

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

**AMBASSADOR JOHN A. BURROUGHS**

*Interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy  
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Burroughs.]

*Q: Today is April 12, 2005 this is an interview with John A. Burroughs and what does the A. stand for?*

BURROUGHS: Andrew.

*Q: Andrew, but you also go by John?*

BURROUGHS: Yes.

*Q: And this will be done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. John lets start kind of at the beginning when and where were you born?*

BURROUGHS: I was born in Washington, D.C. 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1936.

*Q: All right!! Could we talk a bit to give a feel about your family and what you know about your grandparents, lets start on your fathers side.*

BURROUGHS: Okay. I did not know too much about my grandparents and I never did see them. They died before I was born and there was never really that much talk in my family about grandparents.

*Q: This was on both sides of the family.*

BURROUGHS: Yes, both sides of the family, so I really don't know that much about them to tell the truth.

*Q: Alright. How about your father and mother?*

BURROUGHS: My father grew up believe it or not in Southern Maryland not too far from where we are now.

*Q: We are in Bristol, Maryland.*

BURROUGHS: We are actually in Rosen, Maryland. He grew up in Southern Maryland, in Charles County. And my mother grew up about five minutes from Upper Marlboro which is five or ten minutes from here. My father was what they called at the time a Steam Engineer, for which he is proud, which dealt with coal fired boilers in these large apartment houses in and around DC. My mother taught school for awhile. She graduated from Minor Teachers College in Washington DC. She left that and started working in the Government.

*Q: Well, so you were born in DC. By that time your father was working in steam engineering and your mother was working for the government.*

BURROUGHS: Yes, yes, yes. We lived in Munson Hall which now is a dormitory for George Washington University.

*Q: So you were basically in Foggy Bottom weren't you?*

BURROUGHS: For awhile, yes.

*Q: I noticed you've moved back here in a beautiful home in Bristol, Maryland. And you have been here for ten years. I take it, it was returning to your roots more or less, your family or was it happenstance that you came back to the Bristol area?*

BURROUGHS: No this was all happenstance. Ten years ago I didn't know what Bristol or Lothian was, never heard of it. This is all happenstance. There is no connection with me living here now and my family. I just like the peace and quiet of rural areas. We had a farm one time near Front Royal, Virginia, and I loved that and I just like the peace and quiet.

*Q: And, of course this is April in Southern Maryland which you cannot beat as far as the view. Well tell me a little about growing up in DC. How would you describe DC from your point a view at that time?*

BURROUGHS: Well the first thing you must realize for me, I grew up in a totally segregated society. It is hard to believe now but I can vividly remember when there were no black street car operators, bus drivers, police, no clerks in the store. The only jobs available to black people at that time were menial kinds of occupations – so it was that as a backdrop. We were poor, but we did not know that we were poor because everybody else were in the same category. It was that kind of DC that I grew up in.

*Q: Well, where you lived in Munson Hall on I Street did you live elsewhere in DC.*

BURROUGHS: Yes, we moved far northeast which is really across Benning Road from what is RFK stadium today. This was a kind of public housing complex which consisted of hundred and hundreds of houses. I ran across a picture that I had taken when we lived in far northeast and I got a chance to see houses and it was reminiscent of the same kind of square houses that I saw in South Africa. I was telling a good buddy of mine, I said,

you know we were really living in a township in a sense except that it had no razor wire around it.

*Q: You are talking about a township in South Africa at the time of Apartheid.*

BURROUGHS: Yes. Right! Right!

*Q: What about schools? Where did you go to school? Say elementary school.*

BURROUGHS: I went to Neville Thomas School which was in our community and while we were living in Munson Hall I went to Stevens School which I think is still there.

*Q: It is still there, it is not far. I go by it all the time. I think it is on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street something like that. It's still full of little kids.*

BURROUGHS: Yes, exactly, I went there for awhile. Then we moved to northeast and I went to Neville Thomas.

*Q: How did you find school? Let's talk about the elementary school, first.*

BURROUGHS: I found school to be challenging at the time. But from what I observe today, it was a hundred percent better than the schools today in the sense that there were no discipline problems. I mean, I got put out of class for chewing gum. We had one teacher who made us wear a tie. If you came in with a tee shirt you had to wear a tie. So, it seemed to me the teachers were very serious. The students were very much disciplined. If there were any problems with the students, the students would bring a note home. You were disciplined by the teacher. You were disciplined by your parents. There was no question about questioning the teacher about whether the student had done something.

*Q: And you also benefited by the fact that being so few jobs opened at anything but menial level that so many, you got some really excellent teachers, didn't you.*

BURROUGHS: Yes. Yes. Very dedicated.

*Q: We will say women I would imagine?*

BURROUGHS: Primarily women I would say. Yes, right, exactly.

*Q: This is primarily true in a lot of places that I grew up in Southern California and we had, I was born in 1928 and we did not mess around in school and the teachers had discipline and you know they were dedicated ladies. They drove you, you just didn't mess around.*

BURROUGHS: That is right. The schools were serious. I can't remember, for example, anytime that I ever cut school. That was a cardinal sin to do that. I would go to school

everyday and tried to do my best. I am the president, believe it or not, of a high school alumni group and we still meet once a month.

We often talk about what was the driving force that always made us strive to do better. And we figured it was a combination of things. First of all our parents but secondly the teachers and maybe even more important in many respects were the coaches that we came across. I always played sports. I played baseball, and football. And like the teachers those coaches were very much dedicated and had done it a long time and they knew how to get the best out of you.

*Q: By the time you were out of elementary school were you much of a reader. Was reading part of your life or not?*

BURROUGHS: Yes, but only those things primarily that were school connected. I can't remember going out and buying a book. First of all I couldn't afford it. I read but it was basically those things connected with school or required by school.

*Q: Was segregation and the antiquities of it much a topic of conversation or was this sort of the world you lived in and accepted and how to get along. What were you picking up from school and then from your parents?*

BURROUGHS: Segregation was never really a topic of discussion either in school or dealing with everyday real life. I mean it was just a matter of fact situation that everyone didn't really accept but it was just a way of life and people went on with their lives despite the situation. The only time there was any question of the system came with the beginning of the whole Civil Rights Movement in 1955. And then young people like myself started looking at the system and saying, "well you are right and this whole thing was wrong". But up until that time, people accepted the status quo.

*Q: I think this is true in both the white and black communities. And when you are looking back on it and you wonder how you could of but that was life. What about World War II, you were pretty young, I mean really we didn't get in until you were five or six years old but did that have much impact on perhaps what you were thinking about and doing?*

BURROUGHS: Not really.

*Q: This would have been before you were in high school?*

BURROUGHS: Yes, that is true. The only thing I remember about that time is when President Roosevelt died.

*Q: Back in 1945?*

BURROUGHS: Yes.

*Q: So you would have been nine years old?*

BURROUGHS: I remember Roosevelt dying and parents crying and people crying and all of that. I remember also when the war was over, because I was living at 1731 New Hampshire Avenue. I remember people riding up and down New Hampshire Avenue with these rolls of toilet paper coming out of the cars celebrating the fact that the war was over.

*Q: Where did you go to High School?*

BURROUGHS: I went to High School in Washington DC at Armstrong Technical and Manual High School. And it was part of the segregation scheme. It was a vocational school basically, but it was those teachers and especially those coaches at Armstrong, I think, that gave me a sense of responsibility. Helped to develop character and a whole bunch of solid traits of that group of those high school teachers that helped me make it through life.

*Q: You would have been in high school from about 1948 or so or a little later?*

BURROUGHS: A little later 1951 I guess until 1954?

*Q: Being a vocational school were they pushing you toward a vocation or what were you looking at?*

BURROUGHS: I was majoring in automotive repair. But, of course I had some math and science courses, I remember taking some physics and all that kind of stuff. But my major was automotive repair. And we had old engines and the instructor did the best he could to teach us on that old engine. I took a couple of carpentry courses while I was in high school.

*Q: I went to print shop and I learned how to set type by hand. I don't know what they call it, but it was something. It was that square thing. It is a skill that is absolutely without value today. Because it is all done by computer and typing and all that but I learned that. What about, were you pointed toward anything by '54 I guess had they talked about desegregated schools while you were still in high school or that is not coming until '55 "Brown vs. the Board of Education", 55'.*

BURROUGHS: Right! Yes it was. But, I had a major breakthrough which catapulted me and my buddy. I keep talking about my buddy because he was in the same kind of situation. Around that time there were track stars around the country that were trying to break the four minute mile.

*Q: Oh yeah, Roger Bannister of England did it.*

BURROUGHS: The University of Iowa's track coach came here with a runner. They used to have a star game. The Washington Star was a newspaper. They used to have the Star games over at the National Guard Armory. So Iowa's track coach came here with

this runner. He was in that group trying to break the four-minute mile. That track coach was here and he picked up the Washington Post. It had the All City Football Team in it, High School. So me and this one guy named Mike Haggel, who has since died, had made this All High School Football Team despite the fact that the schools were segregated. This coach said he figured if we made this team we had to be pretty good. So he went back and told the football coach from Iowa. The coach from Iowa wrote me a letter and the rest is history. I was off to the University of Iowa. So I leaped out to a whole different world.

*Q: Let's talk a little bit about football? Considering you are a big man so were you a big football player for high school at the time or not?*

BURROUGHS: Yeah! I was bigger now than I was then, but, but I made All City in DC.

*Q: What position?*

BURROUGHS: Tackle.

*Q: While you were in Washington what was the attitude, say toward the police?*

BURROUGHS: The attitude toward the police was horrible. I mean, I do not like the State of Virginia today. You notice I said I don't like it. I still have a little thing right here in the back of my mind about the State of Virginia. If you were black, and we used to ride bicycles, if you were black and you went across that 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge those police would stop you. I was dating a girl at Virginia Union University of Richmond. Had my little car, and by this time I had started working for the State Department. I would drive down. We took Route One and we had to go through all of these little towns. I would get through Bristol, Virginia, I would do two miles an hour because I knew the cops would stop me. Not to say that Maryland or anything was any better during the time but that always sticks in the back of my mind.

*Q: In High School did you have after school work or not?*

BURROUGHS: Oh yes. I worked. I served papers

*Q: This would be legal papers?*

BURROUGHS: No, newspapers.

*Q: Excuse me, newspapers.*

BURROUGHS: Right! I served the Washington Daily News. It cost 18 cents a week at the time. Even when I was living on New Hampshire Avenue and I Street, I served papers in the apartment building. So I have always worked. I caddied at the Inner Springs Country Club. That's why I like and know a lot about the sport of golf. Not that I played it but I used to caddy, so I know about it.

*Q: In 1954 you moved to the University of Iowa.*

BURROUGHS: Right!

*Q: And you were there from 1954 to 1959 something like that. Was this an eye opener for you?*

BURROUGHS: In many respects it was. I did not know it at the time, but in many respects it was a shock. Because remember I had just come out of this totally segregated society where you had absolutely no contact with white people. None! Absolutely, none. In Iowa, it was three weeks before I saw another black person and that was a shock. But! I hasten to add it was the best move I have ever made in my life. And it changed my life.

*Q: How did the University of Iowa strike you? First of all where is it located?*

BURROUGHS: It is in Iowa, City.

*Q: It is a pretty small city isn't it?*

BURROUGHS: Yes. The University is the city, almost.

*Q: You got there recruited essentially for the football team, is that it? What was the football team like and the coach?*

BURROUGHS: Yes. The coach was fantastic Coach Evashevski was a fantastic coach. He was motivational as a lot of coaches are. He was interested in the players. Often talked about you are here to get an education, not to play football. Football is on the side. I am sure a lot of coaches said the same thing. But, you got the impression that he meant it. Plus, he was a good coach from a tactical standpoint.

*Q: What sort of courses were you taking there at Iowa?*

BURROUGHS: I majored in Political Science. Only primarily because most of the people back here that I knew who had decent kinds of jobs, and by decent I meant maybe they were mail-carriers in a mail room or the State Department, that was decent to us, worked in the Government. So I figured, well, if I am going to work in the Government, then maybe I will major in political science. It was as simple as that.

*Q: Were there many other black students when you were there?*

BURROUGHS: No! No! That is why I said, it took me three weeks before I saw another black person, anywhere, despite the fact that there were 18 or 19,000 students. And when I finally saw this guy, he was from, I often say the roughest city in America was St. Louis, Illinois. He was going through the same thing. He didn't see any black people.

What kind of place is this? There are no black people nowhere. We later became roommates and we later graduated together. We got to be very, very good friends.

*Q: How did the Civil Rights Movement affect you and did it have any effect on the campus or anything?*

BURROUGHS: I still go back to Iowa and Minnesota and Wisconsin and places like that. I think the people in the Mid-West are probably some of the most genuine people that I have ever met, black or white. I had that feeling when I was out there at Iowa and I still have that feeling today after I have traveled around the country. One day I was going to class and there was this big demonstration. People were traveling down Clinton Street which is the center of our campus. So what the heck is going on? He said these people are marching in support of the students in Little Rock. Well, "What the hell is going on in Little Rock, Arkansas", and someone told me the whole situation. But up until I saw those students marching, I did not know anything about what was going on at Little Rock and all of that. The students at the University of Iowa and a lot of schools in the Big Ten were very, very supportive of the whole Civil Rights effort.

*Q: Did you find that students would seek you out to talk to a black or something by the fact that you said that you didn't see many others you became sort of that awful term "a representative of his race" or something like that but did you find this as a spokesperson position or not?*

BURROUGHS: Surprisingly, no. I didn't have any problems at Iowa. I got jobs in the summer, became friends with an awful lot of people but never once did they really seek me out to discuss "black/white issues" that kind of thing. It was partly there were so few of us at the University. We would go out to some of the rural areas and some of those people had never seen black people before in their lives.

A famous place we would go was called the Amana Colonies where they made Amana freezers and appliances. I guess it was a German settlement and it had some fascinating history and there were several of them in Iowa but they have some unbelievable restaurants and the coaches would take us out there sometimes to eat and we would go on our own.

*Q: Good German restaurants?*

BURROUGHS: Yes, unbelievable. That Iowa beef, you know and T-bone steaks that would hang off the plate. Boy! Was it good.

*Q: What about dating and all of this? How did that work out?*

BURROUGHS: Interracial dating was no problem at the time. It is probably more of a problem today than it was back then. Simply because of the makeup of the student body and what was going on at the time.



*Q: Speaking of Segregation though, did I understand that many of the universities today and for sometime the football teams, sports are almost segregated because they are higher performers practically and the coaches kept them off to one side and did you feel that at all or was that how the coaches system work?*

BORROUGHS: No, we were very much a part of the student-body. The only thing we had, thank goodness, that was maybe apart from the normal students was a training table and that was some of the best food in the world. And, of course, that ended after the football season. That was the only thing. The rest of the time we lived in a dormitory with all the other students and we went to the same classes. I mean, if you failed, at least when I was going, it was primarily your responsibility because we would get quarterly reports on the courses that we were taking. And if you got into any difficulty in political science, western civilization or anything, they had a guy there that was part of the coaching thing. He was an advisor and he would direct you to a tutor, if you needed it. So they made every possibility for you to survive.

*Q: How did your team do?*

BURROUGHS: Oh! We did great. We played in the Rose Bowl twice, 1956 and 1959, my Senior year. We ended up number one in the country and we finally beat Notre Dame. After three years we finally beat Notre Dame.

*Q: What sort of jobs did you work? Did you stay in Iowa during the summer?*

BURROUGHS: A couple of summers I stayed. I worked in Chicago for a couple of summers. I worked at a place called Corn Products Refining Company in Chicago, which was a company that made Karo Syrup. I had the roughest job but it was ideal for football and getting into shape. I had the toughest job I ever had in my life, and that was filling box cars full of 100 pound bags of cattle feed. You put 933 bags in a box car. You did three of them a day in the sometimes 80 or 90 degree heat and maybe even hotter than that inside the box car. So after that job I couldn't be in any better shape going back to school. It paid well at the time and I was young, 19, 20.

*Q: So when you graduated in 1959 where did you go?*

BURROUGHS: Well, I got drafted by the Philadelphia, Eagles football team. I was going to be a professional football player. So I went to Philadelphia after graduation. And it was obviously and totally different than it is now. We didn't have to talk about a 21 million dollar contract. If that was the case I would still be trying to be playing. I went to Philadelphia and I stayed about three-quarters of a season. I got placed on waivers and I came back here and started to work for the State Department.

*Q: How did you get into the State Department?*

BURROUGHS: I took the Federal Entrance Exam (FEE). Everybody took that to get into the Federal Government, and I started in the Passport Office.

*Q: So you were in the Passport Office?*

BURROUGHS: I started there.

*Q: Was Frances Knight there?*

BURROUGHS: Oh yes!

*Q: She was a real presence wasn't she?*

BURROUGHS: Frances Knight was unbelievable. We would see her once a year around Christmas time. They would announce that Frances Knight was coming through and buddy you talk about people shaping up, you might as well have said the General is coming down from the Command. It was all spit and polish at the time.

*Q: What sort kind of work were you doing at the time?*

BORROUGHS: I was an examiner, a passport examiner.

*Q: How did you like that?*

BORROUGHS: Well, I found it very interesting, but here again this was 1960. When I came into the Passport Office there were people working; thirty, forty examiners all sitting at desks in the open. There were people that would open the office door and look in and I kept wondering why they would do that. So, finally, maybe after my working there maybe a year, the people said, well, you know, those people work in the file room and they want to see this first black person hired off the street as a GS-5. I could not believe it. I simply could not believe it. But later on I found out there were people working in the file room that had degrees, black people who primarily had gone to Howard University, had gone to historically black colleges. That fit with what I had found out when I was in high school. I also worked a couple of years at the Post Office down on North Capital Street and knowing some of those people I found out that they had gone to colleges or universities, had degrees in Accounting, and Psychology, and Engineering. But neither Corporate America nor the Government was hiring any of those kinds of people. So they went to work in the Post Office where they were making two dollars an hour which was very good pay at the time. They started raising families and stayed on. So, anyway, Passport Examiner or Adjudicator I found interesting.

*Q: You got in there about the election of 1960, did you get engaged with Kennedy vs. Nixon or any of that?*

BURROUGHS: Kennedy would give his press conferences down in the Loy Henderson Conference Room during the period of his Presidency.

*Q: The Auditorium, yes.*

BURROUGHS: His motorcade would drive into the building and he would get out in the garage in the basement and get on the elevator and go up to the Loy Henderson Conference Room. It got to the point where people, instead of going on their ten o'clock coffee break would go down in the garage and see Kennedy and I was one of the people that would go and see him. The crowds kept growing bigger and bigger until they had to cordon off an area to keep the people back. Kennedy would come in and get out and just wave. Women would faint; it was unbelievable. But that is what I primarily remember about President Kennedy and, of course, all of the different things that happened. But in terms of getting involved in any of the election, anything like that, no. I didn't get involved; other than vote for him.

*Q: For awhile in the Passport Office, at least as an Examiner, you were the only black?*

BURROUGHS: Yes. Yes. The only black examiner.

*Q: Did you find coming back to Washington a shock because you had been in Iowa where it is an open friendly place. Did you find Washington different? I assume it was still pretty segregated wasn't it. If not officially, but certainly in name in actuality or not?*

BURROUGHS: Yes, it was segregated, but I think that the advent of Kennedy and what was going at the time gave a lot of people, African-Americans, a lot of hope that things were going to change. I later found out, after I left the Passport Office, that it probably had one of the best equal opportunity profiles in the Federal Government because I was hired as the first black examiner. There were subsequently other minorities that followed me into that Passport Office. And also there were minority lawyers, black lawyers, in the Passport Office, in the legal section, which I found to be unheard of in other Government Agencies at that time.

*Q: It was very interesting because one thing Frances Knight and before her Ruth, whatever her name was.*

BURROUGHS: Shipley!

*Q: Shipley. Of being real tyrannical types but at the same time obviously Frances Knight was not a racial bigot say the way J. Edgar Hoover was.*

BURROUGHS: Well, yes you are right. I don't know to what extent Frances Knight had anything to do with a profile but certainly within her office and within her operation there were substantial numbers of blacks and women with meaningful jobs.

*Q: You can bet your boots that Frances Knight had a role in this because nothing happened as far as I can gather in that Passport Office Agency without her saying so. No President, no one dared mess with her. So I mean with all the things that you heard about her, I think you can give credit for being one of the open types.*

*How long were you in the Passport Office? From 1959?*

BURROUGHS: Well actually from '60 to '66. I stayed there for six years. I found it very rewarding and I got promoted. I became Chief of the Official Travel Section, it was a little group of about ten of us which issued these official passports.

*Q: Did you find, the Passport Office sort of stood alone, right. As a Consular Officer my basic profession I always made sure I never got cross-wise with the Passport Office. But being a sort of enclosed agency did you find there was much?*

BURROUGHS: Interface with the State Department?

*Q: Uhum! Interface with the State Department but also within it! You know sort of almost court politics and also maneuver for a position or something like that or was it collegiate. What was the atmosphere?*

BURROUGHS: It was very collegial. But a separate and distinct organization. I didn't understand why Frances Knight insisted upon keeping apart from the State Department. She did not even want to move into the same building as the State Department. And not until I got into the State Department did I begin to understand why. She was running her own sort of empire. And I could understand how she wanted to keep it that way. I did not understand at the time but I could understand later.

*Q: Were you there, because I remember my boss for sometime, a person I had very high respect for was Barbara Watson and she couldn't stand Frances Knight. Those were two very powerful ladies. Did you get any feeling for that of the tension between the two?*

BURROUGHS: No. By the time Barbara Watson came on board I was out of the State Department. The one that I remember, Security and Consular Affairs, was I think his name was Abba Schwartz. That is the one I remember her getting into a big fight with. I knew Barbara Watson and I was out of the Passport Office at the time.

*Q: Well then, where did you move to in '66? Oh! And where did you settle in Washington when you came back?*

BURROUGHS: Initially we moved into Washington, DC in the first FHA approved condominium in Washington, DC. It was over on E Street in Northeast Washington. People could not even pronounce the word, this was like in 1969. Coops, yes. But Condominium, "What the hell is that". We moved into a nice apartment. I became the President of the Board of Directors. I was sort of catching hell from all the tenants. I think we had something like 185 apartment units, two and three bedrooms. In three separate buildings. And those buildings are, of course, still there today. But I stayed there until the early '70s and then we bought a house in Oxon Hill, Maryland.

*Q: You mentioned we, did you get married and where?*

BORROUGHS: I got married in 1965. She lived in Washington, DC. I met her in the State Department. She worked for AID. As a matter of fact, you mentioned Kennedy. About Kennedy! The first time I saw my wife was the night or the day of the Kennedy Inauguration and it snowed.

*Q: Oh Boy! Was that something.*

BURROUGHS: Do you remember that?

*Q: Oh Yeah! It did not look as though it was going to take place practically.*

BURROUGHS: That is right! I got off from work and I was walking over to Columbia Plaza which was a parking lot. And right there as you come out of “D” Street and going right on the corner was an AID office. I saw this poor woman standing out there literally up to her waist almost in snow. And I said, “Excuse me Miss, but do you need a ride”, she was looking so, snow was coming down. She said, “No, as a matter of fact I am waiting for my ride.” So I went on about my business. So, I think later on that year maybe not later on but it snowed again, it was January, I think it snowed again. So here I go walking out again, you know. I see her again. My rides’ car broke down and I do need a ride. Well, you know like they say, the rest is history.

*Q: In '66 you moved to another job.*

BURROUGHS: Yes.

*Q: Where did you go?*

BURROUGHS: I went to the Department of Navy down the street. Walked down 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to those little temporary buildings on Constitution Avenue and I walked in and said to myself, “I don’t know if this is the right move or not”. Because they have these air-conditions sticking out of the windows and linoleum floors.

*Q: It was like a World War II or maybe even World War I, I think it was World War II construction. T ultimately became the park area where the Vietnam Memorial is.*

BURROUGHS: It was a promotional opportunity. This was right after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of '64. We were all kind of caught up in this new Government. We are going to have this new Government, Title VII, that says that you cannot discriminate because of this or that. Like a lot of my friends at the time, we were kind of sick and tired of going here when I am the only black here. So I took a job, they were not even calling it equal opportunity at the time, I was a Personal Management Specialist.

So, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Navy as a civilian because I got a chance to see a lot of the world as a civilian and at the time the military was one of the most diverse, not from a racial standpoint but from a job mixture and mission than any in the Government

Agency in the country. I mean you have everything from funeral director's to Ship drivers and pilots, you name it.

*Q: You were with the Navy from 1967 to when?*

BURROUGHS: Probably '75 or '76 when I came back to the State Department.

*Q: While you were both in the State Department and in the Navy. Civil Rights was gaining. You had Martin Luther King but you also had the Stokely Carmichael, these were people basically on diversion paths in a way. One was more militant and the other was moral suasion. Did you get involved in this or did you find yourself adherent to one side or the other?*

BURROUGHS: I got involved in the demonstrations. I marched in the demonstrations. I was at King's March on Washington. Probably the most exhilarating thing I have ever done in my entire life.

People like Stokely Carmichael and Angela Davis were pretty radical.

*Q: Looking at what they were saying at the time, looking at today they are still pretty radical today.*

BURROUGHS: I was more a Martin Luther King proponent than for Stokely Carmichael and Angela Davis and some of these black power advocates. I got caught up in the Navy and it just seems like a series of things just kind of happened and that is why I enjoyed my time at the Navy because we had the Norfolk Naval Shipyards. I think there were nine shipyards at the time. And they had a relatively large number of black employees that were serving as helpers. Like Helper Electricians, Helper Pipe-fitter. From the rating of helper you were supposed to eventually move into the journeyman level as a pipe-fitter or an electrician or whatever, but that was not happening. There were guys at the time that had worked thirty years as a helper without an opportunity to ever become a journeyman.

So there was a guy down at the Norfolk Navy Shipyard, head of the International Hard Couriers Union, a black guy. He started getting stuff stirred up down in Norfolk Navy Shipyard. By this time the formal discrimination complaint regulations were issued as part of that Civil Rights Act of 1964. So these guys down in Norfolk Navy Shipyard started filing complaints, I mean formal complaints of discrimination. And at that time formal complaints, you had to have hearings, first you had to have investigations and there were hearings and it was a long drawn out process. And you had to have a decision by the head of the Agency, that what the regulation said.

So this guy was bogging down the system with complaints, tying up the whole system with complaints. It was all in the newspaper both in Norfolk and here. So they announced this position as personal management specialist, but it was to begin to deal with these discrimination complaints issues that were coming out from the Norfolk Navy Shipyard

and, of course, later on out of other shipyards, from all over the Navy. So we had that on one hand, and then on the military side the Department of Navy was known as the most racist of all the branches of service.

*Q: Absolutely, I grew up as a kid in Annapolis and my friends were Naval Officers, in fact I knew one kid whose cousin was first name was called States Rights Cobb. To give you a feel. Ha! Ha!*

BURROUGHS: So we started trying to deal with the discrimination complaints from the Shipyards and then on the military side were people who started trying to deal with that. And then, Admiral Zumwalt comes and an Equal Opportunity Program with the Department of Navy takes off. Not without a lot of problems. We had a lot of problems. We had a mutiny in San Diego. We had a riot in Great Lakes. We had a riot on board the "Kitty Hawk". So it was a fascinating time and then in '79 came the all volunteer force, I think '78 or '79. Did away with the draft. I got involved in a lot of fascinating stuff. We let contracts with J Walter Thompson Advertising Agency for something like 24 million dollars. We had tractor trailers, 18 wheelers that were replicas of airplanes, trying to recruit people for the first time.

*Q: This is a very important slice of history. With the Norfolk situation did you find yourself up against I would imagine a Shipyard of an entrenched managerial group of, you know, we have always done it this way and why should we change?*

BURROUGHS: Definitely, from the people, the lowly GS-2 or whatever in the shop all the way up through management. This is the way they had always done things. Then you were talking about bringing these Negroes, as they called them at the time, into this work place and that is not going to fly. This was rough stuff. If you found discrimination at the time, through these regulations, somebody had to be supposedly disciplined.

*Q: And some people were subject to lose their jobs.*

BURROUGHS: Well, not that. They wouldn't lose their jobs. That was another component of it. It was difficult finding discrimination. "Oh well, he didn't mean anything by it." Or he didn't do this or he didn't do that. So first you had to find discrimination. If you have a finding of discrimination, then the supervisor or somebody in that organization, you have to do what they call corrective action. Somebody was supposedly disciplined. A lot of times that ended up as being sent simply a letter of reprimand. Later on it got to be a little more tougher on some individuals. But it was always a kind of tough kind of situation. You were always rolling that rock up the side of the mountain. It was always difficult. When Zumwalt came on board as Chief of Naval Operations it helped to turn the tide. People were saying, okay we will change this organization. And Zumwalt and Admiral Kidd, who was Head of the Naval Material Command, 4 star Admiral, I felt that I was lucky in my career to have worked with people like that who were not conservative, who were not liberals as far as I was concerned. They were about doing what was right. And even in speeches today I talk about those people.

*Q: Elmo Zumwalt and Isaac Kidd.*

BURROUGHS: Right! Those people, they did things. There are three big apartment houses across the street from the Pentagon. I forget what they are called, three of them. I am sure that they are still there. I think about sixty or seventy percent were occupied by military personnel. We got these complaints that they were discriminating against blacks and other minorities, mainly service people that work at the Pentagon. We, when I say we, I mean I am talking about the Department of the Navy, we sent testers into those apartments to apply for apartments. Blacks go, sorry we don't have any vacancies, white go yes, sign up. Did that about three or four times. This was over a long period of time. Get all this information. This stuff goes to McNamara, who is Secretary of Defense at the time.

*Q: Robert McNamara, yes.*

BURROUGHS: McNamara holds a press conference and he says something like: the RiverHouse Apartments are in Arlington County, Virginia. As Secretary of Defense I had no control over Arlington County, Virginia. But I do have control of the military personnel. With "primo facie" evidence that they discriminate against black military personnel of whatever service if this continues I will place the RiverHouse off limits to United States military personnel. Problem solved. Solved. That took balls! You know. Zumwalt, same thing down at Charleston Naval Shipyard. The advent of desegregation, buses were coming in the Charleston Naval Shipyard to pick up kids to take them to private, religious, segregated schools.

*Q: These were schools basically, these were segregated schools.*

BURROUGHS: Yes! Right! Zumwalt, again said I cannot control the schools but I damn sure can control the Shipyard. I will prohibit those buses from coming into the Shipyard to pick these kids up. Problem solved. You could not get that today. That would not happen today. These guys were labeled under the liberal category, and I hate that. These guys were doing what was right. I feel very fortunate to have worked with people like that in my Government career. When Zumwalt walked into a room of Admirals, about thirteen or fourteen Admirals, and said, "Gentleman, the question is is the Navy all American or is it all White? I know what the answer is and we have got to change it.

That is the one thing I like about the military, if the boss says, "God Damn it, this is what we are going to do." Then somebody, if they want their careers they start trying to do it.

*Q: Well I think quite from the beginning the military since Truman's Order. I remember I came in the Air Force, I was an enlisted man for four years right after college in 1950 during the Korean War and we were just seeing a trickle, but blacks were coming it was the beginning of things. You could still see Army Engineer troops were almost all black. I noticed this in Korea. But the Air Force was really beginning to change. I think it was*



*one of the first. The military is the place where you came to get a good education and all that. You might get killed but other than that it served a very beneficial service.*

BURROUGHS: I think two things had a very negative impact, on the black community. One was, when they did away with the draft. Because I remember many a kid that I grew up with didn't have any direction. Didn't know what they were going to do. Kind of floundering around. The opportunities were not in the system as I talked to people working in the Post Office or whatever. They went into the military and they found their niche and they came out a lot better people than before they went in. And then I think the whole "Women's Liberation" kind of thing confused a lot of people in terms of the roles that people had. I think that has had a negative impact probably on an entire society as a whole. It seems to me.

*Q: When you were in your job, we talked about the black and white discrimination. What about the women, and discrimination, and your job in the Navy, how did you find that?*

BURROUGHS: Women in the military organization, it was unheard of. I remember we made a lot of jokes. I was there when we put women for the first time on board a hospital ship. Throughout my Government career I think that women have had a tough road to hoe. There were arguments like women were making pin money for their husbands. And if you spend all the money training women, they are going to go off and get pregnant. And they are not worth the time or effort.

Working in the area of Equal Opportunity we did a lot of statistical studies that showed that as far as leave was concerned it was not a hell of a lot difference between leave of women and leave of men. To try to dispel all those notions that people use to throw up at us about women and minorities. People in the State Department would say, well, you know blacks are very much more interested in domestic kinds of issues. Housing, this that and the other. I don't really buy that.

We ran a couple of ads in Ebony magazine and CRISIS Magazine which is an NAACP journal. Had those little coupons send in for more information about the Foreign Service. In fact, BEX was not even set up to handle the mail for more information for Foreign Service.

*Q: Were you affected by the large scale riots and demonstrations and everything else in Washington when Dr. Martin Luther King was killed?*

BURROUGHS: Oh yes. I was in -- the night that Martin Luther King was shot, I was working in the Department of Navy. I was at 14<sup>th</sup> and Belmont Street in a black hotel at a fabulous buffet and jazz session and I had convinced a couple of my white co-workers to go with me and we were in there listening to the music and eating some fantastic food and the guy came over the microphone and said Martin Luther King had been shot and none of us could believe it. We did not know he was dead anyway. So, I tried to call and it was all before cell phones and all the lines were busy. Anyway I finally got out and we left. I don't think we continued to do what we were doing, eating, finishing dinner and

what have you. Anyway, I got out and went down to Belmont Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street and made a right turn and this was up above “U” Street and started to head towards Virginia to take these guys home and the riots had started.

There was a big dealership. So I pulled down Belmont Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Street was going this way. Right where you are was a big Buick dealership. It had this big plate glass kind of thing. Just as I pulled down near the stop sign to make this right turn to go down 14<sup>th</sup> Street and across 14<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, some guy took a brick and threw it thorough the window and scared us to death. Glass was falling. Took off to Virginia.

For the next four or five days, I would go to work and I would see smoke kind of billowing up over the Nation’s Capital. I saw the 82<sup>nd</sup> Air Borne drop out of the sky over on Benning Road and set up razor wire all around the police station.

*Q: I remember going up Wisconsin and seeing the 82<sup>nd</sup>, I think it was the 82<sup>nd</sup> with bayonets and battle gear.*

BURROUGHS: Radios and big antennas. It was a scary time.

*Q: Yes, it really was.*

*You left there when, the Navy in 1975 or 76. What sort of job did you move to back to State?*

BURROUGHS: I went back to State as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Equal Opportunity. A recommendation made, I guess, by some of my colleagues at Navy Department. Because we had some success at Navy. We helped change the organization, not without a lot of hiccups along the way, but I went back to the State Department to try to do the same kind of thing.

*Q: You were Deputy Assistant Secretary of DABS from '76 about to when?*

BURROUGHS: '80 to '81.

*Q: You were under the Office of Administration or the?*

BURROUGHS: Management.

*Q: Who was?*

BURROUGHS: Ben Reed.

*Q: Ben Reed. How did you see the situation, you had this Navy experience, how did you see the situation at that time that you came in as far as what you had to do and how things were working and how things weren't working?*

BURROUGHS: The nature of the organization, State Department is what I am talking about. They made it very, very difficult simply because you had people changing all the time. The reinvention of the wheel as they often say. I think the biggest impediment to dealing with the situation in the State Department was the fact that every two or three years in the key positions you get a whole different set of players. So when I took over the job at State, I was given a study that had been done under the leadership of Director General Carroll Laise. And the study had been laying around on somebody's desk or office, I don't know how long. But I was given that and it had some very creditable recommendations in it and I went about the business of trying to implement those recommendations.

*Q: While instead of instituting a whole new study usually?*

BURROUGHS: Right! Exactly. Instituting those recommendations realizing from my Navy experience that John Burroughs could not change the organization. But I could help facilitate a change in the organization if I could get the people in the organization to buy into those recommendations and actively participate in their implementation. And that is what we did. And we had some great success. But here again, you get a different set of characters. Whatever success you have had, whatever progress you have made, can literally go by the wayside in a matter of months, simply because the people don't care. They have a different philosophy. They don't know. They don't understand. That is a sad part of the situation.

*Q: Well, you came in in the Carter Administration who had a strong commitment to equality and civil rights. Did you find this of value?*

BURROUGHS: Very much so. Cyrus Vance is the only Secretary that I know of who would hold meetings simply on the situation of Equal Opportunity in the State Department. He would hold meetings with all of his top people just on that issue, no foreign policy but just on a personnel issue. Of course the Director General was a part of that. So as a result, we were able to make some sizeable progress in that effort.

*Q: Well, did you feel, I don't know where it was but the whole women's issue and Alison Palmer, was that having an impact on what you were doing?*

BURROUGHS: I think literally the first day I was on the job, I was summoned to a meeting in the Director General's Office, and I was told that the Women's Action Organization was requesting the meeting. So I go to the Director General's Office and there was a group of women banging their fists on the table talking about promotions and assignments. It was a heated kind of meeting. I did not know any of the players. I think it was literally my first day back at State Department. And after the meeting was over, I think it was Carol Laise or Joan Clark or one of them looked at me and said you have got a tough job and I looked right back at them and said, "We have got a tough job!" They looked at me kind of strangely. And I left the office. So it was very much a part of the whole effort. But I had heard so much talk about Alison Palmer that I thought that Alison Palmer was about 6 feet 8 inches and would spit fire. Until I met this little diminutive

woman, soft spoken, and I couldn't believe it. I think anytime that you try to change an organization, State Department or Navy, which heretofore has had predominantly white males in the organization, it is always extremely difficult. Recruitment is only one aspect of the process. Trying to make sure that those people that you bring in to the organization can survive is probably more important and even more difficult than recruitment.

*Q: This was one of the things that I noted. I don't think I dealt with it as well as many. Had some minority officers brought in and I was overseas in Korea at the time. Some were thrown not just into my section but others places. They were kind of brought in under special provisions to make sure we had more recruitment from black ranks, women's ranks and all and then there were no instructions for those of us in the field of what to do and so we were treating them like regular officers and not giving them at early stages that extra boost that they needed and I regret that I didn't do more. I think the mentor's role was not spelled out and it should have been.*

BURROUGHS: That is the major difference I found between Navy and the State Department. The Navy had at the time 450 thousand civilian employees. Forget about military personnel. So it is a huge organization. In order to adequately run that organization you had professional personnel management people. People that had spent their entire careers in the management of people. So, they know counseling, they know labor relations, they know recruiting, they know staffing. They are familiar with all the aspects of personnel management. They are professionals. They have been to courses. They worked in the area. They have grown-up in the system. They have gotten promoted. You don't have that in the State Department.

Plus, in the Navy organization, people got promoted on how well they developed the people under them. You did not have that in the State Department. And that was the difference. If you had some young people in the State Department and these people were trained and counseled and they did well, they were recognized for that. These people under your age, you helped train them, you helped to develop them. That was very prevalent in the Navy with young navel officers. If you got these young guys under you, you take care of them. You look out for them and make sure that they survive. Well that was absent in the State system because of the competitiveness of the organization. So, as a result a lot of people bit the dust along the way. Not that they would be treated any differently per-se. But supervisors, there was a major difference.

*Q: When you took over, how did you deal with the women situation? How did one deal? Had their been judicial judgments and all at that point or was this was before there was a series of sexual judicial commands to do something about?*

BURROUGHS: Lyndon Johnson issued an Executive Order which I think was part or an addendum to the Civil Rights Act which said that discrimination against women in the Federal Government was illegal. You cannot do it. This was late 60's I think. That was the birth of what we called the Federal Women's Program. That is when the Federal Employed Women's Organization started which was called "FEW". I remember, I think it was 1971 going to a first conference in San Francisco at the Hyatt Regency with ten

thousand women from all over the Federal Government and maybe ten men and I was one of them. Ha! Ha! I remember it as though it was yesterday. But with that Executive Order people that were working in the area then were responsible for Federal Women Program Coordinators. To start to try facilitating the hiring of women in different kinds of jobs other than those support positions in administration like budgeting, personnel and obviously secretaries. I venture to say that right now probably sixty percent of the State Department's Civil Service work force are women. Of that sixty percent, and maybe that is changing now, but in those days they were in budget, clerical kinds of positions by and large, a lot of them in the Civil Service. Well that was the case all throughout the Federal Government. Most of the women in the Federal Government were secretaries and there was no way of getting out of that secretarial area despite what qualifications you had. So the Federal Women's Program was aimed at trying to improve that. And it did. That is what annoys me about this whole business about affirmative action saying it is preferential treatment.

I don't hear anybody complaining about Title 9 that deals with women athletics in colleges and universities. One of the most successful affirmative action programs that ever existed. I mean it is one of the most effective affirmative action programs that ever existed, Title 9 in athletics.

*Q: As we talk today I have been out of the State Department for twenty years but I work on the campus of the Foreign Service Institute and when I started this oral history program I was really working hard to interview women retirees who had been officers. Because there just weren't many. So I had my own mental program of really going after. Today retired women who have held responsible, very responsible positions are coming off the assembly line at almost the same rate as men. And so in a way, it is no longer an issue. But, did you get involved in the placement of women or minorities, I use minorities because I think they certainly need some Hispanics included into positions in the Foreign Service position of Deputy Chief of Mission and other ones that led toward major jobs?*

BURROUGHS: No, I never got involved personally in the placement of anyone. All we were doing was basically advocating that women and minorities should be placed in meaningful career enhancing kinds of positions. What helped the whole women's program in the State Department was Alison Palmer and that suit. They won it. They won it to the extent that from what I understand it was a consent decree or whatever you call it or judicial order which basically said women will be promoted to such an such and such and will be assigned to such and such and such. So the State Department got itself into a situation where they had no choice in the matter. So that is what I think played a major role in facilitating women's careers within the Department. That discrimination complaint suit filed initially by Alison Palmer lingered on and on and on for many, many years.

*Q: One of the sides that I have heard but have not experienced myself but I have heard the problem of, if somebody was unsatisfactory in their work, didn't show up on time, didn't do this and all that, that if they happened to be a women or they happen to be black, that they could file a discrimination suit when according to at least their*

*performance they really were not doing their job, this must have been a hard thing to take to look at wasn't it or deal with this?*

BURROUGHS: Oh yes, we called them frivolous complaints. And we would deal with them because regulations said before your complaint can go forward a counselor has got to interview you. So the counselor will interview you and during that time the counselor's responsibility is to resolve the complaint. That is the whole purpose of the counselor. We have thirty days from the time you file the complaint, thirty days you have got to have this counselor. So you see all Government agencies posting on bulletin boards info about EEO Counselors. That is what these people are for; they are supposed to interview. During that phase you could decide whether it is a frivolous complaint. While I was working the area, I said, "you ought to be able to resolve ninety percent of the complaints during the informal stage. You don't need to go through the hearing and investigation and all that kind of stuff." Because usually a lot of times the discrimination complaints are just bad management practices. Like not meeting the guy at the airport when he comes to post or something like that. Maybe the people just forgot. These damn people, and a person files a complaint.

*Q: What did you find to be your main problems during this '76 through '81 period that you had to deal with?*

BURROUGHS: A sort of backlash on the part of Foreign Service Officers. In fact, they signed a petition. That we were bringing in these unqualified people. That was the thing, bringing in unqualified people. These people coming in were taking up promotions. You only have so many positions and you bring these people in and they are taking up some of the promotions. So you had that kind of backlash. So what we had to do is to show and I am sure it is the same now. That it is no, no, no. You have got this over proliferation of promotions in the political cone and there is no room. You know what I mean. Everybody wants to be a political officer because that is the way you are suppose to make it to the top. I had a guy working for me in class 1, he had never hired or fired a soul in his whole thirty years in the Foreign Service but he was a class 1.

*Q: That was an Administrative Counselor.*

BURROUGHS: Yes. That is right.

*Q: You did this until 1981. I think this may be a good place to stop and I will put an end of the tape so I will know where to pick it up the next time. Where did you go in '81?*

BURROUGHS: In '81 I went to Malawi.

*Q: Okay so we will pick this up in Malawi in 1981.*

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*Today is the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2005, John how did you get assigned as an Ambassador to Malawi?*

BURROUGHS: Well, the Under Secretary of Management, I guess he had observed my work and felt that I could represent the country and I was off to Malawi.

*Q: You were in Malawi from 1981 to when?*

BURROUGHS: 1984.

*Q: What was Malawi like when you went out there?*

BURROUGHS: Malawi a small country in the eastern part of Africa and about eight or nine million people. It was referred to as the “warm heart of Africa” and that is the way I found it. Things worked there, despite the fact you had what we described as a benevolent dictator. As President, he set the rules regarding the operation of the country and it brought home, I guess, really to me at least the importance of leadership. Subsequently, I found out how well Malawi worked as I went to other African countries. It was a very delightful country and everything worked. If the trash company was supposed to pick up things, trash on Tuesday, then they showed up on Tuesday. Road system, social services were just remarkable despite the fact it was a very poor country.

*Q: Who was the leader in Malawi?*

BURROUGHS: Hastings Banda. He was a lifetime President. When I got there it was rumored that he was about ninety years old and he sort of exemplified, I guess, the whole British tradition and the country reflected that.

*Q: How big an Embassy did we have there?*

BURROUGHS: Relatively small Embassy as I recall, maybe about 15 or 20 or so American staff.

*Q: Who was your DCM?*

BURROUGHS: Bob Kott.

*Q: What was the American's interest in Malawi at the time?*

BURROUGHS: Of course, mainly like so many African countries, it was humanitarian and of course we were constantly after Banda to more or less exemplify a better human rights posture. As I said he was a benevolent dictator. It was not a democracy as such. Banda ruled with an iron hand. So our interest I think was primarily humanitarian, but of course we were always trying to convince the Malawians to support us in various UN resolutions.

*Q: Did they Malawians have more or less the same interest in the UN as we did or did you find that they took a different tack?*

BURROUGHS: I think that they supported us pretty much at the UN. There were no major policy disagreements with the Malawians at the time with the exception of the whole issue of human rights. One interesting situation occurred while I was there. There was a socialist dissident group headed by Orton Chirwa and he was duped into returning to Malawi allegedly by Malawi's equivalent to the Secret Service. They captured him and tried him and he was sentenced by some tribal chiefs to be hung. That brought international attention to the point that the Vatican even entered into the fray stating that this man should not be hung and that he was not afforded due process. And I was given the assignment of going to tell the President that that Orton Chirwa should not be hung and that he should have due process. Which I did.

*Q: How did Banda take that?*

BURROUGHS: I made my demarche. Banda said that he would look into it. Subsequently, Chirwa's sentence was commuted to life in prison. One of the reasons why it made national attention was Chirwa had a daughter here who was a nurse at the Columbia Hospital for Women in Washington and she made a lot of noise here in the DC area and that is why it garnered so much international attention. Some of the people I was dealing with in the Malawi Government kept telling me I had to tell them or indicate to them why I wanted to see the President. And they said that it is important to see Banda at the right time.

Because just prior to this apparently, the Canadians had made a demarche regarding some Canadian that was arrested in Malawi in a similar type of situation. The President was adamant in terms of saying that his forces did the right thing in arresting this Canadian and apparently he and the Canadian Ambassador sort of got into it and Banda threatened from what I understand to let prisoners out of Zomba Prison to remove railroad tracks which was a major Canadian project in Malawi.

So it took me about a month or so to get the right time to go see the President.

*Q: How did you find dealing with Banda? As you say he was a man, he was an elderly man. Did you find that this caused problems dealing with him?*

BURROUGHS: No it didn't. Banda was always very respectful. I can remember at one of the affairs which he had at Sanjika Palace where all the Ambassadors would go and sit with him for four or five minutes. I remember I had this extended conversation. It was during the time that Jesse Jackson was running for President in the United States and Banda was fascinated by this. We had this long conversation about Jesse Jackson running for President and what did I think his chances were. We spent almost fifteen or twenty minutes talking about the U.S. Presidential Election and it was a very animated kind of discussion as I recall. I got the feeling he was very attentive and it was important, I think, to him at least.



We established a sister-city relationship between, of all places, Malawi and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It happened as a result of an athletic program sponsored by USIA. People came to Malawi who happened to be from Cedar Rapids and one thing led to another. We garnered a very good Sister-City relationship. The reason I bring this up is that once we established it I remember talking to Banda on one occasion and he was questioning about where was Cedar Rapids. And we were talking about the similarities in terms of growing corn in Iowa. So it was very pleasant.

*Q: Where did you get involved or was Malawi involved in the work that was going on regarding South Africa at the time of Chester Crocker and all of that?*

BURROUGHS: Malawi was the only black African country that maintained diplomatic relationships with South Africa. They were criticized for that but it was Banda's feeling and position that Malawi should maintain dialogue with South Africa. He said it on a number of occasions. And that is basically what transpired.

*Q: Did you find yourself carrying messages regarding what Chester Crocker was trying to do and his policy toward South Africa?*

BURROUGHS: No, as I recall, South Africa was just moving on to the radar screen, when I was in Malawi. So South Africa was not a major concern for me in Malawi at that time. I lived next door to the South African Ambassador and we would get into a lot of discussions about South Africa. And he was telling me that South Africa was not as bad as the press in the United States and other countries claimed. He said, if you don't believe it, why don't you go there and see for yourself.

Which I did! While I was in Malawi, I took a vacation, we went to Pretoria, Johannesburg, and I had a chance to see for myself what the whole situation was.

*Q: What were your impressions?*

BURROUGHS: Well it is interesting because they did their best to script my visit. When I got off at the airport, I could see the skycap trying to look for me. And I figured, hey! If I go with him then I will not see the real situations. I got a chance to see the real South Africa and it was horrible. The whole apartheid thing. I understood it and I had seen it before and I had lived it. So I was not shocked or surprised. I was more understanding because all of it was not new. The whole apartheid situation.

*Q: It was like you described growing up black in Washington to me, yes.*

BURROUGHS: That is right. Exactly! Exactly!

*Q: Was Malawi concerned about problems in Mozambique or Zimbabwe or any of the other countries?*

BURROUGHS: In many respects Banda was out of tune with the rest of the leaders in the area. Malawi maintained relations with South Africa. And so there was not a lot of camaraderie between him and Samora Michele who was the President of Mozambique. Mozambique was sort of a Socialist country. So there were never any State visits between the two Presidents despite the fact that they shared a common border. The only African President to come to Malawi while I was there was Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. He paid a visit. So he and Banda seemed to be compatible. Banda often spoke highly of Jomo Kenyatta, the President of Kenya. But insofar as the rest of the Presidents in the area, they pretty much stayed away.

*Q: Did we have an AID Program?*

BURROUGHS: Oh yes. We had an AID Program primarily for the agricultural college that was part of the University of Malawi. We had a large contingent of people from Iowa State University who were experimenting with different kinds of maize. They had been there for a number of years growing a different varieties of maize, bug resistant and that kind of thing to see what would work there in the country. So that was quite extensive and we sent a number of Malawians to school in the United States in Agri-grow related areas.

*Q: On the medical side was AIDS was that a problem at the time?*

BURROUGHS: No. It was not. AIDS was not a problem at the time but all the other diseases like polio and things like that were very much prevalent in Malawi.

*Q: I would imagine that with the President being as old as he was that one of the prime things or topics of conversations would be who is going to replace Banda wasn't it?*

BURROUGHS: Yes, very much so, but you never talked about it.

*Q: This would be something I imagine through your political section you would be taking a look at?*

BURROUGHS: Yes. Yes.

*Q: What did you see coming along the road after Banda?*

BURROUGHS: It was rumored that the Head of the Reserve Bank was always in line to replace Banda. And in one period of time five ministers disappeared in the middle of the night. These ministers, some of whom were heir-apparent supposedly to Banda, were allegedly gotten rid of by the Head of the Reserve Bank because they posed a threat to him in succeeding Banda. Now whether or not this was true no one ever really found out. But we do know that five ministers were severely killed. They were there one day and the next day they were gone. And that was my introduction to African politics. Minister from the North, Regional Ministers, Treasury Men, it was unbelievable. And Banda never

really did anything about it. And the irony of the whole thing is that no one ever really talked about them anymore. It was just “poof”.

*Q: How tribal were the politics in Malawi?*

BURROUGHS: There is one thing that Banda did. He de-emphasized tribal issues. He constantly said in talking to his people that we are all Malawis and, for the most part, I think it worked. I think that Banda exemplified at least at the time to me a kind of leadership that was necessary when he was President. To me and to us from the U.S. his biggest fault, of course, is that he was life President. No one could succeed him in a democratic way. But certainly up to the ministerial level, there was all kinds of democracy in a sense that people voted for parliamentarians and for, example, Banda, appointed women to parliament. Because he said that men would not vote the women in so, therefore, he appointed women. It was very smart. He had tremendous support by the women in Malawi and I am sure he figured if he could get the support of the women, that the men would follow.

But to answer your question. He totally de-emphasized tribal politics and if I remember correctly, I think there were eight or nine different tribes in Malawi but he had a common language “Chewa” I recalled that everybody spoke. He constantly emphasized or de-emphasized the whole tribal aspect of the country.

*Q: Was Malawi all caught up in the “cold war” with the Chinese there the North Koreans and the Soviets?*

BURROUGHS: No, that was not an issue in Malawi at the time. The whole “cold war” situation was not an issue. I don’t think the North Koreans were there. I am trying to think, I don’t think the Cubans were there. None of the Communist block countries were represented.

*Q: Well then after three years in Malawi in 1984, where did you go?*

BURROUGHS: I went to Cape Town, South Africa.

*Q: And you were there from 1984 until?*

BURROUGHS: Until 1987 I guess.

*Q: What were you doing in Cape Town?*

BURROUGHS: I was the Consul General in Cape Town.

*Q: Who was the Ambassador when you were there?*

BURROUGHS: Herman Nickel.

*Q: So how did you find Cape Town?*

BURROUGHS: Cape Town was probably one of the most fascinating experiences that I had in the Foreign Service. Simply because of what was going on in the country at the time. Everyday was a new and exciting challenge. There was nothing in any sort of diplomatic books or anything that you could read that would prepare you for what I found in Cape Town. Beside it being probably one of the most beautiful cities on the face of the earth. I found the people there genuine, warm and sincere. And caught up in a system, at least in and around Cape Town.

They knew the system was wrong and they were trying to express at least to me that they knew it was wrong but they wanted the outside world to know that their country was not that bad as a lot of people made it out to be.

*Q: The white government, how did you relate to them, the Mayor and others?*

BURROUGHS: Once I was walking down the main street in Cape Town and the Mayor's limo pulls up and the window goes down and the Mayor looks out the window and he asked me, "John, you need a ride." That has never happened to me in any city in any place. But you have got to put Cape Town in a proper context. It is the most liberal part of South Africa. It is made up primarily of English speakers. When I say English speakers I am talking about people that are descendents of people from the United Kingdom and European Jews who for years have been allowed to do their commercial business and as a result live quit well in Cape Town. Plus it has this large, so called colored population. So it is quite different than say Durban, quite different than Pretoria or Johannesburg where you have especially in Johannesburg or Pretoria or where you have concentrations in other parts of the country, rural parts of the country, where you have concentrations of the Afrikaner. And it was the Afrikaner, at the time who ruled South Africa. So it was much more complicated than the white/black issue. A lot of people I think here looked at it in terms of our own civil rights efforts in the United States and to many aspects that were similar. But it was this small group of people, descendents of the French, the Germans and the Dutch. They are the ones that controlled South Africa, at least politically.

De Clerk is an Afrikaner. P.J. Botha is an Afrikaner. The Broederbond, which is kind of a secret organization. Those positions are all held by Afrikaners and they determine who goes into these parastatal boards. Like the Electric Board and this board and that board. So economically, at least government-wide they controlled the country. So it was the Afrikaner against the English speaking whites and the Jews and against the blacks and against the coloreds, with the blacks being on the bottom of the totem pole.

*Q: What was our policy, how did it impact your view at the time? Were you making a special effort to reach out to the black population or to the coloreds or to the English there and also Afrikaner's? How did you relate to these people?*

BURROUGHS: Well, a series of things we were doing. Just the mere fact of me being there in South Africa and working in the consulate to a lot of South Africans it was very confusing because they had grown up into this apartheid system.

And one of the things that you got a feel for in South Africa is that if your newspapers are by and large controlled by the government, your television is controlled by the government, and if they constantly tell you what they want you to hear, eventually you will believe it.

It was the only country, I think, that we were dealing with where an AID program could not be administered through the government. It was a bi-lateral system directly to organizations and groups in South Africa that were fighting against apartheid. Which made it very, very difficult to administer. One of our biggest AID recipients was a Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. And we were dealing with that group on a face to face basis without any governmental involvement and we knew very well that the South African Government would break into their offices, they would burn their files. Sometimes they would kill some of their leaders. So it got to be very, very dicey in dealing with that kind of situation constantly. The policy of constructive engagement, I think it was called inside South Africa, I mean it wasn't that meaningful. It bore more criticism externally here in the United States than it did in South Africa. Constructive engagement said, "Well, you know you keep talking to these people. You got one or two choices, either you close the embassy and you walk away and you won't have anything to do with them or you keep talking to them." So you have to ask yourself what has a possibility of working. And it was constructive engagement.

I remember when two Congressmen came to South Africa and we went to Crossroads which is an unbelievable township outside of Cape Town. They were standing there outside the barbwire fence and they made the statement that we need to help these people in Crossroads. So, Mr. Congressman, with all due respect, if we are going to help them, the United States is going to help them, then we need to be here. We can't cut and run to help these people that you are talking about. You can't have it both ways.

And then the whole issue of sanctions. Sanctions did not work. In terms of U.S. politics they were great. But we have illusions of grandeur about the ability of sanctions because the French sell the same things we sell. The Germans sell the same things we sell. I remember Kodak film came in and the people at Kodak said, "Look! We have to close our shops down here in South Africa. We can not jeopardize our U.S. market. We sell more Kodak film in New York City in one day than we do in South Africa in a whole year. So, therefore, we are going to have to close it down." So what did they do? We had coloreds in management positions working at Kodak. We had 400 employees; they literally fired the employees. Locked the doors and walked away. You think that stopped Kodak film from being sold in South Africa. No! Where is Kodak film coming from? Someone said, "Have you ever heard of Swaziland." Sanctions were a kind of an external thing.

*Q: It was sort of don't just stand there, do something type of thing. It's a feel good something kind of thing.*

BURROUGHS: Right! Right!

*Q: Sometimes it works but very, very seldom. You really have to have everything. How were you received by the black community there?*

BURROUGHS: Very well, very well. I was received by just about all of the communities. I thought I had a great reception in South Africa. The white South Africans were trying to convince me and my wife and other people and other Americans that they were not the piranhas of the world. My wife and I could be sitting in a restaurant having dinner, and someone would send over a bottle of wine and you would look around and you would see somebody that you didn't even know wave. And I would often tell my wife, "Well, before too long we are going to have some guest." And invariable somebody would come over to the table and start a conversation and the next thing you knew we were sort of holding court. And the people wanted to know about our civil rights movement. What do you think about our country? What about this and what about that? So the reception was fantastic as far as I was concerned.

*Q: How about social engagements? Were you able to bring the African, the coloreds and the blacks kind of together at your place or not?*

BURROUGHS: I started talking to various groups. And I had a social function at the house with white South African business people and black South African business people because anytime you get in a township I don't know, 500,000 people you can sell Campbell's and make a pretty good bundle from selling that. Anyway I got the idea at this dinner. One of the white dinner guests called me the next day and said, "John, I want to really thank you for that fascinating lovely dinner that we had last night." I said, "fine! fine." He said, I want you to know that I am fifty-five years old and that was the first time in my life that I have ever sat across the table from a fellow black South African and had dinner. I said, "you have got to be joking." This was early on in my assignment in South Africa. But then later on I found out, yes, that this is probably true.

But by bringing these groups of business people together that did not know each other I formed a kind of informal group of business people (blacks and whites). My purpose was forget about the whole racial thing. There were business people in South Africa, black business people and white business people that did not know each other. They were doing some of the same kinds things like home remodeling and you name it. So we formed a group and we had a big luncheon at a hotel that started at 12 o'clock in the afternoon and we brought these people together. I think there were over 60 or 70 and I called it the Cape Experiment. I think we didn't leave there until 7 or 8 o'clock that night. And that began to foster a linkage between some of these white business people and black business people. Including as I remember a number of Afrikaners. One thing I like about the Afrikaners, they would say exactly how they felt and they would do exactly what they

said they were going to do. Some newspaper people got hold of it and it was written up in the Baltimore Sun about the Cape Town experiment.

*Q: Was there much follow through did you find? As far as these contacts and all that?*

BURROUGHS: I think we had several other meetings. Several other social functions and it seems to me that this one particular guy, he was into the home building business and he formed some kind of business partnership with the other Afrikaner and they together started building homes. When I say homes I am talking about these houses in the townships under the auspices of something called an Urban Foundation.

*Q: How about the colored community, how did you find that?*

BURROUGHS: It was strange. They were hated by the blacks. Simply by and large because they had accepted their one notch above the blacks in the eyes of the whites in South Africa. So, therefore, they were hated. And I understand even today, the ramifications of that are still going on in South Africa, especially in and around the Cape Town area. But as a group of people, I found them very receiving and very receptive and some of them very rich. There were some very well-to-do coloreds in South Africa. The whole thing was an anomaly. There was more black business ownership in South Africa than there was in the United States. So everything was totally different than what you might suspect.

We had a big horse race in South Africa, like the Kentucky Derby horse race. I remember my wife and I going, people dressed up and women had on fur coats and it was like 80 degrees outside, trying to figure out what is going on here? They would dress up and I can remember about the horse that won and this black guy and his wife were standing down in the winning circle. I looked over and they said, oh yeah! That horse belongs to Mr. & Mrs. Mbeki. Well, I am trying to figure out, I thought this was South Africa. You find all of those kinds of anomalies in South Africa.

My first visit to the University of Cape Town, I saw blacks walking around the campus and in the student union and I asked the Vice Chancellor, "What is the percentage of blacks and coloreds here in the University of Cape Town?" He said, "Oh Well, It is about 13 or 14 percent." Nobody told me that there was this integrated University here, the University of Cape Town. You would have to realize that the University of Cape Town is an English speaking University and it had English speakers, Jews, Coloreds and blacks at the time. Whereas Stellenbosch University, which is Afrikaner, there were no blacks or coloreds going there.

*Q: In your impression, what was the impact of the Jewish community at Cape Town?*

BURROUGHS: The Jewish community in Cape Town was represented in the commercial sector of Cape Town and they wielded a lot of power economically. But! their influence was limited just to the commercial sector. They did a lot of business in Cape Town and Cape Town was a very nice city in which to live. Sort of reminiscent of

the ocean of Miami Beach. If you closed your eyes and looked at the ocean you think you are in Miami Beach. But in terms of political influence, no. South Africa was so divided that people who owned Mercedes Benz would take their automobiles. Afrikaners would take their Mercedes to the Afrikaner's franchise and the Jews and English speakers would take their Mercedes to the English speaking franchise and that was just how divided the whole place was racially.

*Q: Did you find, I don't mean you personally, but our office there have problems with the South African Security Services?*

BURROUGHS: Not that I am aware of except for our Embassy. Our Embassy in Pretoria was housed in the South African Police Building, and one of the reasons we would have built a new Embassy. That was not good. And every time I would go there for a meeting I would be very nervous because you see these young Afrikaner soldiers who look like they are about 12 years old with these big guns and you just got a feeling that if anything happened, you wonder about their ability to deal with it.

*Q: This was all over the world including the United States. It is usually, the young kids who end up with the guns on the streets. Tell me at the time you were there, you know, it had been, I won't say an article of faith, but I remember being in INR dealing with African Affairs back in the early 60's. And you know that people who dealt with South Africa were saying there is going to be a night of long knives at some point. Blacks massacring the whites or driving them out and all. Was that a feeling or what were you and your officers thinking? How was the whole thing going to come out, something was going to happen?*

BURROUGHS: While we were there you kept hearing these rumors about Mandela being released from prison. That was during my whole period there, that Mandela was going to be released. But in terms of any mass revolt on the part of the blacks that was not a main issue. South Africans saw to that and made sure that would not happen with the townships. And places like Crossroads were surrounded by razor wire and there was only one way in and one way out and that was guarded.

*Q: Warthogs or Armored Cars.*

BURROUGHS: Yes, exactly. So every time I went into a township I would be nervous because you had to ride thorough. There was only one way in to the township, and you had to pass by these guys, these young Afrikaners, with these guns; it was sort of dicey.

*Q: So when you left in 87' had the situation changed much from the time when you had arrived?*

BURROUGHS: I think it had gotten more volatile. I think a lot of people realized that something had to change. One of the things that I think influenced a lot of people in South Africa more than anything was that their children were leaving. Their kids were saying we do not want to live in this apartheid, or be a part of this apartheid regime. So



the kids would go to college and they would go: Australia was a favorite spot. They would go to the United States or they would move to Canada. So these Afrikaners and other people in South Africa would spend their entire vacation visiting their kids in these different countries. I think the international financial community was telling the South African Government, hey, something has got to change, this place is going to blow up. In other words they were losing confidence in the country. We had this Anti-Apartheid Act, I think, of 1986, you know of Randall Robinson and people like that picketing in front of the South African Embassy here in the United States. That brought more U.S. attention to the situation. So there was a combination of things. You had revolts in the townships and people were resigning out of parliament and it was just a combination of things. I think that when I left, that we had helped to facilitate change either directly or indirectly. Which made it very obvious to many South Africans that you can't go on like this. Something has got to give. And it finally did.

*Q: When you left there in '87 where did you go?*

BURROUGHS: I went to Kampala, Uganda.

*Q: As Ambassador.*

BURROUGHS: Yes.

*Q: You were there from?*

BURROUGHS: I guess from '88 to '91.

*Q: Okay! After South Africa how did you find Uganda?*

BURROUGHS: Quite different. South Africa was a country that had a 'pick and pay' which was equivalent to our Giant or Safeway with 69 checkout counters. Uganda was just the opposite. Coming off the heels of incredible tribal conflicts and Idi Amin. The country was devastated. But, one bright hope as far as I was concerned at the time was the young President, who was smart and very accommodating and he would listen and change his mind, if he felt it was best for the country.

And I am happy to say from what people tell me now that Uganda is the shining star in that part of Africa.

*Q: Well, who was your DCM?*

BURROUGHS: Bob Gribbin.

*Q: What were your major concerns when you got there?*

BURROUGHS: Here again, humanitarian concerns, AIDS was a big, big, big problem in Uganda and Kenya by this time. We were concerned about President Museveni. We

wanted him to open up the system to a more democratic form of government. And we had a number of large AID programs there to restore the infrastructure, bring back tourism to the country. Of course, they have Lake Victoria which I think is the seventh largest fresh water lake in the world. Fantastic lake and I guess in the 60's you had groups of people coming there as tourists, but, of course with the fighting the infrastructure had collapsed. So we had a big AID project to deal with bringing back the trails and identifying the floral and fauna and creating cabins for people to stay. It was a big effort.

*Q: During the time you were there was Uganda mixed up with Rwanda and Burundi?*

BURROUGHS: In my conversations with the Rwandan Ambassador we became quit friendly. He was worried about the Hutus. He was constantly concerned about the Hutus that had fled an earlier rebellion in Rwanda and grew up in Uganda. He was afraid that those people one day would go back to Rwanda and invade the country. He used to talk to me about it at length. And his prediction came true.

Of course, it was rumored that Museveni was allowing Uganda to be used as a launch pad to invade Rwanda. So much so that we got instructions from Washington to go and tell Museveni that he cannot allow Uganda to be used as a launch pad to invade Rwanda and that his people shouldn't do that. Well! I went to Museveni five or six times on this one issue to the point where he said if you think this is happening, you go up to the border and see for yourself. So we did. Me, the British Ambassador, the Russian Ambassador, several of us went to the Rwanda/Uganda border to see if we could find out what was going on in that area. And we came back and said, if they are doing it, they must be doing it under the radar. They must be doing it in some other place, because we were unable to determine whether the people were attacking Rwanda and then running back into the bush and we were never able to find out.

*Q: Was there the problem of the Lord's Resistance Army? The Guerilla group up in the hills of Uganda which was still there?*

BURROUGHS: These rebels, Northern rebels were headed at one time by some woman who rubbed herself with this oil and it supposedly repelled bullets. And we kept saying well we don't think that this group was an organized group. Here again, we went up there and the President provided a helicopter. We prayed before we got on the helicopter. Me and the British Ambassador and several other Ambassadors flew to a Northern part of Uganda and we talked to a number of people. We came back thinking that what was going on there is about the Karamojong which is a tribe in the northern part of Uganda. They claimed that the Karamojong spent their entire lives rustling cattle.

I think we spent two or three days up in the northern part of Uganda and we found that part of what was going on was the Karamojong, a cattle rustling tribe, would come down and invade areas that were occupied by the Teso. This was another tribe of people in the northern part of Uganda that I guess were descendents of the Ethiopians. They looked liked Ethiopian people. But anyway a lot of the rebel activity was simply revenge on the

part of the Teso against the Karamojong for stealing their cattle. But in terms of some organized rebel group that was against the President, we did not find any evidence of that. We saw that northern Uganda, the short time we were there, was totally different from, say, the Kampala area. I mean different people, different language. Not accessible. You could not drive there. The only way you could get there was to fly by helicopter. It was totally cut off from the rest of Uganda. But in terms of rebel activity, we did not find any evidence of that.

*Q: Was at that time Qadhafi and Libya messing around in Uganda?*

BURROUGHS: There were two times that Qadhafi came to Uganda while I was there. But in terms of messing around, I don't think he was. I remember once I met with Museveni and he talked about a plan that Qadhafi had to try to influence the whole Muslim thing throughout certain portions of Africa. That was his plan. But I don't think Qadhafi was a big player. Surely he was a friend of Museveni but I don't think he was a big player in Uganda.

*Q: What about relations with Kenya?*

BURROUGHS: I always said we had a "Don't make Kenya's President Moi mad policy" at the time vis-a-vie Kenya. I don't think Museveni and Moi saw eye to eye because one time I think Moi broke with some kind of agreement with Museveni about Uganda. I think that Museveni broke that agreement and took over the country. I think it was back in the years when Museveni was fighting for power but I think there was an agreement with Moi. Museveni had talked about staying in the bush for about five years outside of Kampala before his forces took over.

*Q: Were there any issues other than our trying to get concerned about what was happening in Rwanda were there any issues between the United States and Uganda at that time?*

BURROUGHS: No major issues because I think our government respected Museveni for what he was doing in Uganda, trying to bring it back. He invited all of the Indians that represented the commercial sector back to the country.

*Q: Amin had kicked them out and destroyed the economy of the country.*

BURROUGHS: Exactly. Museveni invited them back. That was a difficult process. We were involved with that. We got some people there who had some knowledge of principles to help the Ugandans deal with that. Because what had happened is a lot of these government ministers had moved into some of those Indian houses and of course they were not about to give them up. They had been living there apparently free ever since Idi Amin drove the Indian people out. In fact, there was a movie about that, Mississippi Masala. And I remember that it starred Denzel Washington and some of it was filmed in Uganda. I remember some people came to the office to talk about this

movie and that they were going to be filming. They said that Denzel Washington is going to be starring in it.

*Q: How about American tourism? Did you have problems there with the Americans getting off the beaten track and that sort of thing?*

BURROUGHS: We did not have that much tourism. That is one of the reasons why we were involved in this big project around Lake Victoria. Not a lot of Americans would come simply because outside of Kampala you really didn't have that much of a facility for tourism. Kampala had nice hotels, nice Sheraton Hotel in Kampala and other hotels, but once you got outside of Kampala it was difficult.

*Q: Did we have a Peace Corps there?*

BURROUGHS: I helped to bring the Peace Corps back. I helped Museveni and he said he wanted the Peace Corps back. It had been there before, of course.

We dug out the old agreement between the Peace Corps and Uganda and dusted it off and modified it and eventually got about fifteen Peace Corps volunteers and a lot of vocational volunteers because Ugandans needed to learn how to build things and make things. I made it my business since the President had talked about the Peace Corps,

I took the fifteen Peace Corps volunteers to see Museveni. It was probably one of the most enjoyable visits or calls on a President that I had made. The Peace Corps volunteers had spent their three or four weeks or three or four months, in language training. When I introduced them to the President they were able to greet the President in his language. And, of course, this brought a big smile on his face. And we sat there out in a big tent that Museveni likes to sit under, like a military commander. We sat out there for three hours with the Peace Corps volunteers and Museveni. And I kept saying, "Well sir, I realize that you are busy". And he said, "Oh no!, no!, no!." "Hold on, hold on!" He kept talking and talking about Africa. Talking about his background. Talked about the fact that he had first learned about the atom when he was a kid in school from a Peace Corps volunteer and how much he appreciated it. So yes, the Peace Corps volunteers did return.

*Q: Well then you left in 1991 what happened?*

BURROUGHS: I did a diplomat in residence tour at Lincoln University for two years and then I worked on Sudan.

*Q: Just briefly, at Lincoln University, of course one thinks of Nkrumah. How did you find Lincoln University?*

BURROUGHS: I found the whole experience very rewarding and fascinating because of its African history and the President at the time, Nira Sudarkasa, was an Africanist. She was one of a few black women who had participated in this program back in the 60's, Crossroads to Africa.

*Q: Oh yeah! I have heard about it.*

BURROUGHS: So she was very much into this whole African mold. I taught a course on African Politics dealing with the countries that I had been to and I found that very, very rewarding. To bring some realism to some of those young people about Africa. And also while I was there I was appointed to a State Commission that had on it thirteen other educators including the former President of Temple University. Our mission was to take a year and come up with some recommendations about the future of Cheyney University. This was thirty or forty miles from Lincoln University on two hundred and seventy-five acres of rolling Pennsylvania land of beautiful facility that had run into some hard times for a number of reasons. First of all, it was out in the countryside, a historical black school. In fact, Jim Vance the news broadcaster, graduated from Cheyney University. So we spent a year looking at that University. It had had five presidents in ten years and it was heavily in debt to the State. The commissions made a number of recommendations, headed by a young president of Johnson C. Smith College in North Carolina and he was fantastic. Very sharp individual and we made some recommendations and I understand Cheyney University now is doing quite well.

*Q: You were a special envoy dealing with the Sudan from about '94 to?*

BURROUGHS: I think from about '92 or '93 until I retired in '94.

*Q: Okay! What was the situation in the Sudan and what were we doing?*

BURROUGHS: The Sudan was tough. It was like it is today. My main focus was to make sure that relief supplies were getting into the Sudan.

*Q: We are talking about the Southern Sudan.*

BURROUGHS: Southern Sudan, right. I got a chance to go to the Southern part of Sudan with daily flights to drop off relief supplies. The plane landed in Lokichogio, Kenya. In going into the Southern part of Sudan I saw first hand some of the bombing that the Sudanese Government had done to the air-strips where the planes were landing. And I saw the results of the proselytizing that the Sudanese Government was doing and saw the impact on the Southern part of the Sudan and the people. And despite the fact that I spent eleven or twelve years in Africa it was one of the worst human tragedies that I had seen. I had seen some horrific things in South Africa but I was not prepared for the kinds of things that I saw in the Southern part of the Sudan.

*Q: Were you involved or were others involved in trying to find some reconciliation between essentially the Arab North or the Muslim North and the Animalistic South? Was any of that going on?*

BURROUGHS: Well other than the bombing and the wars and the starvation my function was dealing with the humanitarian relief although I couldn't help but get involved in

other issues because what happened when I was there, I was there with some AID people in the southern part of Sudan. And I remember talking to some of Garang's soldiers.

*Q: Whose soldiers were these?*

BURROUGHS: They were with John Garang. He was the leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. He was the guy fighting the Government. He has been fighting the Government for years and still is today. [ed note: Garang died in a helicopter crash on July 30, 2005]

But something quite strange happened when I flew back to Kenya after visiting Lokichogio. I was at the Nairobi Hilton Hotel. This chap knocked on the door and I looked out and saw this big African guy. He said, "The Chairman, would like to see you." My first reaction was. The Chairman of "who", and the Chairman of "what". He was talking about Chairman John Garang. This is about seven or eight o'clock at night and the Chairman would like to see you. So, I said well, I don't know if I can do that but I will think about it. I am due to leave here shortly. If I go back to Washington by the time this thing gets being around the African Bureau it will be two weeks from now so I have got to make a decision. So I said, "well I did not come this long way to become this senior, I am going to make this decision. I am going to get myself into a situation in which I have absolutely no control. So I am going to see John Garang." So I called one of the AID guys and that next morning a car picked us up. We drove somewhere outside of Nairobi to this house. We went in and I hear this rumbling and stuff upstairs and finally this guy comes down the steps and he says, I am John Garang.

Come to find out he graduated from Iowa State University with a PHD in Agronomy or some such thing and we spent at least a half an hour talking about Iowa. I felt kind of strange but anyway it was a fascinating conversation and he laid out his view of the Sudan. I reported all of this back to Washington and then I flew back to the United States and I think I arrived back here the day that seventeen soldiers were killed in Somalia. People would look at me and they would say I don't even want to see you, basically. We had gotten burned in Somalia.

*Q: That put us back for a lot.*

BURROUGHS: That is right.

*Q: Looking at the Sudan situation, did you have a general feeling about what the solution was?*

BURROUGHS: Like I said, I got a chance to go to the Southern part of the Sudan. To me, I think, partition is really the only solution. Those people in the Southern part of the Sudan they are really, that is northern Uganda. And that is what it should be. You should draw a line right there. Create some kind of demilitarized zone. Let the Arabic north go their way and do their thing and let these northern Ugandans, as I call them, let them become, and I think Museveni would take that on. A person like Museveni with the right

support would take that on to resolve that whole issue. If the people in the North are Sudanese these people in the South are not Sudanese. Just look at them and you can tell the difference. The northern people are more Arab. It is a big racial thing. It is racial, it is tribal and it is all kind of mixed up. I went to Khartoum, too. I went to about eleven camps where the Northern Sudanese were trying to transform the Southerners into Muslims, proselytize. I went into the camps. I don't think it is going to work. I found this in South Africa. If you grow up in a situation where there has been war and turmoil and nothing works, you begin to believe that the rest of the world is like that. I remember telling these young soldiers in Sudan that the rest of the world is not what you have here. And you cannot develop a country if you constantly have strife and fighting and war. And they said, you mean to say there is a place somewhere that is not like this. I said, "Yes!" I found that everywhere I would go. People, of course, grow up in a certain area in a certain country, they think the rest of the world is like that.

*Q: Yes. You run across this in Yugoslavia and other places. Well John, you retired in 1994?*

BURROUGHS: Yes.

*Q: What did you do after that? You just retired or did you get involved?*

BURROUGHS: I continued to speak, not as much as I did in '94 but I continued to speak on college campuses and I was doing that virtually all of my career. I am on the Board of the United Negro College Fund, the International Fellows Program and I am also involved with the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Program where we select these Pickering Fellows. We just finished that about two or three weeks ago.

*Q: Great! What is your impression about the Pickering Program? This is essentially selecting young people who will get certain scholarships which will hopefully lead them to become Foreign Service officers.*

BURROUGHS: I think it is an excellent program. We get some good people. It is important to follow-up and make sure that these people have every opportunity to succeed. I think the whole thing should be monitored to make sure that they have every opportunity to make it into the system.

*Q: Well I want to thank you very much.*

*End of interview*