the embassy were these high costs, was this compensated for?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, the cost of living allowance was quite good, all things considered. It was pretty reflective of the real cost of living, but prices would still stagger you. Apples were $3.00 a piece, a six-pack of Budweiser was $20 or more, but remarkably it was available There was one store where an enterprising north African had set up a store with almost exclusively American goods brought in by containers. You could buy a jar of mayonnaise that would cost $2.50 here, would cost you $9.00 there, but it was American. His clientele was mostly Americans in the oil sector. Food grown on the economy was reasonably priced, but it was very limited. Libreville was a very expensive place, and so designated near the top of the list by the UN cost of living index. Going out to dinner cost at least $80 a person at a decent restaurant. There were a lot of very high quality restaurants. The 35,000 French residents were getting paid very handsome salaries, and they could support a very substantial culinary establishment.

I remember one time the visiting Mobil Oil vice president had eight of us out to dinner. The bill was over $2,000 The meal was excellent, I remember I had the ostrich, and the chef was French, a graduate of the cordon blue. Most Embassy people could only rarely go out to dinner. By contrast, the French were having a high old time. When the lyceï¿½s closed during the time of political confrontation however, a lot of them took their children out of school so they not fall behind. They anticipated that the lyceï¿½s would have disruptions in the future and so they could not take the chance. When the children returned to France, many of the wives left as well. Their departure put a dent in the high end part of the economy. During the rioting in late 1989 the world class cinema complex in Libreville was torched by rioters because it belonged to the president's son. Some of the glitter began to fade during the time I was, but it was still a stimulating and challenging period even though the U.S. remained a distant second to the French in the country.

Q: Well, did you find that you or your staff were kind of, couldn't help but dig at the French for, I mean either in public or not, for what you were doing?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, there was a certain amount of resentment against the French. The French would high-hat us; at least until our success in the Gulf War. That really did change their attitudes. They became a good deal less inclined to condescend to us. I'll tell you one other change that took place as well. My predecessor was of the belief that.

Q: Who was that?

WAUCHOPE: Warren Clark, who later went on to be the PDA in AF, although he didn't last too long. In any event, he had been of the belief that the best and the quickest way to find out what was going on in Gabon was to invite the French conseilliers technique from the various ministries for lunch or dinner. When I took over, the only Frenchmen who came to the ambassador's residence were the French diplomats, the Ambassador and those with whom we worked. I did not invite the conseillers technique, because I didn't think that was right approach. I thought we were there to. . .

Q: These were the French, these are the white?

WAUCHOPE: White advisors, yes, in each of the ministries. They did know a lot about what was going on. They usually countersigned everything the minister did. I believed that I should talk to the minister directly. I decided to play according to the book, and not play this side game. Whether the French resented this change I don't know, but they recognized the different approach. I figured I was not accredited to the Gabonese government, not the French government.

I should say a word about some of the prominent visitors Gabon hosted in the last six months of my tour. The most bizarre was the visit of Michael Jackson, the great Michael Jackson.

Q: He's a rather oddball entertainer.

WAUCHOPE: He's a very strange individual indeed. Apparently, he had been doing a music video about Egypt in which he played a young pharaoh, when the idea of visiting Africa seized him. Bongo's son Ali had had friends in the entertainment industry in the United States, and he extended an invitation to Michael Jackson to come to Gabon. So, Michael Jackson assembled a group of people, and they worked up an itinerary to Africa. It was the most extraordinary visit that one could ever possibly imagine. He arrived in his own chartered 737 aircraft. Everybody on the plane was an African-American except for one English fellow who was a holistic healer from the Caribbean. The party was accompanied Irv Hicks, an old AF hand, as the State liaison person. I've known Irv for many years, and he seemed bewildered as to purpose of the trip and his role. The visit began to unravel from the moment Jackson's plane landed. First, there was an endless delay for Jackson to deplane, and it seemed the president's entire family including all their kids, were waiting in the VIP lounge. They hoped for a photo opportunity with the great entertainer. He was apparently enthralled about coming home to Africa and hesitated at leaving the aircraft. One of his security men finally went up and assured him that everything was fine. The understanding was that he would come down to the VIP lounge and spend a little time with the president's family, schmooze and then leave in a limousine the president had laid on for him. When he finally raced down the ramp, he looked like Mickey Mouse. He had a red shirt and black pants and he wore white gloves. He had on a wide brimmed hat with hair streaming out underneath so you could barely see his face. He has an affectation of putting his hand to his face like this, which came back to haunt him. As he brushed past, I tried to introduce him to the president's daughter who was the foreign minister. He raced through the crowd with fans screaming from the balconies of the main terminal, charged through the VIP lounge with his bodyguards pushing people out of the way. By this time, crowds of fans on the grounds around the airport and from the balconies above us were erupting and screaming. It was like an explosion. He and his guards roared to the limousine parked in front of the VIP lounge. He jumps into the limousine by himself with a couple of his security people. The escort had no idea what's going on. The motorcycle policemen were befuddled, but when Jackson stood up in the sun roof and started to wave, the crowd surged forward screaming, they start to form up. Jackson panics and ducked down and says let's get out of here. The escort blasts through encircling crowd and disappears toward his hotel. I apologized to the foreign minister, and said to his people that we have no role to play in this visit, but we were prepared to assist his party.

That afternoon there was an event at his hotel and the president's daughter was also supposed to be there and kids from the president's family. My older boy was on the stage with an international children's choir performing for Jackson. We were sitting close to Jackson and we noted that he had one of those little boys, 13 or 14 years of age, with him whom he described to us as his nephew.. He constantly had his arm around the boy.

Q: This was Michael Jackson?

WAUCHOPE: This was Michael Jackson and his young friend. It was later revealed that he had these relationships with young boys, which landed him in deep trouble. The people in Jackson's party were almost as bizarre as Michael himself. They described him as a "gift from God" and they virtually worshipped him. For his second day in country, Ali Bongo had arranged a trip to several cities in the interior. I asked the PAO to accompany the party and offer to interpret and to provide advice. She had the most extraordinary experience. They were given an Air Gabon plane to take them up to Oyem in the north, and then down to Franceville. In Oyem, the people thought Jackson would perform, but he had no intention of performing. His trip was being videotaped to work into a possible music video. In Oyem, when they found out he wasn't going to perform, they went ballistic. They charged across the big public square and his people panicked. Once again they hauled him away, and raced back to the airport where the military could hold off the crowds back. He left immediately for Franceville. This was considered to be Bongo's hometown, it had more amenities than you could expect to find in the African bush. Air Gabon, which was run by the French, told Ali Bongo that it had to have the plane back to fly regularly scheduled flights that evening. The plane returned to Libreville and Jackson and party are stranded. The people in Jackson's entourage went into panic mode. It seems that Michael Jackson has to sleep every night in a special container to preserve his complexion and his many plastic surgeries. The people around Jackson were just unreal; it was like some sort of a cult. All efforts to obtain a replacement aircraft failed. There is a luxury hotel in Franceville that is seldom more than 10 percent full. Obviously he survived a night without his container, but when he returned the next day there was a good deal of unhappiness about that episode.

On this, his last day in Gabon, there was to be a presidential presentation of a medal, something like the Order of the African Elephant. I was asked to attend, and while awaiting the festivities, I was in the waiting room when Michael Jackson arrived. In lieu of the little boy, Michael Jackson entered with a baby chimpanzee clinging to his midsection. The president's son introduced us and I was amazed at how little presence this mega-star exhibited. His handshake was limp and spoke in a mumble. The conversation turned to arranging to take the chimp back to the U.S., and the president's son says, "I'm sure the American Ambassador can make arrangements to help you to take this chimpanzee to the United States." I said, "It's not going to happen. They are an endangered species and there are endless restrictions on importing chimps." Even research institutions take months and months to obtain permission. Ali Bongo replied, "I'm sure you can overcome all that." I offered no hope. Inevitably the chimp's mother had been killed by poachers and it would cling to anyone. Someone took the chimp from Michael before he was ushered into the president's office. Jackson's PR people wanted to videotape the whole ceremony. I went in before him and was part of the furniture. From there I could hear the exchange between the President and his son. Of course Michael and his people didn't speak any French, and had no idea what's being said. Bongo said to his son, "Now, tell me again, who is this guy? Why am I giving him a medal? What has he done for Gabon?" Bongo was completely bemused. .When Michael Jackson entered, the lights went on, and pictures were taken, hands shaken and finally the pinning on of the medal. Michael Jackson said a few whispered words.

In any such event, after the presentation, the lights go down and the two principals usually sit down and have an exchange of words. Michael had almost nothing to say. The president thought, well, okay, I guess this is finished. He essentially dismissed Michael Jackson, the lights go back on and Michael Jackson leaves the president's office. His managers had set it up a photo op those who had missed the chance previously. They went to one of Bongo's very opulent receiving rooms on the ground floor as backdrop. All I want was for Jackson and his people to leave; his flight was at 2:30. They asked me if I wouldn't like to have my picture taken with Michael Jackson. I demurred, while for half an hour they ran from one side of the room to the other taking photos with various family members on a banquet with Jackson. Finally he and his party departed for the airport and he was gone. I sent a telegram, advising the embassies on his itinerary to be aware of this bizarre individual and his party of sycophants.

Overall, his visit to Gabon did not redound well for Ali Bongo and his father. The opposition, who now had their own newspapers, asked, "Who is this guy Michael Jackson? We thought he was a black American, but he doesn't look like one." Because he has a very pale complexion, they seized on that to criticize the Bongos. They criticized Michael Jackson for not performing. Jackson's affectation of keeping his hand in front of his face, which I assumed was a symptom of shyness, was seized upon as a sign that he didn't like the smell of Africa. This issue arose again when Jackson went on to the Cote d'Ivoire next. The African press reamed him over the implication that he couldn't stand the smell of Africa. It was unfair, but the trip proved to be a disaster and he curtailed the rest of his trip. I think he went on to Tanzania, but then he returned to the U.S. He was going to go onto Egypt but the trip just fell apart. That was my brush with real fame as far as I'm concerned.

I also met the Pope. He came to Sao Tome, a Catholic country, the last stop on a three-nation African tour. Being simultaneously accredited to Sao Tome I was invited to be present for the visit. It was my sense that he was a man of great gentility and sincere humility. This was his last stop on his visit and he appeared completely exhausted. I thought he was probably not going to survive another six months. The Sao Tomeans did not seem particularly impressed by the Pope's visit. No more than, 5,000 or 10,000 people turned out for the open air service. For an island nation of 140,000 mostly catholic people, and no place is more than 20 miles away, I was surprised by the light turnout. After the service there was a reception in the presidential palace. We were asked to line up and the Pope's assistants came along and gave the women rosaries and the men commemorative medallion of his trip. As I moved through the line and I'm watching how the Sao Tomeans were treating the Pope. They were just shaking his hand, and I thought that as Catholics aren't they supposed to be more deferential? When I came before the Pope, I figured I'm neither Catholic and nor should I be deferential as I was the American president's representative? So, I shook his hand and spoke in English. He was obviously tired, and, while he speaks 36 languages, it took him a moment to recognize English. He said it was nice to meet you, and I didn't figure I should burden him further so I just moved on. He spent about eight hours in the country and then returned to Rome. He is still the Pope today and I had figured he wouldn't make it to the end of 1992. So much for my prognostications.

I was accredited to Sao Tome Principe, and I took that responsibility serious, making 23 trips there during my tenure. When I first arrived the government in power was Marxist oriented. I wouldn't call it Marxist-Leninist per se, but it basically the successor leftist government that arose after independence from the Portuguese in 1975; this was now 1989. The whole Marxist process was wearing very thin. The country is a nation of about 140,000 people. They are people who were brought by the Portuguese from other nearby regions of Africa. The islands had first raised sugar, than coffee and then cocoa under a plantation system. In 1913 it was the largest cocoa-producing country in the world. At about this time there was a report circulating in Europe that the plantation labor system by which they imported laborers to work in the cocoa plantations was essentially a form of slavery. The workers were brought to the islands under a contract labor system, but none of them ever returned home. Most of them died on Sao Tome. Many of them died within two years, and those who would live beyond that had their contracts extended, probably involuntarily. This became a scandal because the British candy maker Cadbury which was owned by Quakers was the major purchaser of Sao Tome's cocoa. Quakers are longstanding opponents of slavery. The Portuguese were forced to make major improvements in the treatment of their workers and in opening the islands to modernization. Cocoa production declined in competition with largest producers on the African mainland, but cocoa was still the most important economic activity on the islands at the time of independence. In 1913 Sao Tome had produced 35,000 tons a year, but by independence it was down to 10,000 tons. Within five years, with production under the control of state companies, it was down to 4,000 tons. These plantations were no longer really economically viable activities. They were more a form of extended welfare where it just happened that the product was cocoa. Many workers were still working on the pre-independence Portuguese plantations using the antiquated turn-of-the-century equipment and houses that were 150 to 200 years old.

In any event, the people of Sao Tome are very gentile, and the elites were reasonably well educated. Despite their socialist perspective, they remained very much oriented toward Portugal, and, to a certain extent, toward Angola. There are some inhabitants who are Cape Verdeans by origin, and they are very capable people. Our interests there were very modest, primarily to promote the democracy and to promote economic development, while discouraging closer alliance with the Bloc nations. I suppose that the most significant event in our bilateral relations arose when I was tasked to negotiate for a site for a VOA relay facility, an alternative, ironically, for the facility we had been forced to close in Liberia in 1990. The proposed new facility would require only six or eight people and have a very low profile. The Sao Tomeans were more than happy to have us come. On the larger stage, there was a sub rosa competition between the Portuguese and the French; the latter were interested in extending and expanding their influence in the country and the former wanted to maintain and strengthen its political and commercial relations. The Portuguese welcomed our involvement while the French harbored suspicions about our intentions.

The Marxist government's mandate eventually ran out and the new elections brought in a fellow named Trovoada who was viewed as a more liberal politician and not wedded to the one party system. He held office most of the time I was there and he was always interesting to talk to. He was considered particularly friendly to the French, and the French became pretty cozy with him. He had spent his time in exile during the Portuguese rule in France rather than in Portugal, while most of the hard-line leftist had spent their time in Angola. Despite a promising start, regrettably he has proved to be a person all too susceptible to bribery and political machinations. He did not have a very successful tenure. We had a very small military assistance program which provided several patrol crafts so they could patrol their fishery zone. This program fizzled as they could not provide the fuel and spares to keep the craft operational.

Recently foreign oil companies have found very substantial amounts of oil offshore in areas bordering the Nigerian economic zone. There is an inevitable conflict about how these offshore tracts should be divided up. There is an article in this week's New Yorker Magazine about Sao Tome, our new friend, as it says. In fact, there are a modest number of Sao Tomeans are in the United States. They are friendly and decent people, and deserve to be treated with respect.

At the time I presented my credentials and made my calls on the few resident ambassadors, the government's Marxist orientation was apparent. I called on the Soviet ambassador and the Chinese representative, but not the Cuban. The Chinese had built a stadium and were involved in building low cost housing. The Soviets, soon to be just Russians, were closing down, and elderly Soviet ambassador was ill and seemed completely worn out. He wished the best for the Sao Tomeans, and asked that the U.S. be generous to them. The Cubans were considered a sinister presence, but they were doing a few modest development projects. The Europeans had a presence there as well. I think the Portuguese had the only resident ambassador, a very gracious, elegant and intelligent fellow who was always available to meet with me. All other accredited nations were represented from either Luanda or Libreville.

It is a delightful little country with tremendous possibilities for tourism. There was a project underway to develop a resort in the northern part of Principe. The developer was a mysterious South African named Hellinger, who was in the arms/diamonds/gold business in Angola. He had set up a base near the airport in Sao Tome, and as such, was able to transport all kinds of unidentified cargoes to the Marxist Angolan government, the MPLA, in return for access to diamonds. He had his own compound with his own armed guards. He was right out of a James Bond movie. He was persuaded that the Americans were intent to do him in and my few meetings with him were always laced with recriminations. Once he insisted on showing me one of his transport aircraft that had been supplying the MPLA against UNITA. A rocket had hit the plane just below an inboard engine. The hole where the rocket had impacted was evident, but it had not exploded. This was particularly fortunate because he had several American pilots working for him. He also hired American flight crews and mechanics who flew in and out of Sao Tome. God knows what his real business was, but he was believed to be moving Angolan diamonds to markets where few questions were asked. If these diamonds were not fiscalized, after paying off the MPLA leaders, he had plenty of money to pay off officials in Sao Tome. The new president said to me that he really wondered what being transported on those planes and claimed he would find out. In fact, it seems that he too made an accommodation with this character, and their operations were never seriously impacted. Nonetheless, it was an interesting place to visit and as I walked around the small capital, I would wonder about the lives of those who lived in the brightly painted modest little bungalows just up from the ocean front and what the future of this nation was to be. There were times when there was little food to be had in the capital as there was virtually nothing in the market. They'd run out of fuel and so the fishermen couldn't go out to fish. It is possible that oil revenues will change all that, but more likely it will ruin a country with great charm and gentility

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

WAUCHOPE: Okay.

Q: You left when?

WAUCHOPE: I left in August of 1992.

Q: Whither?

WAUCHOPE: Well, I came back to the States. I'm not sure if that assignment even warrants a whole session in its own right. I came back and I took over the Office of Performance Evaluation for two years and then from there I worked as special projects for the Director General on issues of women's class action suit and black officers' suits. I also initiated and effort to modernize the information management systems in Personnel which were desperately needed.

Q: Okay, well, we'll move on. We'll just keep going. Great.

Today is the 27th of October, 2002. Keith, when did you start this work?

WAUCHOPE: I came back in 1992 from Libreville. I must say I did get a very attractive offer from the African Bureau to be its nominee as ambassador to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. I was mightily tempted by this offer. Personal considerations always play a role in this process and at that particular point my older boy was 12 years and he had spent more than half his life overseas, and my younger boy was five and I thought it was time for them to come home. We'd been overseas for six years in a row. I knew that my older boy would be disadvantaged with his peers by not even being part of the American society even for such simple things as knowing the professional sports teams from various parts of the country. I felt that I really couldn't take this offer. As it turned out, that was the right thing to have done. I end up in PER because, in part, Ed Perkins had been the Director General and I had been interested in bring one of his deputies. I had served with him in AF/W and in Liberia, and I looked forward to the opportunity to serve in personnel again as I'd done in CDA. Ed was favorably inclined to have me, but you may recall in the waning days of the Bush administration, there was some concern about how Thomas Pickering was handling the USUN port folio. It seems the White House wasn't very happy with some of the things Pickering was saying as he seemed to demonstrate a greater degree of depth and understanding than the administration itself did on some of the key issues. The White House decided that he should be moved on. The search for a replacement focused on Ed Perkins who could be relied on to follow the White House's lead and his confirmation with the Senate would present no problems. So, Ed was moved to the United Nations, which turned out to be a somewhat unfortunate assignment for him. In any event his ability to influence the events in PER obviously diminished, and I was told that the front office was not in the cards. I asked about PER/CDA as I had worked as division chief in that office 1981-83. I was told that this position was already assigned to somebody else; that turned out to be Johnny Young. They proposed the Office of Performance Evaluation. I didn't know much about it, but I knew it was not an insignificant responsibility. PER claimed that it was trying to upgrade the office director positions by assigning former ambassadors. So I took over PER/PE and I found it was an interesting operation. We organized the annual selection boards and tenuring boards. The office has a permanent staff of 23 people, most of them civil servants. Some of the civil servants are deeply entrenched and others come and go. They had the promotion cycle process down reasonably well, and for those interested in how the Foreign Service promotion process works, I can bear witness to the fact that it's about as good as it's likely to get. Now, nothing is perfect, but in terms of how we constitute boards and how PER negotiates the precepts with the AFSA, and then how the boards are trained and how they review performance files, it is as best as can be done. A fair and rigorous process, and those who participate as members of selection boards emerge with a deeper appreciation of the effort to make this a fair process. Nothing is flawless, but even so, we felt it was a very effective and constructive system of reviewing Foreign Service files and giving people an honest opportunity for promotion.

The key problem was that getting good people to serve on these boards. It was an annual exercise that began early in the calendar year. The Director General would work from a list we would compile and write them a letter requesting that they serve as chair or a member of that year's boards. The boards are structured, as you probably know, so that the chair is from the cone of the officers that is being reviewed. The other members are from the other cones. There is always going to be a female on every board, a female professional officer as available. There will always be a minority and a female on each board, and an other agency member and a public member for a total of six people. Persuading State officer to participate on boards entailed identifying officers who haven't served on boards recently, who have a high standard of achievement and integrity. Then the Director General sends a personal letter to request them to serve on the boards. The first requests usually secure about 50% of the officers required. For those that opt out their excuses include that it is disruptive to their career or their onward assignment; it's disruptive to the operation of the post overseas, and its disruptive to their family or other personal considerations. The boards convene in the summer which makes it a little bit easier for candidates, who are often transferring back to the Department, and are thus more amenable to board service. Ideally, we to try to get at least a 50% of the members who were either overseas or returning back from overseas, because we believed that it was important to ensure that the Foreign Service perspective was given its full weight.

After the first 50% had declined to serve, PER/PE would have to identify alternative candidates. We'd move through the lists of the available candidates and it would often not be until just before the first boards convened in June to get a full complement of board members. We had somewhat less difficulty with other agency members. Public members were relatively easy to recruit because we had sort of a reserve of candidates. Ideally the public member would have worked with the Foreign Service in some capacity or had some overseas experience. The idea of including both the other agency member and the public member was to keep the Foreign Service people honest. Once the boards convened, we would train them for 2-3 days. The cardinal rule was that they were not to evaluate the relative merits of the officers being reviewed on anything other than what in the written file. A board member may not say, I know that person and he was a loser. The public and other agency members are asked to keep that in mind during board deliberations. We encouraged them to be very rigorous on this point, and we felt their presence would constrain the chair and this other Foreign Service members from injecting their prejudice into the selection process. I felt the system as constituted was very good, and I fought very hard to protect it.

The "mandatory" 5% low ranking requirement did not exist then, so the boards were instructed only to "identify" 5% of those reviewed for low ranking. This exercise was, in a way, artificial and not particularly productive, but the regulations were clear. As the Department initiated its personnel restructuring including offering buyout, there was pressure to get people out through the low ranking process. In the early '90s, the number of officers selected out through low-ranking jumped from about 20 to about 75. During my tenure officers were low-ranked but not selected out, and then their names would come up for reassignment in the next assignment cycle and Personnel would again have to find a position where they could do the least harm.

I would like to offer a bit of the context in PER in the early '90s. It was a period when there was a significant effort to bring more women into leadership and program direction roles. The Director General was Genta Hawkins Holmes who had been ambassador to Namibia She was a bright and capable person and handled herself well in public. In the past, however, Directors General had usually had served at least two Ambassadorial assignments at significant overseas missions, or as an assistant secretary and as a Chief of Mission. In any event, she presided over a PER front office that was very much oriented toward a new Foreign Service that was intent on dismantling what they saw as the "Old Boy Network." They openly ridiculed the white male officers and decried all the problems that stemmed from this group having control of the system for so long. Any one who objected to this new approach was termed a whiner, and their concerns discounted. As a result, I found it a difficult environment in which to garner front office support for initiatives that I tried to pursue or procedures I was trying to protect. For example, we tried to maintain not only the integrity of the promotion process, but also of the awards program for which PE was responsible, as well. All too often, people were being given awards that were no more than cosmetic baubles. I remember in particular that outgoing Secretary Baker wanted to give his personal secretary the Distinguished Honor Award. This award is probably the only remaining "honor" award that has any real significance. It was awarded almost exclusively to senior Foreign Service career professionals who have had substantial policy and resource responsibilities, and who had handled them in an outstanding manner. This secretary was somebody brought in from the private sector by Baker, and I am certain that she provided yeoman service, but she was not the kind of recipient that was contemplated for such an award. I made an issue of granting this award, and I suggested a reasonable alternative award. PER took the issue to the Executive Secretary, and whether he actually had the courage to raise it with Baker, I have no idea. In any case, I could not persuade the Director General to stand up to the Secretary on this, and his secretary received the distinguished honor award. I am certain she did not understand the distinction from a distinguished service award. I felt that that was the kind of thing I should stand up for, but the Director General simply said we're not going to discuss this anymore. I also pleaded with Genta to hang tough on permitting senior officers to opt out of serving on selection boards, suggesting that the request to serve be signed by the Secretary. Again, she demurred.

The personnel function in the Department of State is probably the most sensitive of all its various activities despite the higher profile of policy and intelligence positions which require the highest-level clearances. Information about assignments and promotion prospects are among the most closely held issues among Foreign Service officers. There has always been the sense that those who control Personnel can pretty much have their way on issues of importance to them personally with minimal regard for the regulations. In most cases they're correct. As a result, their preferences both in terms of personnel policies and deciding the people that they want to see rewarded always seems to prevail. Only the occasional intervention of a political appointee, such as the under secretary for management, can disrupt what the DG wants to have happen. Of course, if that undersecretary initiates action that contravenes regulation and practice, the DG is the primary official who should stand up for respecting the regulation. All too often, they are often unwilling to do so.

With the end of the Bush administration in 1992, Dick Moose took over as the under secretary of management. We thought there was a certain irony in that appointment. He had been the assistant secretary for Africa in the Carter administration having started out as the management undersecretary. As the story goes, after three months in that position in 1977, he had not covered himself in glory and they asked him what other job he would like to have in the department. He ended up in AF where his performance during his tenure was mixed. With the Warren Christopher crowd, Dick found himself again the under secretary for management. It seemed a rather peculiar choice, to say the least. I know Dick, and I think he's a very decent fellow, but I always felt that management was not his strong suit. As I got involved increasingly in the systems side of Personnel, he became more engaged in this issue on which he had not previously focused.

Let me just say a bit about information systems in the department because it was an interesting and important part of what I tried to do in this assignment. When I came back to the Department in 1992 I found on our desks the antiquated, what they called the Wang classic, which is a monitor with a keyboard attached to it. These were machines that we junked when I was in Liberia in 1987. We stacked these machines up against the wall in GSO looking for some way to dispose of them. It was finally decided to throw them into the waters off Monrovia. Here in 1992, the same were on our desks in the Department. I had served in CDA back in the early '80s, and I was back almost ten years later dealing with the same system, the same word processing that we'd had 10 years before. They had computerized the assignment process to the extent that when you did an agenda for an assignment panel meeting, you started the process by inputting it into the computer. If the assignment was approved, as in most cases it was, it would then move to the next station in PER and successive assignment actions would be taken. We had proposed this in the early '80s, and it was now in effect. It was a fairly simple mechanical process. Computers have a three-dimensional, even a four dimensional capability and PER was still working in two dimensions. To give you a specific example, during the transition between the Bush and Clinton administration, there was an intense demand for personnel information. PER was asked for all the assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretary positions and equivalent in the Department of State; the position number and the incumbent's name. PER's IM operation did a number of different attempts to obtain this info. At the end of one week they came up with a list which I looked at. I found that it was 50% wrong, that either they missed jobs altogether or there were jobs that had been eliminated, or there were jobs that were no longer being encumbered by the individuals that the data base showed. I remember a deputy assistant secretary in particular who had worked in AF. He had been gone for five years, and yet his name was still coming up in this position. So, they were tasked to do it again on a priority basis. They came back three days later and the list was still 30% wrong. The system couldn't equate such positions as a deputy director in INR who has a DAS job and likewise it couldn't pick up a lot of other critical information. That's because PER's system was what they call a flat file, it was this two-dimensional. You put the information in it and it could bring it back up, but it couldn't interconnect or integrate it. If you wanted to find out how many FSO-2 political officers we had who had Chinese at the 3/3 level and where they were and what there transfer eligibility dates, TEDs, were, the system failed. They tried these kinds of operations and the results were inevitably wrong because the information was being inputted manually and there was a backlog, and the data that they retrieved was often dated and inaccurate. Clearly, PER's system was inadequate.

I took it upon myself, while I was running PER/PE, to do a study of the IM systems in PER. I interviewed other IM savvy people in at least a dozen other bureaus to find out what they were doing in the IM field. Not surprisingly, I found that those who had independent funding or had overseas operations missions, for example, the international narcotics office, has funding from outside and they had really a quite superb IM system which linked to their offices in posts in Latin America. EB had a pretty good system. My analysis of the problem was the Department's Office of Information Management itself. First, the managers and the personnel were, by training and experience, radio operators, and communicators who were only belatedly learning to master computers. With computers, all document creation, transmission, distribution and storage would be integrated. The management was not prepared to approve new systems until IM had established standards for operating systems and security. Therefore, virtually everything beyond the Wang system, to include internet access, was on hold. The Department was wedded to Wang which had been cutting edge 10 years before, but had been pushed aside by PC based computing. PER's IM people had not clue about this technology.

Most of the people who ran our IM operation had started in the Department as mail clerks. They had worked their way up to the PER message center and been entrusted with managing the Wang system. I worked with these people, they're very fine fellows, and they were doing the best they could, but they had no idea what was out there. I would say to them, "Are you going to go to the annual Federal systems Expo down at the Washington Convention Center?" They hadn't heard of it. I said there were all kinds of government IT people are going to these events that occurred every few months. I would go to these gatherings myself bring them back brochures. In many cases, they were on the brink retiring and there were really no IM savvy personnel ready to step in behind them. Younger more junior employees were more knowledgeable of systems because they'd been exposed to them in college and in their own lives. The PER system was a rather hodge-podge operation. PER received little guidance from IM which was under the direction of a senior Foreign Service admin officer who was usually there for two years. Usually they didn't understand the IM function themselves. They counted on their subordinates to know and these subordinates were primarily communication people of broad experience, and some had mastered certain aspects of systems. Clearly PER needed people who understood what was happening in the systems sector and what needed to be done to improve the way personnel records were managed. My first task was to convince PER that its system was antiquated and that there were better ways to manage PER's information. The director of administration in PER/EX was defensive. She didn't see any reason to "migrate" to a new system and used the lack of resources to oppose change. She had little familiarity with modern systems and she was not getting useful information from those running PER's IM operations. I pointed out that a PC LAN, a local area network, would permit our employees to multitask. In PE as in the rest of PER, if you wanted to go from word-processing to the PER database, you had to log out of the one and logon to the other, a procedure that could take 3-5 minutes With a PC based LAN, you need only click from one window to another. PER/EX initial reaction was I'm being critical of what they've had done this far and to some extent I was, but this was not the point. My objective was to persuade them to focus on what was possible as opposed to what had gone before. While initially there was a fair amount of resistance, over time, they began gradually to see some benefit to PER, and to themselves, in getting involved in this issue and the prospect of obtaining more money from the Department to fund the migration.

I produced a 27-page study of all that I had learned with recommendations for modest incremental improvements.. I analyzed 12 different bureaus' systems and their varying degrees of success. Since IM hadn't established the standards, it tried to prevent the bureaus from launching their own systems, but several other these bureaus did create mini-systems with LANs just as posts overseas had done. I had hear the story that former Vice President Mondale, Clinton's Ambassador to Japan asked for an internet connection in his office and was told that IM had not issued standards for internet connections. He replied, "I don't give a damn about IM, I want internet access," and of course, he got his connection. Overseas posts set up their own LAN s and WANs, wide area networks tailored to their own operations. In some case, the bureaus had hired consultants to assist the Embassies' efforts. The bureaus in Washington were doing the same thing. For example, EB needed a lot of economic data and they needed access to the internet. IM was trying to prevent Internet access.

Q: IM stood for what?

WAUCHOPE: Information Management. The Bureau of Information Management.

Q: Where did that fit?

WAUCHOPE: Under A.

Q: Under Administration?

WAUCHOPE: Right. For a while it was under DS but then the DS shed IM and it became IRM . The Department was aware of its lack of information management specialists. I remember in the early '80s when I was in CDA, the Department put out a call for 200 IM technicians. They had little idea how to recruit such specialists. They had to be cleared and they had to be worldwide available and to have medical clearances as well. And we needed 200 people within six months. Even after two years they didn't have the 200 specialists they needed. They were also transitioning people from the communications field to computers. Some of them picked it up on it reasonably well while others never mastered systems.

If the Department was going to move to local area networks away from what they called "legacy systems," the big centralized mainframe computers, it would need to integrate the LANs to the legacy system. The LANs would need access to the personnel data base on the WANG system which had been in operation since the late 70s. The Department had a longstanding relationship with WANG which was losing its ability to compete with IBM and other major IM systems firms. The leaders of our IM operations did not seem to realize this reality. In December of 1992, I believe it was, the Department signed the last major contract with WANG before it went into Chapter 11 in August 1993

Q: Chapter 11 being apply for bankruptcy.

WAUCHOPE: Apply for bankruptcy protection, right. The U.S. air force and Philco Ford had been with WANG for many years, but they turned to other IM technology. The Department had actually put out for bids for a replacement system to WANG. IBM said it would cost $25 million just to prepare a proposal to take over the Department's IM operations, and it demurred. So, we were stuck with WANG and WANG was stuck with us. When WANG went into Chapter 11; it phased out its legacy systems, reverting to the imaging business where its systems were state of the art. We had to use the Wang system until a replacement could be determined. I remember that one provision of the Wang contract was a maintenance charge of one dollar per day for every Wang terminal in Main State. Wang had Having been burned with our Wang contract, there was great hesitation in the Department to take responsibility for a replacement system. Further State had a reputation in OMB of not using its IM resources wisely, and it as resistant to supporting our request for funding a new system. So the way around the immediate problem was to create LANs. and make them compatible to the Wang and you're in business with an operational system that can do multitasking. You could move back and forth between the main frame and the LAN which would share information among your own people. All this seemed an absolute mystery to these people who couldn't conceive of what could be done with such a setup. I identified four applications that we could use to improve efficiency just in my office alone if we had a LAN. These included tracking receipt of EERs, monitoring the awards program and scanning the database to avoid missing files of those eligible for the annual review for promotion, a chronic problem. If somebody finds out that they were not reviewed for promotion in a given year, they have an automatic grievance and will receive a review by a reconstituted board which is both expensive and time consuming. These boards give the member a much greater chance for promotion, as well.

Q: You're talking about efficiency reports?

WAUCHOPE: Well, the official personnel folder, or OPF, which is the file of all the operational information about an individual's performance. The OPF is divided with the right hand side a compilation of all one's EERs, and on the left-hand side letters of accommodation, awards and training reports. Another problem was the personnel audit report or PAR, a sanitized version of which was provided for each member being reviewed. It was sanitized to take out such things as date of birth and education so that the member's college would not arouse any biases in board members. The remaining record of assignments, awards, promotions, had to be up to date and accurate; if they were not, the member had the basis for a grievance as well. PER's IM office had to accurately update the PAR to make certain that the process would be as fair as possible.

I recommended to the DG that these were some of the things we could do by modernizing our systems. I insisted that one of the most important and cost effective things we could do was to computerize EERs. Raters and reviewers would type them right into an electronic form. They would then move forward just like the assignment documents did, move from the rater to the reviewer, then to the rated officer and to the post review panel. Most importantly, once the EER has been prepared and reviewed it can be transmitted electronically to the Department. To do so, the test is extracted from the form and is sent as an attachment to an email to PE. PE then downloads the text into the template of the EER form and it is available to print out and to archive in electronic form. In order to be as fair as possible, a selection board can request, in case of a close call on ranking members above or below the line for promotion, to view a cross-section of the rater's EERs on other members. This could give the board a sense if a rater has been too harsh on the individual member. As a result PER/PE maintained 35,000 hard-copy EERs on file, or five years worth of EERs maintained in a massive rotating file in the file room. That is an obvious application for computers. Past EERs could be scanned into the computers, and with new EERs transmitted electronically, in five the 35,000 EERs would all be stored electronically.

We found that raters and reviewers at posts overseas were chronically late in getting EERs into PE. Theoretically, there is accountability for late EERs, with attendant penalties. So, posts would send their EERs by Federal Express or by DHL at an inordinate cost to the U.S. government, probably on the order of $100,000 a year just to avoid the penalties that would accrue if the EERs arrived late. I pointed out that if we prepared EERs electronically there would be a whole range of benefits. Not only could we get rid of the 35,000 EERs, we could create a matrix that would scan the EERs as they arrived searching for inadmissible comments and terms. At that time, to be candid about it, we could not review the over 7,000 EERs PE received every year. Inadmissible comments were only caught if a board member challenged the EER content PE does not have enough people, 23 people, to read 7,000 EERs to ensure they conformed to the admissibility rules. I eventually persuaded PER that there was merit in preparing electronic EERs and we finally engaged a contractor to design the required programming. Shortly after I retired, PER did apparently run a pilot test of electronic EERs with two different posts. The Service resisted, saying it was too difficult. They claimed there was a chance of losing the data and there were security concerns so EERs were encrypted and double encrypted as they were sent out by the Department's own e-mail system. All of this was easily overcome, but there is always resistance to change. This entire exercise seems rudimentary today with our total dependence on computers and our addiction to email. To my knowledge, as of this time, EERs are now being scanned into the system. There was an exercise two or three years ago where they were actually conducting selection boards using EERs read from a monitor, which I believe would be a horrible exercise. While there are certain efficiencies, reading massive amounts of text from a monitor is brutal. Yet boards could make its rank ordering, highlight the most compelling parts of the EERs and. at the end of the process, destroy all documentation of its deliberations.

This exercise resulted from the PER bureau realizing that, once you have electronic EERs it could save even more money by having selection boards comprised of people located all over the world and the board would deliberate by teleconferencing. They would all have the same electronic data input and then they could discuss candidates and make determinations. I thought was a terrible idea because you lose all the collegial ambiance..

Q: We've both obviously served on these. I mean you lose the teamwork aspect. Because pretty soon you're all functioning on the same wavelength which is done by being in the room together.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely. That old dynamic would be lost in this process. In any event, the first step was to get the EER into an electronic form. Once drafters get into that habit of preparing electronic EERs, PER benefits from a range of new capabilities. Once it was determined how to double encrypt the EER emails, AFSA was onboard. The Department IM's inability of to set the standards necessary to use the Internet reached the point of absurdity. The bureaus simply wouldn't tolerate it. For example, because Internet information is so important, EB was one of the leaders in that area. EB needed up-to-the-minute statistics and data, and access to business news on the Net.

IM was wringing its hands about the security aspects, but this was inane. This was now 1993 and no access to the Internet? Of course IM had to build firewalls. Other Federal departments and agencies figured out how to do that. One of our objectives was to establish an integrated personnel database, which is to say a three dimensional database that you could query anyway you wanted, whether by TED or grade or language ability or marital status, or combine any of those elements and retrieve results instantaneously. That was basically what was needed. I was finally able to persuade Under Secretary Dick Moose that we ought to work for this objective. He quickly understood the merit in it. After I made an informal presentation on PER's systems, he asked me to go to coffee with him. He asked, "What do you think is the biggest problem in the way that our systems operate?" I said, "We don't know who we have and where they are currently posted. We do not have that information available at our fingertips. Given the way things change in this world, we will need to know where people are assigned and who has the expertise the Department needs. That's where the integrated database comes in."

After that, I made a presentation using PowerPoint, one of the suite of programs in Microsoft Office. I did a presentation about the problems we had in trying to obtain basic personnel information. At the end of the presentation I produced a cutesy little graphic to get the audience's attention. I took a moose head graphic and I figured out how to get the moose to wink at the end of presentation. That little trick may have had more impact than the content of the presentation. I thought, if you're going to do a presentation about systems, you should do it with the state-of-the-art presentation program. In 1993, this was wow stuff; today its old hat. The IM people were familiar with such presentations, but the decision-makers were basically completely naive about systems. Eventually, after endless birthing pangs, PER did develop an integrated database. Originally, it was to be a three-year $39 million program to create this database and three other programs. One of which was to computerize the awards program to ensure accurate information on awards is inserted into the individual's the personnel audit report. I did have some impact on shaping PER's systems development, although I couldn't swear to you today that we have a fully functioning integrated personnel database. I know that they have a vastly better database than they had before. Running parallel to PER's efforts was IM's effort to create an integrated financial management program, which had been started during the tenure of the previous under secretary for management. The Under Secretary had a relationship with that company which caused some consternation because of the apparent conflict of interest. As I understand it, by 1995 IM and financial management just threw up their hands and agreed it wasn't working. It proved to be a good deal more complicated than they thought. I don't know what system the Department uses now.

Q: I was in personnel in the late '60s and actually we had a system that worked not too badly called the royal McBee system in which we used a knitting needle and hole punchers and cards. We could come up with FSO-2s who spoke Chinese.

WAUCHOPE: Is that right?. Pretty accurately?

Q: Yes, pretty accurately.

WAUCHOPE: Well, the key problem was that the assignment data was not being put into the database in a timely way. The fact that some of these DASs had departed five years before when PER did this DAS equivalent exercise, made my point that the database was woefully inadequate.

Q: Tell me something about awards. I spent 30 years in the Service and I got out in 1985. I don't think I got an award. Most of the people I knew never got awards. Now I look at the biographic register and everybody seems to be getting awards. I mean, was there a conscious decision at some point to say, gee, let's get out and give awards or this just a better breed of people than the ones I was with?

WAUCHOPE: No. The award program was in transition while I was in PER/PE. We didn't have any role in awarding them; we just processed and recorded them. I think it was in the late '70s when the Department apparently decided to use the awards as an incentive for improved performance. I'm talking primarily of the meritorious honor award, the superior honor award and, of course, the distinguished honor award, which was given to only a handful of senior officers, usually at or just before retirement. The women's class suit in which I became involved in 1994, mandated that female officers should be granted meritorious and superior honor awards. The suit claimed that women were not granted these awards in the same proportions as men. As a result, participants in the suit could nominate themselves for one or more awards citing their service and supporting it with a favorable EER. I have no idea how that worked out, but I was bemused at the whole exercise.

In the past, it was generally accepted that one ought not to receive the superior honor award unless one was serving overseas, and that there ought to be a dimension risk or exceptional hard work. As DCM, I chaired the Mission Awards Committee in Mali. AID people were being nominated for superior honor awards when all that they had done was their job. When asked why the nominees deserved a superior honor award, the USAID rep would say, because of the difficult conditions in which they operate and it's tough to get the host government to cooperate. That's what its like for everybody working overseas. AID's philosophy was that awards were a compensation for service in hardship posts, thereby rendering the awards virtually valueless. When I was assigned to PE it appeared that State had adopted the same approach; awards for service in busy offices. The concept had been that meritorious honor awards were appropriate for people who did an extraordinarily job domestically and the domestic assignment in a town crisis backstopping or what have you, and superior honor awards should be directed to people overseas who have found themselves in stressful, hostile or dangerous environments who are doing an extraordinary job as well. That standard had broken down. The result was a precipitous decline in the value of awards, and most importantly, where does the rubber meet the road; in impact of awards in the performance folder. The selection boards barely bothered to look at all at the left hand side of the performance folder where awards are inserted as it became a common conception that awards were contrived if not solicited by the recipient.

Q: In a way it would tell all of what was happening in academia where people graduating with honors. I know at my little college I graduated with honors and I think maybe 20% of us did. Now, there's something like 70% or something.

WAUCHOPE: Absolutely, grades at the undergraduate, and at graduate level as well, have become ridiculously inflated. Everybody gets A's and B's. Where's the average then? The C was supposed to be average. You ask yourself, what has changed? What changed was the Department has become less focused on its personnel and more directed by management for its exclusive benefit. To get the recognition you want, you had to grasp for everything you could exploit to enhance your record. The AF bureau, as I mentioned before, is, or was, a bureau that really cared about those who served in the bureau. It recognized them for their efforts and their willingness to adapt to very difficult conditions, and AF looked out for its own. In other bureaus that interest and concern had begun to break down. To get recognition beyond that bureau that knows you, you had to have some other achievement that you could point to. So, awards apparently became more sought after. When I was head of PER/PE I used to brief the incoming A-100 classes on performance evaluation. I did this for five or six classes every year. I made a point of giving them an unvarnished assessment how the process worked. I would tell the JOs about performance evaluation, the procedures and the realities. I would provide them explicit guidance about what to do and what not to do on their own performance evaluations, which I believe is critically important. I told them that they had to pay close attention to from the beginning; how the EER was written, whether it was fair, whether it was accurate, whether it reflected everything they had achieved. The bottom line is that today more than has been the case in the last 20 years, you've got to look after your own career interests; you cannot expect the system to look after you or your career. The position of career development officer, who is the officers' advocate, has survive through several restructurings of PER, but individual officer has the primary responsibility to look after their own career. They should check their performance folder at least every two years, and make sure everything is in there that ought to be in there. You have to negotiate your EER with your rater and your reviewer. If you're unhappy, or if you think it's unfair, you should make clear why you think so. You should write it down and you should convey it to them verbally and in writing. It's all a part of the new process. The Department is a complex yet amorphous, detached operation, and you simply have to know your rights and make sure that you pursue them vigorously. There is no longer any stigma in doing so. I didn't pull any punches because I thought we should give our people the right start.

That's an interesting way to lead in to the suits that I got involved in after I concluded my two years in PER/PE in 1994. In light of my personal situation I was placed on PER over-compliment. My wife was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in February of 1993. It was a malignant cancer which oncologists have great difficulty treating, but we were initially assured when surgeons removed the cancerous tumor, that there was no sign of metastases. In point of fact, the cancer apparently spread by the blood to her liver. While they said they had a 50% success rate treating it with chemotherapy, that did not prove to be the case in my wife's situation. She had five chemotherapy treatments over five months, and it did not have any significant effect on the tumor. She was granted medical retirement in July 1994. As a result, I opted to remain in the Department to be close to my family.

I was assigned to work in an office in PER that had been set up specifically to deal with two major class action suits that the Department had been contending with for some years. The women's class action suit had been brought by Alison Palmer in the early '70s. The participants were claiming institutional discrimination against women. The other was the black officer suit in which there were 17 named claimants, and was granted class action status, and the entire black officer corps in the Foreign Service was included. The judge presiding ruled that, if the black officers were claiming systemic discrimination, everybody had to be included. I think at the outset you could opt out, but if you didn't elect yourself out, you would be considered to have been included. These suits were pursued by the plaintiffs primarily on the basis of statistics demonstrating unequal treatment. They made a claim that women were not being promoted at the same rate as white males, in particular. They were not being given awards at the rate as white males, that they weren't getting tenured, they weren't being passed on the entrance exams, and they weren't being promoted by the selection boards. In both suits, it was claimed that statistics proved that in virtually every personnel action there was discrimination. I thought, if women don't pass the Foreign Service exam at the same rate as men, shouldn't we look into why more women don't come forward to compete for the Foreign Service. I was told this was irrelevant. The Department of State was being defended in these cases by the Department of Justice. Their lawyers, who I thought were distinguished by their arrogance and notable ignorance of how the Foreign Service operated, would come to the Department for meetings once a month on the status of the process. Less frequently, we would meet with the parties representing the plaintiffs. It seemed to me our role was to concede everything the plaintiffs claimed, and then they would go to the court and demand corrective actions like the granting superior and meritorious honor awards to all who applied. My sense was that, while this case was being pursued on a statistical basis, some of the complaints were also based on the anecdotal evidence, if not an urban legend as they call it today. For example, they claimed that white males were disproportionately soliciting their supervisors for meritorious and superior honor awards, and because women had not done so, they had been discriminated against as shown by the statistics. My personal experience throughout my entire Foreign Service career was I never solicited an award, and I never had anybody solicit an award from me.

Q: I never heard of anybody doing that.

WAUCHOPE: Yes, that was a part of the alleged evidence on which this claim was based. The plaintiffs' attorneys put that case forward. I mentioned the environment in the DG's office, and this tangible anti-male bias fed their sense was that this claim was probably true. When I would interject my experience on these issues, I was roundly dismissed. That was the prevailing atmosphere. So, the corrective action was that any woman plaintiffs who felt that she should have been granted a superior honor award could nominate herself for an award or for multiple awards, if they thought they were warranted. The awards were granted with minimal review. The Foreign Service culture reacted quickly by determining that the honor awards no longer had any real value. Anyway, that was one of the objectives that the suit had achieved. They claimed further that women were being discriminated against in the examination process itself. The attorneys demanded that women who had received a close to passing score on the entrance exam over the last 12 or 15 years be encouraged to come forward to see if they wanted placement in an A-100 class today. I don't know that anybody really came forward to take advantage of this offer.

My personal feeling about the experience of women officers in the Foreign Service is that there were not enough in the service. We did not make a concerted effort to recruit women in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Some male supervisors had not employed these officers effectively either through either stupidity or prejudice. My wife was an FSO who came in through the exam process just as I had. She always performed at the highest level of dedication and competence. Most female officers who I worked for, or who worked for me, were of a similar high caliber and made significant contributions. I always believed that the Department could ill afford not to capitalize on their skills and dedication and to assign them to positions that would take fullest advantage of their abilities. I was the joint recipient of the Equal Employment Opportunity Award by the Department in 1983 for my efforts to assign women officers to supervisory positions in AF during my tenure in PER/CDA. I thought my credentials were pretty respectable on the issue of women in the service, but my perspective and experience were dismissed by the DG and her subordinates at this time because I was a white male and therefore guilty by that alone. Remarkably, Genta and her subordinates never saw the irony that the situation they created was the obverse of that which the Palmer suit protested. Plus ca change!

One of the corrective actions arising from both the black officers suit and the women's suit concerned revamping EEO training for managers, which I had taken some years before. The course lasted only half a day and while it addressed how words and actions can be interpreted in different ways be different groups, it was too superficial. As these suits moved forward, it was agreed that this training had to be pursued much more rigorously than in the past. I believe the course is now three days long. Everyone who supervises anyone must now take the course. The plaintiffs wanted every Foreign Service supervisor to take the course within two years. We were able to demonstrate that that wasn't possible logistically. You couldn't possibly cycle through that many people in that short a period of time. Inevitably, the plaintiffs' attorneys said PER was dragging its feet. It was unfortunate for the Department that the presiding judge in the women's case was judge Stanley Sporkin. Sporkin had been the general counsel of the SEC with Bill Casey, and when Bill Casey took over the CIA, Sporkin became the general counsel at the CIA. I mentioned that when I was in West African affairs in the Reagan administration, some of the wild ideas that came out of the agency in that time. That was Casey's CIA, and the Department of State would often quash these initiatives. It was up to Sporkin as general counsel to promote and defend these initiatives that Casey and his people proposed. As a result, he apparently harbored a very intense resentment against the career Foreign Service. The women plaintiffs couldn't have found a more sympathetic ear than Sporkin. It seemed as if everything that the Department put forward, or the Department of Justice on its behalf, was slapped down. We were told to go back and try again to do more for the women, and so we did. Among other corrective actions were retroactive promotions. They had been in grade at the FS-3 level for 20 years and they claimed that because of discrimination, they were entitled to one promotion, probably two promotions. I know women who went from FS-3s to FS-1s overnight. There were people that I had worked with, and I knew that they did not have the ability to handle the responsibilities of an FS-1 officer; but the deal was done and that was that.

As we were dealt with the diverse issues the plaintiffs brought forward, the Department it was in a retrograde retreat. The plaintiffs' attorneys would come up with a new set of statistics allegedly showing that women were not being assigned to positions of responsibility to the same degree as men. We responded that they had defined what countries are more competitive for promotion or are nicer places to serve, but the real issue is who bids on those positions. We have to look at the bidding statistics, as well as the assignment statistics. That was a basic point that the women attorneys weren't acknowledging, you can't base claims solely on statistics that appear to show discrimination without looking at the other factors that underlie these statistics. We had very limited success with this approach, largely because the DG's reps did not press this approach. Basically the women got pretty much what they wanted through court directed settlements. When the Alison Palmer case was first filed, and was finally made a class action suit, it had has to meet certain specific legal requirements in the courts to obtain the judge's determination. All the women in the Foreign Service were asked if they wanted to be participants in the suit and a certain significant number said no. My wife was one among those who did not. A number of her friends and colleagues did as well. It is obviously a subjective judgment to say whether the more competitive officers opted out and the less competitive stayed in. I don't know. The ones who did stay in, did derive significant benefits from the case.

Q: Well, were you running across the problem of reverse discrimination? I mean I had one man who said he, he launched a suit. He was nominated, he was accepted to be DCM I think it was in Finland, but the ambassador in Finland I think it was Jim Kelly, was saying, well, he really wanted a woman. So all of a sudden somebody who was several grades lower, but a female was brought in his path. I think he said there was documentation on this.

WAUCHOPE: There were several cases of that sort. There have been both grievances and court cases, but they really went nowhere. When I was in PE, grievants would claim that selection boards were discriminating against males. The fact is they were missing the point. When we trained the selection board members, a process that lasted three full days for each board, one of the presentations was by the EEO office. At one of these sessions the acting head of EEO at that time said, among other legitimate points, "When in doubt, promote the minority or the female." After he concluded, I said, as Office Director, that the EEO rep was not correct. The position of the Department of State was that there was to be no discrimination on the basis of race or gender. Boards were to recommend employees based on the written record alone. While female employees can be distinguished in the record, one's race cannot, and any reference to race is prohibited. By agreement with AFSA, selection boards are to be a completely color blind exercise. It was a struggle to eliminate these factors, but we tried assiduously to do so. Another example of the environment that Genta presided over in the PER front office, when she briefed boards at their swearing-in, she would say to them, "I hope to see a substantial number of women among those who are promoted." Apparently she could not grasp that this was inappropriate.

I knew an individual who became quite prominent in pursuing a reverse discrimination grievance. He claimed that the selection boards are discriminated against males, and that women were disproportionately being promoted, and, statistically, that could, in fact, be proven. That allegation had also been a part of the women's class action suit in the past. I said that, while the statistics may or may not prove that case, I consider that gender bias by our selection boards was unlikely. We tried to manage as color-blind and as fair a system as we could. I suggested that he look instead at assignments. That's the real key to advancement in the Foreign Service. Performing well in a high-profile management assignment is what gets one promoted. He then began to look at that aspect, as did others. One could ask, how is it that when 25% of FS-01s were females, yet the number of female DCM at that grade was over 50%. Clearly, one's chances of promotion are advanced by taking those positions. He and others began to focus on that issue, but the assignment process is one of those amorphous exercises in which there are multiple assignment criteria, and you are at a loss to determine the deciding factors were in an assignment decision. They were unable to prove that the Department had made a deliberate effort to assign more minorities and females to these career-enhancing jobs.

In terms of whether promotions are skewed by race or gender bias, you need only look at the promotion lists of today; particularly at the most senior levels. At those most senior levels, minorities and females have been promoted at extraordinarily higher rate on a proportionate basis than any other group. Are we making up for the past mistakes? Let's be honest about it. I joined the Service in '66. During my A-100 course, I was part of a working group, which had a project to determine how many black officers there were in the Foreign Service of about 3,600 FSOs, and what was being done to recruit more. The answer we received initially was 56. When we examined more carefully at that number, we found that there were actually only 11 black FSOs, the others were reserve officers who PER was counting to try to make the overall figure look better. The service missed the boat back in the '60s and 70s with both minorities and women, and it all came home to roost ultimately. When does this process stop, and we achieve a completely merit-based system? That I don't know.

Let me go back to the black officer's suit. They based their suit on a statistical demonstration that black officers were not tenured at the same rate as white officers on a proportionate basis, they were not promoted at the same rate as the officers in all the grades in the Foreign Service, they were not promoted into the Senior Foreign Service at the same levels. They tried to pursue on the assignments side as well, saying blacks were disproportionately being sent to Africa, and they said they could support that statistically as well. This claim did not succeed because the element of self-selection inherent in Open Assignments undermined their contention. The Department, again defended by the Department of Justice, attempted to demonstrate that their claims were incorrect, but we were hanged by our own statistics. My analysis of it is that the Department's efforts in the past to recruit and advance blacks by making concessions for them. Obviously you can more readily manipulate the outcome of the oral examination process than you can a written examination. There were also a couple of initiatives on the written examination in which minorities were given a break. If they didn't quite meet the passing grade they were given an opportunity to compete on the oral assessment.

In the oral assessment there was an inclination to accept minorities into the Service. By doing so, in an otherwise in a color-blind system, it essentially lowered the barrier at the entry level, but did not extend this approach to the other hurtles for advancement that exist throughout the career. If you do not institutionally ensure that all the other hurtles are equally adjusted, you will have a systemic problem. Since any reference to one's race is forbidden in the promotion process. Even if a board knew that an officer is black or African American, he cannot say so as that would not be an acceptable statement to make in any verbal exchange in the selection board deliberations. Nonetheless, blacks felt that they were not being tenured at the same rate as others; likewise for promotions, assignments and awards. They could show that statistically. Remember the mid-career program of the early 80s? We brought in experienced minorities and females in at mid-career levels. It seemed like a valid concept. Those who qualified had advanced university degrees, and in most instances, a fair amount of practical experience. Most were FS-03 and 02s, and in a few cases as 01s. The Department hoped for a quick fix, if you will, to increase the percentage of minorities and women at the mid-levels. Many of these mid-level entrants encountered problems because they hadn't been junior officers and they didn't have the basic experience that a junior officer gains from their first few tours. When they stumbled as well, they became part of this suit.

The court found in favor of the black officers against the Department and the settlement of $6.2 million was granted to them and their attorneys. Their attorneys had started out pro bono, but decided after a while there was so much work involved that they would have to have their share. I think the officers themselves received something on the order of $4.8 million. The next issue was how the plaintiffs were going to divide it up between the named claimants and the other members of the class who, unless they opted out, were part of the suit. Ironically, the plaintiffs came back to the Department and said, "This settlement is all well and good, but we need your help in deciding how this money should be distributed." Well, the Department may have been foolish in times past, but it wasn't foolish enough to become involved in that issue. Any determination the Department made would subject it once again to litigation. It demurred, and I have no idea how the money was divided.

The true irony in this suit is that the plaintiffs claimed that the Department had set them up for failure, by which I took them to mean that it had failed to give the black officers an equal opportunity to advance through counseling, mentoring and coaching them over the hurtles. In fact, the Department instituted a system that gave these officers an advantage to get into the service, and left them to fend for themselves vaulting the other career hurtles, thereby setting them up for failure just as they had been claimed.

Opportunities to hire and advance these plaintiffs were missed early in the 60s and 70s, and having missed those opportunities, the Department could be faulted statistically by both blacks and females, and it was. These suits have significantly changed the structure of the Foreign Service. It is much more broad-based and representative than it was before. Only time will tell about the quality of the personnel and success of this effort.

Q: Did the Hispanics or Asians come up in this?

WAUCHOPE: Not as part of these suits, but the Hispanics have their own organization, and they were looking for opportunities to differentiate their success rates from that of the non-Hispanic white males. They had a fair amount of success in ensuring that Hispanics were represented on boards, and in management positions, but not to the extent that black and females had. I don't know if Asians were ever an issue per se. I believe they also have a group as well, but my impression is that they have done quite well.

Q: One of the things I've noticed in the Foreign Service and that has been in some of the jobs such as Director General or in some of the other jobs which are not sort of geographic that a number of women who have come in who've really held very minor ambassadorships. Mostly African and mostly the smaller African, no strategic countries and all that which seems to be a diminution of the currency. Was this apparent?

WAUCHOPE: Yes, it was true, but that has changed in the last decade. As I mentioned, I shared the annual EEO award for assigning more women into AF DCM positions. AF had more than 40 DCM positions, and they are still considered an excellent opportunity to test one's management and leadership skills, and as a stepping stone to greater things. Over time, exceptionally qualified women, women who would be competitive in any organization like Mary Ryan and Roz Ridgeway, would rise to the top no matter what the obstacles. Roz became the Counselor of the Department and the ambassador to Finland and Germany and then assistant secretary for EUR. Carol Laise was the first female DG followed by Joan Clark and then Genta. There was some irony in that in the 90s, certain attractive chief of mission positions in Africa were rejected by women who now had opportunities both in the Department and overseas. By that point the Department was so desperate to assign more women to these senior positions, that women who were serving as office directors or deputy assistant secretaries were offered AF missions, and they'd say, "No, that doesn't interest me." I know of the case where Dar Es Salaam was offered, the candidate turned it down. An interesting reversal of traditional practice reflecting the new realities in the Department.

You may recall the origins of the women's class action. Alison Palmer was being assigned to an Arab country, I believe it was Saudi Arabia. The ambassador said he did not want her assigned there because the Arabs would refuse to work with a female officer. Well, that was the prevailing attitude at that time, both in the Middle East and in the U.S. Subsequently we sent female officers out to that part of the world and they've done extraordinarily well, in part because we made clear to the host governments that these officers represented the U.S., and if you want to deal with the U.S., you will have to learn to work with these officers.

Q: They represent the 800-pound gorilla.

WAUCHOPE: They represent the United States, exactly. Absolutely, and you foreigners had better accept it because you don't any choice ultimately. Alison Palmer did break down barriers to the benefit of both women and of the U.S. Women were then accepted and as effective as a male officer, and in some cases more so. Women political appointees served with success as Ambassadors to Ireland and Paris. These advances were far more than a sop to women.

Q: I think so. One of the things that was put out at one point was that if more women were representing our foreign policy, we would have a gentler, kinder foreign policy. Of course that has had absolutely. Of course, this is coming from the feminist side of, not within the system. It was nonsense and I think all of us knew that.

WAUCHOPE: Oh, right. Anybody who knows Roz Ridgeway wouldn't think that way. She was one tough officer, and she wasn't going to make policy any kinder and gentler than it absolutely needed to be to achieve the U.S. interest..

Q: Well, then what happened?

WAUCHOPE: I did about a year in this special projects office working on these suits and on systems issues. My wife's condition deteriorated markedly in May of 1995. She had retired on disability the previous summer and she had been following the macrobiotic diet over the eight months after giving up chemotherapy. She had seemed to be doing well, and she had plenty of energy, which she devoted to the building of our new home in Loudoun County. But, by May things had gotten substantially worse. With Linda's illness and the ages of my two boys, I had long before decided that I didn't want to go overseas again. Once we returned to Washington, taking my two boys back overseas with the limited educational facilities in Africa was just not an option. I had been contemplating early retirement anyway. My wife died in early August of 1995 and I retired in September of '95. My boys and I moved out to our beautiful home in the country, and I have devoted my time primarily to their upbringing.

It was a great career. I enjoyed virtually every minute of it. In terms of recommending it to people today, I'm not so sure. The Service has changed a great deal, and we don't have the great issues of the bipolar world to address any longer. We do have the terrorism issue and the obligation to play a constructive role in defusing international tensions, but these missions are not the same. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, our focus as a nation is no longer confronting a single threat, but confronting a diverse set of threats. The Service is now also much more subject to being politicized because of the diverse domestic constituencies. This is a corrosive process, which can prove debilitating to a highly talented and well-motivated Foreign Service, but in a democracy, these interests must be served.

Q: Economic, trade.

WAUCHOPE: Every nation has its unique economic interests, and trade issues abound. This has brought interest groups into play, and the service is pushed and pulled by these interests. Our ability to retain any degree of coherence in our foreign policy is very difficult unless there is an extraordinarily strong Secretary of State who is backed completely by the President. This isn't the case today and it hasn't been in a while, and may not be the case ever again. Looking back over my seven years of retirement, there have been many times that I was glad not to be in the service and have to explain some of the bad decisions made by the Clinton and now, more particularly, by the Bush administration. All this makes the Foreign Service a less attractive career than it was in my time, although, you know, there's no greater job than representing the United States overseas. At least that is how I felt about it in my time in the Foreign Service.

Q: Okay, Keith I want to thank you very much.

WAUCHOPE: Okay, it's been fun.

End of interview