

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

**KENNETH N. ROGERS**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*

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## INTERVIEW

*Q: Today is October 21, 1997. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy and this is being done on behalf of The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I wonder if you could give me something about when and where you were born and something about your family.*

ROGERS: Sure. I was born on October 21, 1931 in Troy, New York, exactly 66 years to this day of interview (across the street from Terry McNamara). My mother was born in upstate New York the village of New Baltimore immediately south of Albany. My father, born in Troy, was a highly decorated veteran of World War I. He was wounded at Belleau Wood, the famous battle, about 40 miles east of Paris. It was the turning point for the allies, and the first major commitment of U.S. troops in combat.

*Q: Was he in the Marines?*

ROGERS: He was in the U.S. Army Artillery. The Marines then had no artillery, so the 12 Field Artillery Battery D was assigned to assist the Marine Corps at Belleau Wood. My mother was a homemaker. I had one brother, who died five years ago at the age of 65. My mother died at age 50, when I was 13, and my father at age 58, when I was 22 and serving in the Navy.

*Q: What type of business was your father in?*

ROGERS: He was a clerk in the Railway Mail Service (RMS). He rode trains delivering the mail and eventually became the head of RMS for a part of the Northeast headquartered in Albany, where he supervised the mail trains.

*Q: That was quite a center between trains coming out of New England and going out to the West and up to Canada.*

ROGERS: That's right. It was a big mail hub. He enjoyed it very much. Sadly, he never got to retire. He died before he retired.

*Q: Can you give me a bit about your home life - family, books you read, things of that nature?*

ROGERS: We didn't have too many books, but we had a few. I wanted to read more and I asked my father when I was about eight, "What is a good book to read?" He said, "Start with the Bible." I did. I still read in that arena a good deal. In fact, once upon a time, I was planning to become a Presbyterian missionary.

*Q: What about school? Where did you go to school?*

ROGERS: A small public high school in upstate New York in the middle of the Hudson River near Troy. I was president of the class both junior and senior years, president of the student council and of an association of all the high school student councils in the Troy region.

*Q: So you were sort of a politician as a young lad.*

ROGERS: Absolutely.

*Q: You were very much a child of the Depression.*

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

*Q: Troy was not a particularly affluent area. What is your impression of that?*

ROGERS: I remember, we were considered very fortunate because my father had a job. Many did not. Troy had a lot of labor intensive manufacturing work, trolley cars, horseshoes, buggy whips, and detachable shirt collars. A lot of things that were suddenly not in need, which made it worse in the Depression era. I can remember as a youngster people coming to our door and my father giving them food as they would pass through trying to find work. I have vivid memories of a lot of terribly hungry men with tools walking through looking for work.

*Q: These were the people who were getting on the trains as hobos. In high school, did you get any feel for foreign affairs or anything like that?*

ROGERS: I was keenly interested in World War II. As a child, I mapped every battle with great detail with flag pins. I was fascinated with that. We had blackouts, of course. I was constantly aware of submarine warfare on the East Coast. There were tremendous losses in shipping. Some of my uncles were in the Merchant Marine and the Navy. We had the closest association with the Navy.

*Q: Did you get, as I did, an unexcelled sense of geography from World War II?*

ROGERS: Oh, absolutely. I was fascinated with geography. I used to draw maps of the world just to fully understand where everything fit. I recall complaining to a high school teacher, "Why don't you teach us more geography?" She said, "Well, why bother? After the war, all the maps will be changed." I don't think she displayed much of a historical sense.

*Q: While you were in high school, did you learn at all about the Foreign Service?*

ROGERS: I had never heard of it. I didn't know it existed probably until I was in the

Navy.

*Q: When did you graduate from high school?*

ROGERS: In 1949.

*Q: And then what?*

ROGERS: I went to Ohio State University. I majored in social work.

*Q: What pushed you towards social work?*

ROGERS: I think the earlier Christian studies and a great compassion for the downtrodden and the hopeless, maybe from the Depression and seeing all that suffering. I undertook a term of residence at a southern California penitentiary, the California Institution for Men. I was also glad to be in the Naval ROTC. It was a great way to see the world. I then actually planned eventually to stay in the Navy.

*Q: You graduated in 1953. Did you go right into the Navy?*

ROGERS: Immediately, on graduation day.

*Q: What about in college, was there any feeling of the world there?*

ROGERS: Oh, yes. We were keenly aware of the war in Korea. Many of my contemporaries went to Korea and never came back - all through high school and college. In those days, if your grades weren't adequate, you were gone. I did not want to be a soldier, pardon the expression. I knew that would be very hard for me. Everyone had to take some kind of military training. Because of our family's Navy background on my mother's side, I decided to apply to the Naval ROTC and did get in. I enjoyed it very much and learned a lot. Just a couple of days after graduation, I was off to serve. My father had suffered much in the trenches in WWI, and therefore encouraged me toward the Navy.

*Q: Where did you go to get your initial training?*

ROGERS: The NROTC training lasts four years during college and five hours a week plus a summer cruise. That's it. No boot camp. No officer's training course. One was commissioned on graduation day. We had our caps and gowns on and then we took off our caps and gowns and there we were in our officer uniforms. We were sworn in on the spot.

*Q: Where did you go?*

ROGERS: My first assignment was the aircraft carrier Roosevelt. I went directly to it. I picked it up in southern France, in Marseille. In order to get there, I had to spend a few

days in Morocco. So, my first real foreign stop (other than Canada as a child) was Morocco, which turned out to be my last Foreign Service assignment 32 years later.

*Q: The Roosevelt was at that time one of the newer carriers. What were you doing on board?*

ROGERS: I was a gunnery officer. I had applied for naval aviation training. Normally, we would have some sea duty before going to training duty just to get a basic understanding of how a ship functioned. If you're going to fly off of them, it is helpful to know how they run. So, I was there for several months and my orders to Pensacola arrived.

*Q: You were in Pensacola from when to when?*

ROGERS: A very short time. I got there, went through pre-flight school, and before any significant aviation work, we all had to take another physical, which I failed. My vision had fallen below acceptable limits. They discovered that I had a serious defect of judging relative motion (depth perception), which would be very dangerous.

*Q: Particularly for flying on and off carriers.*

ROGERS: I kept bumping into things. So, they said, "It was nice of you to try, but we don't want you to kill yourself or anybody else." I was transferred immediately to Korea and a shore unit in Pusan.

*Q: This was 1953. So, the war was still on.*

ROGERS: Yes.

*Q: You were in Korea from when to when?*

ROGERS: I would say October 1953 to April 1954.

*Q: What were you doing in Pusan?*

ROGERS: I was in a small organization called the Military Sea Transportation Service. We were the cargo and troop transport unit that serviced all the armed forces, mostly the Army, but the Marine Corps as well. We planned all their movements. We lived in Pusan itself on a barracks ship LST (landing ship tank). It was not very comfortable, but we were so young that we didn't care. We looked after the movement of everything from troops to dead bodies. One of my most vivid memories was taking on a load of green rubber bodybags of hundreds of our dead servicemen to be shipped out of Pusan. It was labeled "Operation Glory." These were very interesting times. During that time, the city of Pusan burned to the ground. There was almost nothing there. There were masses of refugees and it was a very hard life for them. The same organization, MSTS, had several units in Japan (Yokohama, Kobe, Fukuoka, and Hokkaido) because shipment from the

U.S. often was shipped through Japan or back again.

So, my next assignment following Korea was to Yokohama, Japan.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the Korean navy?*

ROGERS: Yes, every day.

*Q: What was your impression?*

ROGERS: I knew some naval and marine officers. They were all very patriotic and determined not to let their little country be overrun by the North Koreans under Russian and Chinese influence. I had some trouble with stevedores, who tended to run away when you weren't looking, but they were just young kids.

*Q: Were you feeling any of the residue when Syngman Rhee released a great many prisoners, North Korean and Chinese?*

ROGERS: One of the projects of my unit was to look after an operation where we sent thousands of captured mainland Chinese communist troops who wanted to go to Taiwan instead of back to China - thousands - just shiploads. They came from the Kojido and Chejudo camps, relatively small islands near Pusan where there were vast prisoner camps.

*Q: Rhee didn't release the Chinese. It was the North Koreans that he released. This caused great anguish on the part of the Americans because we had worked up a swap deal with the North Koreans. Syngman Rhee had released the Korean prisoners, which sort of forced our hand.*

ROGERS: Yes, but I was only directly involved in shipping the mainland Chinese to Taiwan.

*Q: Was there concern as to whether or not they were going willingly?*

ROGERS: I was convinced... They were delighted not to go back into China and then back into battle, or be punished for getting captured. There was a Chinese nationalist group there that talked with them. They gave them tee shirts with patriotic slogans. They were delighted to get out of Korea. What happened to them when they got to Taiwan, I don't know. I suppose that they were very carefully monitored for a while.

*Q: As far as I know, the amalgamation worked fairly well.*

*You were in Japan from when to when?*

ROGERS: Part of 1954 and 1955, just about a year.

*Q: What were you doing?*

ROGERS: The same thing. One of the most interesting things was that we loaded a lot of Marines, thousands of them, on troop transports. They were going to go to Vietnam and relieve the French at the siege of Dien Bien Phu. They were literally on board the transports when we got the order that it was over. Dien Bien Phu had fallen. We marched them all ashore. They were pleased.

*Q: I know because I was in the Air Force in Germany at that time. I had served in Korea during the war. The word was that we weren't going to be released because we were going to go into Vietnam, a place I had never heard of.*

ROGERS: It was very serious. They were really going to go.

*Q: When you were in Japan, was there a difference between the Koreans and the Japanese?*

ROGERS: There was a lot of animosity. I was interested in Korea. I tried to talk to Japanese about Korea and Korean things. They didn't want to hear about it. You were talking about the second class former colonial people. Of course, Japan had been in Korea in colonial occupation about 42 years.

*Q: Yes, they had been there just after the turn of the century and had a very brutal occupation.*

ROGERS: I didn't particularly like Korean food, but I liked Japanese food. Of course, in Japan, there was much more to do even though much of Yokohama was still burned out from WWII. All the residences were just flat for many blocks as far as one could see. Nonetheless, it was safe and, thus, you could get out and enjoy the sites. I became very interested in Kabuki. I still go to Kabuki every time I'm in Japan.

*Q: This was a period where one kind of wondered who won and who lost the war. The Japanese culture certainly absorbed most of the Americans who went over there and served in Japan.*

ROGERS: The music was interesting, as were all of the theater arts, Kabuki and Bunraku puppets, even the Noh plays, which I never understood, but were very stately and dignified. They are highly educated, cultured people.

*Q: You left there when?*

ROGERS: The summer of 1955. Interestingly enough, you asked if I knew about the Foreign Service. There was a fellow naval officer in Pusan whose brother was in the Foreign Service. Spengler was his name. He told me what a great life he had.

On the small Army compound where we lived in Yokohama, there was a group of Army

officers, mostly engineers. My quonset hut, which I shared with three Army officers, was across the street from the dining hall. I was there one day and I heard these two men talking. They sounded so interesting. I thought, "This must be an elite Army unit." I asked, "What kind of an outfit are you in?" They sounded so intelligent, so full of knowledge compared to the average Army person I knew. It turned out that this was the consul general of the U.S. in Yokohama and one of his staff. They spent an hour talking to me about the Foreign Service. I never looked back. I decided: that's for me. That would combine my interest in international affairs, my humanitarian instincts, my interest in culture, and my desire to contribute to the national service. I also knew that in peacetime, short, chubby democrats wouldn't go far in the U.S. Navy. But one might in the Foreign Service, I hoped.

*Q: What sort of active thing did you do? You heard these Foreign Service officers talking and discussed it, but then how did you go about making this career change?*

ROGERS: I took one exam in Tokyo, I think more out of trying to understand what it was all about than anything else. I know I didn't pass. I forget what my score was. I don't remember if they told us or not. I said, "Well, that's okay. I can do that. I'll study some more." In order to tune my mind up while waiting to try to get into the Foreign Service, I went to law school. I applied to several, and was accepted at all. I decided eventually to attend George Washington University Law School because it was near the State Department. I had a backup plan that if I didn't get into the Foreign Service (and I knew the odds were slight), I would have a law degree. I was still a naval reserve officer (I later became a lieutenant commander.). Thus, I could return to the Navy as a lawyer.

*Q: You were in law school at George Washington from when to when?*

ROGERS: I graduated in May 1958, 11 months after I entered the Foreign Service. I went to law school 12 months a year day and night, and finished up the balance at night school.

*Q: You took the Foreign Service Written Exam twice and passed the second time. Then you took the Oral Exam. What do you remember about the Oral Exam?*

ROGERS: It was charming. I think the chairman's name was Herbert Bursley. He had been an ambassador. It was on Pennsylvania Avenue in a building that still exists across from the World Bank. They were very pleasant. They asked me about the Navy and what my interests were. They gave me some questions, I suppose, to see not only my depth of knowledge but also my ability to reason and to defend a position. They told me on the spot that I had been accepted.

*Q: Were there any particular questions or problems that they set before you?*

ROGERS: I don't remember. It was so long ago.

*Q: They didn't ask you about what rivers flow through Kansas or something like that?*

ROGERS: I don't remember that, but I was very good in history and geography, so I could have handled that, pretty much anything like that. They asked me some questions about art and music of all things and I happened to know those. It was not too difficult. I think they were just looking for persons that would be committed to national service more than knowledge of obscure things.

*Q: This was in what year?*

ROGERS: This was in 1956. It took approximately eight to 12 months to enter on duty. I remember, when I passed, I was offered a commission as FSO-6. I got a phone call months later. It was decided that FSO-6 was going to be FSO-8. Do you object? I said, "I don't really know the difference."

*Q: I think that at that time that was just about the time they switched from a 06 ranking system to an 08 ranking system.*

ROGERS: That is exactly right. I had many friends who went in four or five months earlier who had an FSO-6, but were lowered to FSO-7. I think we never really "caught up" with that group.

*Q: You took the A-100 course.*

ROGERS: At Arlington Towers.

*Q: Can you describe a bit your class and your impression of the training at that time?*

ROGERS: It was a lot of fun. We were a bit rebellious. The men almost all had military service, nine out of 10. Almost all were officers. There were many Air Force pilots and naval officers. There were only three women in our class, a very small proportion. Of that number, two former FS [Foreign Service] secretaries. The third was killed on her first assignment in Algeria.

*Q: Oh, how sad.*

ROGERS: She was killed during a firefight between the French and rebels. Our A-100 group was a lot of fun and there remain very dear and strong friendships. Some of them are dead now. Ashley Cooper Hewitt comes to mind, a dear friend. He died five years ago. One became a hostage in Teheran, Bob Blucher. When he was interviewed after he got out, a newsman asked, "Mr. Blucher, would you like to see Teheran again?" Blucher had been an Air Force pilot. He said, "Only through a bomb site." That was a great line. So, they were jolly fellows. We enjoyed each other's company. We were all developing and learning at the same time. We were from a variety of different backgrounds.

*Q: While you were taking this course, did you begin to get a feel for what field you wanted, both geographic and specialty, which were the best places to go, what to avoid,*

*and that sort of thing?*

ROGERS: I wanted to take Japanese language training. That was the most interesting exposure I had had up until that time. That never happened.

*Q: Where did they assign you?*

ROGERS: They said, "You want to finish this law degree. That is going to take another six to eight months. Why don't you just stay in the U.S. and finish that up?" I worked for an organization that no longer exists called International Educational Exchange Service (IEES). It eventually became part of USIA, but I was only there for that short time. I married in June 1959.

*Q: Where did you meet your wife?*

ROGERS: She was a nurse in Washington. Coincidentally, I was a patient in that hospital and fell instantly in love. Two years later, we were married.

*Q: In the IEES, did you have any responsibility for any particular type of exchanges?*

ROGERS: Yes. I think almost all of mine were in Latin America, educational exchange on the professorial level and the technical expert level, just making the arrangements. These were selected by committees. I was just a facilitator of getting them organized and moved around and prepared. It was interesting, but nothing fabulous.

*Q: What did you do after you left IEES and got your law degree?*

ROGERS: My first assignment (and I didn't go there) was Sapporo. When I told my future wife (She was living with her parents.), "Well, I'm going to go to Japan," she said, "You're really going to go?" I said, "Sure, that's my job. That's my duty." She said, "Okay, then let's get married." I had been asking her for a long time. Her mother was very reticent. She said, "Wait a minute. This guy doesn't have a real job. He's going to traipse all over the world like a gypsy." So, we were married. Two days later, I got a call saying, "Sorry about that. You're going to Hong Kong instead. Somebody else will do Sapporo." But that was great. Suddenly, this vast China was out there. The history, philosophy, and culture was so exciting, not to mention the cuisine. So, there was another vast horizon of fun things to learn about and participate in. So, there I was back on the rim of China, having served in Korea, Japan, and then Hong Kong, as well as Macao.

*Q: You were in Hong Kong from when to when?*

ROGERS: I would say approximately September 1959 to January 1961.

*Q: What type of work were you doing there?*

ROGERS: Consular work and immigration fraud analysis. It was interesting, but just

being in Hong Kong and being a part of that culture was fascinating.

*Q: Could you tell me a bit about immigration and fraud problems in Hong Kong? This was a major occupation of a lot of people.*

ROGERS: Briefly, when Chinese males were recruited, mostly from the Canton area, to work on railroads and mines in the west in the 1860s and 1870s and on, each time they would make a trip back and forth, they would register that they had a son. There may very well have been no such son, but they would build these phantom families for immigration purposes. They were called "slot sons." So, then, a relative or a person would buy that slot and migrate by derivative citizenship and get to the U.S. illegally. So, the plan was to analyze whether or not these people really were the persons they claimed to be. It was terribly difficult. We had very elaborate methods, but I don't think many of them worked.

*Q: You had town books and asked where the well was, etc.*

ROGERS: Exactly right.

*Q: These were built up with great care. Almost everybody came from really a very small number of villages.*

ROGERS: Right. It's called the Seyip, six counties, all around the area between Canton city and Macao, a great triangle. I think I recall, 90% of Chinese Americans up until 1945 were from that region. It's different now. But that was fun and interesting. I was a little annoyed at what I felt to be a corrupt practice of paying people to give what I believed were false statements. I would never do that. I said, "Wait a minute. You're going to give this guy \$5 Hong Kong to tell me that this man isn't the person he claimed to be? He doesn't know anything about it. We're not going to that." That was just an evil practice. But that was the system that sort of developed over the years. It was called the Documents Verification Unit. So, I did that for two years. It was exciting and interesting. I got around Hong Kong a great deal.

*Q: This Document Verification Center... This is really very important in the immigration scheme of things. What was the feeling among the officers there? These are a bunch of crooks and we've got to get them? Let's do the best we can?*

ROGERS: About half of the people involved in that had come from Europe, where they were refugee officers who had been integrated into the Foreign Service, the Refugee Relief Program (RRP). They were rather severe and unbelieving. I think they had been doing this sort of thing too long and become jaded and unsympathetic. I said, "Are we trying to find out the truth or keep people out?" They said, "Keep people out." Part of their task in Europe was not migration to the U.S., but getting people back, if possible, to where they came from in Europe before being dispersed by World War II - and if that place were no longer available or safe, then migration elsewhere. But they were sort of police oriented in that respect. A handful of young FSOs were also doing that. Some of

them became very famous. John Negroponte was one. Our consul general was a wonderful person, Julius Cecil Holmes. We really loved him. He was a great guy, was very kind to us. I made many lasting friendships there as well.

*Q: What were you getting and absorbing at the consulate from your interviews and just getting around and about what was then known as communist China?*

ROGERS: Many of the people who came in were, indeed, border crossers who then wanted to make this connection to go to the U.S. Some of them were of interest, but we detailed them to the person in our unit who was from the CIA who interviewed them. I was never in the room when that happened. He would decide whether or not they had anything of merit or value or utility in his interview, see what they could glean from it. Almost all of the illegal border crossers were from that region, it being so difficult to move from one region of China to another. We had one story which turned out to be not so that I always remembered. One refugee said that the Polish consul in Canton wanted to defect. That was very exciting. We would want to get in on that, get him through, and so forth, but that didn't happen.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the China watchers at that point?*

ROGERS: Oh, yes. Many of them worked their way up. Several of them became consul general in Hong Kong eventually. Richard Williams was one of our colleagues. He became later our first ambassador to Mongolia, although non-resident. Two or three others became very, very active in China. At that time, there were not very many assignments available for the Chinese language officers. There was one position in Warsaw for a while.

*Q: As an interpreter for the relations talks.*

ROGERS: Yes. Then, of course, Taiwan, but they probably were overproducing in anticipation that eventually they would staff up in China. That did eventually happen, at which time half those fellows were retired.

*Q: Was there much discussion at that time within the Foreign Service people who were sitting here on the outskirts of China proper talking about whether we should or should not recognize them?*

ROGERS: I don't recall that. The Korean War hadn't been over that long. There was a lot of concern about the militancy of China in other parts of East Asia and the experience with Korea. There were still a lot missing from the Korean War. Then, China in turn was going through one chaotic, crushing situation after another, which made their whole system one of disorder, a great leap forward and two behind, and a thousand flowers bloomed, that sort of thing.

*Q: Also, during this period, in 1960, there was the debate between Kennedy and Nixon over what to do about Quemoy and Matsu, the disputed islands between China and*

*Taiwan. Did that play out at all where you were?*

ROGERS: I don't recall that. No, it was just the great monolith, the great concern of what they would do. There was hostility left over from the Korean War.

*Q: Did Vietnam raise any blips on your radar at that time?*

ROGERS: Mine personally, yes, for a very strange reason. I was an FSO-8 for five years, because I was still on language probation. I was going to be terminated, so I said, "I would rather really try again to pass this stupid French exam." So, I took annual leave, bought a ticket on a French ship called "The Laos," and sailed off to Saigon. This was prearranged with friends there. I stayed with a wonderful teacher from Alliance Française who within three weeks had me speaking beautiful French. I had all the fundamentals. The grace and the skill of handling it, whipping out subjunctives and impressing people with that. I knew the regional language supervisor was coming through Hong Kong. I got back just in time. He passed me on the spot. With great amusement, I got two letters on the same day: "I'm sorry to say thanks for your five years, but you are out of here." The other one said, "Congratulations on passing the French test. Carry on." I was promoted every 10 months thereafter. I went right through four promotion boards, one after the other. I guess they tried to make up for that lost time.

*Q: You left there in January 1962. Where did you go?*

ROGERS: Vietnam. They said, "Here is a guy who knows about Vietnam. He was just there. Ship him right back."

*Q: There weren't many in those days. 1962 was not high Vietnam.*

ROGERS: Not at all. I was assigned to be the number two person in the two man Consular Section. When I arrived, I got off the plane and learned that the two men from the Consular Section were on that plane leaving. Frank Malloy's brother, Ian, was one. He drowned in Mexico some years later. I never met him. Another fellow's name I can't remember. I never saw them. I was there all alone. They actually departed on the same Pan Am aircraft on which my wife and I arrived.

*Q: This was in Saigon. In 1969, I was consul general in Saigon. We had a booming Consular Section. You were in Vietnam from 1962 to when?*

ROGERS: Until March 1964.

*Q: What was Saigon like in 1962?*

ROGERS: The people were very, very sweet. We had an old building down the street called Ham Nghi deep in the downtown. It was very insecure. When I arrived, I was the Consular Section. Then, a fellow arrived, Harland Eastman, who became the consul. I was his assistant for a while. Then another young man named Anthony Lake came in. So,

I always tell Tony Lake, the immediate past National Security Advisor, that I was his first ever supervisor in the Foreign Service. He agrees. It was great fun. William C. Trueheart was the deputy chief of mission at that time. He was a wonderful person. I was very active and very vigorous in this consular work. At that time, the Vietnamese government required all military personnel to have a visa before they came there. They had to fill out this elaborate form. So, I drafted a diplomatic note from William Trueheart saying, "Our soldiers are coming here to help and protect you. I don't think they should have to have a visa." I presented that to him. He said, "You can't do a diplomatic note like that. It's got to be elaborate, full of lavish embellishments with a lot of depth and background." I said, "Why don't you try it? Let's see what happens." He did and it worked. So, he was very pleased. Then, a fellow named Dickson Boggs, who was the then staff aide to Ambassador Frederick Nolting, was transferred to Belgium. Bill Trueheart asked me to take over as staff aide to Fritz Nolting, which I did.

*Q: Before we moved to the ambassadorial aide job, what was consular work like during this 1962ish period?*

ROGERS: One part was shipping and seamen. A lot of sailors had problems, getting drunk, missing ship, that sort of thing. So, they took a little work. A lot of visas were for Vietnamese military going to the U.S. for training. We required them to have a visa. Occasionally, American citizens were very curious, wanted to know what was going on. David Halberstam was there almost every day.

*Q: He was a "New York Times" correspondent.*

ROGERS: Yes. I got to know him very well. The famous "Beat" poet, Allen Ginsberg, came to see me. I had read "Howl" earlier and he was so pleased that I knew about it. He stayed with us in the office a long time, discussing Vietnam. I can't remember what he was talking about now, but it was interesting to meet him. He died fairly recently.

*Q: What about Americans marrying Vietnamese women?*

ROGERS: There were a few.

*Q: Of course, we didn't have the military...*

ROGERS: We had a handful of military. Generally, it was discouraged. But if they really meant it... Let us say that sometimes an amorous drunken week-end would produce great affection and yet the Army would always say, "Give him two weeks to cool off" and darn if they weren't right. Usually, most of those faded away. But the sincere ones eventually got married. But some were just young, inexperienced, and frankly, in some cases, being taken advantage of. Usually, if made to wait a few weeks, it wore off.

*Q: Was there any adoption of Vietnamese orphans at all?*

ROGERS: Yes, I helped with a lot of those.

*Q: Was it a problem?*

ROGERS: No, I don't think so.

*Q: In my time, the problem was bureaucratic. According to Vietnamese law, the President had to approve each orphan's adoption if it was with a non-Vietnamese. The President was kind of busy with a war on his hands.*

ROGERS: We never had that problem. There was a merchant seaman who posed a very interesting problem. He was in love with a beautiful bar girl. She somehow became pregnant. He loved her dearly. He was a simple person, brawny, strong, and sweet. So, I said, "are you really going to keep this child?" "Yes, Sir, Mr. Rogers. That is my child and I really want to have it." I said, "You know, you're not married." "No." "It would be a wise thing for that child's future if you married before the child was born." "Okay." I said, "The baby is due within hours." "Yes." "Let's go." I got a U.S. missionary to go with me to the hospital. He was marrying them as we got to the hospital steps. They were pronounced husband and wife. Went in the doors and out came the baby, an American citizen. Sadly, that man was killed in a motorcycle crash later, but I gave the child a U.S. passport, to which he was then entitled.

*Q: What about jailed Americans? Was this a problem?*

ROGERS: Yes. One was a particularly difficult case. On the gangplank of a merchant ship, he hit over the head a fellow merchant seaman from the same ship and killed him, but as he killed him, he rolled back onto the dock. So, the Vietnamese claimed jurisdiction over him. He got five years in Chiwa prison. We had a lot of elaborate problems over that. He was still there when I left. Eventually, he got out.

There were a handful of merchant seamen... I hate to pick on merchant seaman.

*Q: That's what you had at the time.*

ROGERS: It was a pretty rough crowd, actually. They would get into all kinds of drunken brawls and trouble. But that was their style. That's what they wanted to do. We just let them sober up in jail for a couple of days and signed them onto the next ship if the captain would take them.

*Q: When did you become Fritz Nolting's staff aide?*

ROGERS: I would say well within six months of arriving.

*Q: This would have been still 1962.*

ROGERS: Yes. So, sometime in 1962.

*Q: What was your impression of how Nolting operated?*

ROGERS: I think he was a very kind and wonderful person. I really adored him. He was very good to everyone, very humane and thoughtful. He always found the best side of a person, forgave their errors and stupidity. He was not always in focus with all the elements of the country team, but he was the boss, so I think they all liked him very, very much.

*Q: Now you were sort of sitting at the side of the ambassador or behind the ambassador. What was your impression of how the country team at that time viewed Diem?*

ROGERS: Nolting's view was "We have to work with him. He is the leader of a nation state which we recognize." He was concerned that his brother, Ngo Diem Nhu, was influencing him too much, but felt that if we worked with him, gradually, things would be okay. He was concerned that Diem was out of touch with the reality or just didn't want to face some aspects of it. He felt that he had a distance, a sense of the traditional emperors, that he didn't feel for the people. I remember when Diem would drive around in town, a police car would go in front of him and everyone was required to turn facing the opposite way and not look at him. They really meant it. I peeked. That didn't apply to me, so I looked around to see him many times. Ambassador Nolting wanted to work with him, knew his shortcomings, but he was concerned that if anything went awry, the result would be more chaotic. Of course, he was quite right.

*Q: Did you have any feeling for strong opinions contrary to this or just strong opinions on the country team? Did these surface while you were present? I'm thinking about the Political Section, the military, the CIA, etc. Did you pick up any feel for this?*

ROGERS: No, on the contrary, my memory is that they pretty much supported him. A problem developed more from newsmen who seemed to feel otherwise. I am sure Halberstam was there during Nolting's tenure. They wanted to show drama and excitement and become famous by reporting what they felt would sell newspapers. John Mecklin was the USIS director in Saigon at that time. He wrote a book called "Mission in Torment." Nolting was on a cruise ship somewhere between Greece and Yugoslavia when he heard on the radio that he had been replaced by Henry Cabot Lodge in Vietnam. Nolting was sad, mystified, and hurt by that. He went back to Vietnam very briefly. His childhood friend was DCM Bill Trueheart. I think Nolting blamed Trueheart for Nolting's relief, but it wasn't Trueheart's fault. It had nothing to do with him. The main purpose was for President Kennedy to have a prominent Republican in Saigon to give the appearance of bipartisan balance. Fritz Nolting did a wonderful job and I was very devoted to him. Some weeks later, Henry Cabot Lodge arrived in Saigon with Freddy Flott and James Michael Dunn, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army. Freddy was the friend of George Lodge, son of Henry Cabot Lodge. He needed a job, so George said, "Dad, could you give Freddy a job?" Mike Dunn was a very tough, hard person who got to know Lodge when Lodge was on two weeks' active duty for training in the Army Reserve. He hooked onto him and became his hatchetman. Dunn enjoyed hurting people and wrecking careers.

*Q: How did the news of Nolting's replacement hit the embassy?*

ROGERS: We were all very sorry. We all loved him. We got in his place a distant, rather arrogant, cold, famous person. Fritz Nolting would play the piano at his residence. Lodge was a totally different style. He was very aloof. I remained his staff aide until my normal time ran out, whereupon Tony Lake replaced me and sometime later, Peter Tarnoff replaced him.

*Q: Did you get the impression or was it going around the embassy that Lodge had come out to get tough with Diem and we really had to push? This was the Kennedy administration. It was a pushy, hard-nosed... At least they liked to think they were a hard-nosed administration. Did you get that feeling?*

ROGERS: Definitely. In fact, the first bump in this crescendo that developed was when the first Buddhist self-immolation, burning suicide occurred. Madame Nhu, Diem's sister-in-law, the so-called Dragon Lady, said, "It's just a barbecue." Lodge reacted with his first press statement. I was with him. He wrote, "It's terrible to say such a thing" and criticized her directly. Buddhists were trying to end the war either with communist influence, or on their own true peace initiative. They were being harassed by the central government and Lodge on the second or third day there (I was with him.) went to a famous Buddhist temple to demonstrate his reaching out to other sectors of the community.

*Q: How did Lodge use you as a staff aide?*

ROGERS: One traditional task was screening calls, listening to all of his phone calls to take notes. As an illustration, suppose either he or Fritz Nolting said, "Okay, I'll go to lunch Monday with you at 12:30." I would write all that down in his schedule book. That was one of my tasks to deal with all that. So, a great deal of his oral flow went through me. I also organized his papers and got there earlier than he so I would have all the cables arranged in a priority system so he would be sure to read the most important ones first, that sort of thing. I organized meetings for him. I was the "helpful hand."

*Q: Did you get any feeling for the role of the CIA? Was there a difference between the time of Nolting and the time of Lodge from your observation?*

ROGERS: Yes. My clear memory is that the CIA station continued to try to work with the Diem regime as Nolting had, but it finally came down to Lodge saying, "Well, I'm the boss and we're going to do it my way." I remember, symbolically, he took the residence of the CIA station chief and said, "I think I want your house." It was a message to the Vietnamese saying, "I can do this and he works for me." He literally kicked him out of his house and lived there. That was only maybe 10 houses away from me on the same street, Phung Khac Koan, so I remember it very well. It was, perhaps, not historically important, but symbolically, at the time, it was.

*Q: These things send messages. How important was the American military as far as the Ambassador's action was concerned?*

ROGERS: Lodge knew General Paul Harkins in World War II. Harkins was then the four star general who was the head of the military activities in Vietnam. They had actually served together in the same regiment, as I recall. Paul Harkins was his senior at one stage in an armored division.

*Q: I think Lodge resigned from the Senate, served in North Africa, and then came back.*

ROGERS: He know Harkins from that time. That was helpful. I think he got on alright with him. Lucien Conein was a CIA officer. He is still living in Virginia [Note: Conein died in 1999.]. I saw him at a funeral not too long ago. He was a lieutenant colonel, uniformed. He was Lodge's liaison with restive generals who were thinking of replacing Diem. My impression was he was involved a great deal with that task, more so than much of the rest of the CIA. Conein knew many of the senior Vietnamese officers when they were all in the French army in WWII.

*Q: Did you gain any feeling about a growing impatience of Lodge with Diem after he arrived?*

ROGERS: Oh, yes, and it gradually seemed to turn a corner and he'd say, "Well, he's got to go." How and when precisely that turn occurred, I don't recall. But it did happen. Unfortunately, Diem and his brother, Ngo Diem Nhu, were killed the following morning.

*Q: Were you there at the time?*

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

*Q: What was the situation from your perspective just prior to the General's coup?*

ROGERS: It was very, very tense. We knew of troop movements around town. We were aware of that. I'll never forget, on the day of the coup, to show you how much I was out of the loop (Even though I was the staff aide, there were some things I never knew.), I went into work one day and Lodge didn't show up. Then, the coup began. I called and he was having lunch with Mike Dunn. I said, "There is a coup underway." He said, "I know. I am staying here. You stay there." So, Bill Trueheart and I stayed in the office. We didn't know what was going to happen. I had a submachine gun on my desk. I didn't know if they were going to storm the building or what was going to happen. Mercifully, the embassy was not stormed. It became very dramatic. I was at the embassy all night long. I went out in the morning with Jim Rosenthal to walk over to the palace and we saw the damage that had been done to it as it had been attacked. I walked around the grounds and in the barracks of the palace guard. We didn't realize it at that time, but Diem had fled to Cholon and was eventually picked up and killed by an army captain who in turn was later killed. That was certainly an unforgettable and dramatic day.

*Q: When you heard about these events, what were you getting from the junior officer mafia about this being a good thing or something else?*

ROGERS: I would say they were more conservative on it, feeling that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know, and that we'd better try to work with this system that we know, try to get his brother, Ngo Diem Nhu, out of power. In fact, Lodge once suggested to Diem, "Maybe it would be better if your brother took some leave in the Philippines or someplace" and tried to gracefully get rid of him. Diem wouldn't hear of it. From what I know about junior officers, in my view they're all very sincere, conscientious people who did the best they could.

*Q: At that time, did we have much in the way of language officers and people who were out in the field or was it pretty much an embassy-centered operation?*

ROGERS: The latter, although in approximately 1963, we began getting Vietnamese language trained people there. The only one I recall who spoke Vietnamese and was there immediately before I arrived was Lyle Brecken. He is still living and is a good friend. Then, six other Vietnamese-trained people arrived. But there weren't too many. Most of our work was done in French. I didn't speak Vietnamese.

*Q: We did not have this vast network that later developed of officers out in the field.*

ROGERS: No. We did have provincial reporters, but not as elaborate as the CORDS program eventually became. It was very small, nothing like was later there. One of those provincial reporters later became Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific and for EUR, Richard Holbrooke [Note: U.S. representative to the UN in 1999]. He was one of those first provincial reporters. I remember distinctly when he came to the office and said, "I have to see the ambassador." I said, "Okay." I was not the doorkeeper. I wanted to facilitate communication. I said, "He's got some ambassador in there now making a courtesy call and he has somebody else coming later, but I'll hold that so you can get in and tell him your story." His point was that things were not as rosy as had been reported by the military in the Mekong Delta region. That was the first time I met Holbrooke. He was certainly very hard-driving, very determined to get his message across, which was a message in contrast to what others were reporting. He was out there in the field.

*Q: Was there any concern that maybe our information was coming too much from sort of political circles within Saigon and not really reflecting the state of the country?*

ROGERS: Yes. I used to call it "veranda reporting." You sit around with the usual suspects, the same old folks, in sort of an incestuous turnabout and you hear the same story.

*Q: The veranda of the Continental Hotel.*

ROGERS: That sort of thing, or homes. But I've seen that all over the world. Either it's

the veranda or it's what the taxi driver told you on the way to the airport and that's the way the lazy people do their reporting. But hopefully, I'm confident, nowadays people are much more astute and professional about it.

*Q: Was there the feeling that America's critical interests were at stake in Vietnam at this point?*

ROGERS: No, I don't think so. There was some theoretical domino collapse nonsense, but I certainly didn't buy that. I didn't think it made any sense. That was that if Vietnam falls - to what? Into itself. Actually, the concept was, we were trying to help the people of Vietnam establish their own independent identity free from outside control (read China, Soviet Union). I think that if the Cold War were not underway, we would have taken no particular interest. Just as in much of Africa, our interest was sparked by East-West struggle, but it had nothing or almost nothing to do with our direct interest.

*Q: What about after the killing of Diem and his brother, how did this hit the embassy?*

ROGERS: I think that everyone was very tired. They had been up all night and were just kind of touchy, hoping that it would all work out. Lodge had me organize a dinner for what he called either the Council of Sages or the Council of Notables, some across-the-board group we tried to piece together to try to get people from all aspects of life - university, religious groups, business, and so forth - and try to get them collectively to see how best we should proceed to assist them in their development. I recall also that that didn't amount to much. It kind of sputtered away quickly.

*Q: What was your impression of the Vietnamese political class?*

ROGERS: They were very much - I won't say francophone, but had a veneer of French style to them. They were certainly not pro-French in that all of them wanted independence from France. They were glad of that. I think that they had enough of the French. Some businessmen still stayed there and seemed quite content. There was a sense that "This is our nation and we want to do it our way." I'm sad to say that our position was, "Go ahead, provided China and the Soviet Union aren't involved," which they were. I suppose China historically did look upon Indochina as a former satrapy that owed fidelity to China. They had many conflicts. They had been occupied and had wars with China over the years. On the other hand, during the French colonial period, especially during World War II when the Vichy government controlled it, a lot of Vietnamese were inside China. A lot of the Vietnamese "democratic patriots," as they called themselves, worked within China in the hopes of eventually getting the French out. Of course, they didn't.

Politically, it's a Mandarin elitist culture from the old animite times. It's my theory that Diem saw himself as a replacement for Bao Dai and that he was a regal personality. His family was very powerful. Ngo Diem Tuc was the Archbishop of Hue, the senior Catholic official in Vietnam.

*Q: After the coup, you were still there when they started the series of revolving generals?*

ROGERS: Yes. The coup was in November 1963.

*Q: It was very close to the assassination of Kennedy.*

ROGERS: It was about 20 days from that.

*Q: So we're talking about November 2nd or so.*

ROGERS: I remember, when Kennedy was assassinated, I had to look in a book to see how you make the black mourning wreath on the flag to put out in front of the embassy. All those little things. But shortly after that, my tour of duty ended in January. Tony Lake replaced me and I went off to my next assignment.

*Q: Your next assignment was what?*

ROGERS: Assistant political advisor, Atlantic Command SACLANT, and U.S. Atlantic Fleet, in Norfolk, Virginia.

*Q: When you left Vietnam in January of 1964, what was your feeling about whither Vietnam and American connection in Vietnam?*

ROGERS: My hope was that the nation would find peace and end the horrible suffering and there would be an end to our future involvement. A little while later (I had only been in Norfolk for a very short time.), a car bomb blew up on the street next to the embassy, killing my dear friend who was the consular assistant, Tran Phu Tho, and decapitated him. I was terribly upset by that. It killed several others in the building, including a few Americans.

*Q: Did you get any feel that we knew what was going on in North Vietnam and how that war was going?*

ROGERS: No, I think we knew almost nothing. I think our intelligence was very poor. Cross-border operations or efforts to penetrate were failures. Freddy Flott, of all things, was in charge of cross-border operations, meeting landing people in various parts of the country to conduct activities. But I don't think any of them were ever successful.

*Q: You were with CINCLANT in Norfolk from when to when?*

ROGERS: From 1964-1966.

*Q: What was your job mainly?*

ROGERS: It was to help the Atlantic Command and all of its elements to know about political and economic events that were important for their activities throughout all of

Latin America and the Caribbean, plus on the SACLANT side, all of Western Europe down to but not including North Africa. That was the NATO component. SACLANT's NATO half was vested in the U.S. admiral who was the CINCLANT commander, so he had both jobs at the same time. A major portion of the work had to do with NATO and political briefings on what was going on in Europe and allied organizations and, to a small extent, what was happening in Latin America. We would get copies of all kinds of material and decide what was important enough to brief and consult with senior officers of the U.S. in Norfolk.

*Q: There were probably several admirals while you were there.*

ROGERS: Only two, Harold Page Smith and Thomas Moore, who later became CNO and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Both were very able and good people.

*Q: Oh, yes. During this time, what was the posture of the Soviet fleet as you saw it?*

ROGERS: Aggressive, very pressing to the outer limits. They would have electronic intelligence ships just outside of Norfolk and were just pushing the envelope very much and trailing our ships and coming too close, just, generally, had a "What are you going to do about it" attitude in the Atlantic fleet and, to some extent, also in the Mediterranean. When there were fleet exercises, they would move around out there and say, "We're watching you. We know you're there." The Soviet navy was aggressive.

Two sets of problems occurred during the same time. DeGaulle removed the French forces from Allied military direct command. Eventually, that caused the transfer of NATO in Paris to Brussels.

Additionally, there was a major problem in the Dominican Republic. I think the major issue was concern about an East-West struggle in Continental Europe and how it would play out at sea, the importance of keeping the sea lanes open and fleet readiness.

*Q: Was there much concern about Cuba at that point?*

ROGERS: The Missile Crisis was finished.

*Q: About two years before. Cuba had no real navy, did it?*

ROGERS: No. But I remember, some of the admirals were very annoyed that when the Bay of Pigs landing had occurred, that we didn't follow up on it. They were pretty prepared to... I think some of them hoped it would happen again.

*Q: How about The Dominican Republican dimension, how did that play out from your perspective?*

ROGERS: We had an operations room that I was part of where all the positions were manned round-the-clock by various folks from the armed forces, probably heavily

overstaffed. I think it was an awful lot of effort. They also saw it as an exercise training in how to do these kinds of operations. At that time, most of the Latin American countries were headed by military officers, which the senior officers at the Atlantic command thought was a good thing. Why not? What's wrong with having an admiral as President? Portugal does.

Our first and only child was born there in Norfolk.

*Q: With your admirals and also their main staff, how internationally politically savvy were they?*

ROGERS: Harold Page Smith was. Of course, on the SACLANT staff, we had a large number of military and naval officers from Allied countries literally on the staff in Norfolk: France, Belgium, Germany... I remember a German officer who had a submarine badge from World War II that he proudly wore. Italy, Norway, Portugal... Almost all of the 14 NATO nations, less Iceland, had someone on the staff. The vice commander was a British three star in Norfolk, so it was a thoroughly integrated international NATO staff.

*Q: Was there any feeling during this 1964-1966 period about levies on American forces to help in Vietnam? Was this beginning to become a problem?*

ROGERS: I don't recall that, but I know that many colleagues in Norfolk went to Southeast Asia duty. Whether or not there was an actual reduction in the Atlantic forces committed, I don't recall that. I don't recall if we had to transfer significant ships to that area. At that time, there was also COMIDEASTFOR, which was a seaplane tender.

*Q: In Greenwich Bay, probably. I served in Dhahran at one point.*

ROGERS: This ship stayed in Bahrain.

*Q: It was in Bahrain, but one of them was the Greenwich Bay, a seaplane tender.*

ROGERS: When I went out there on one of those trips, Admiral William Crowe was then COMIDEASTFOR.

*Q: In 1966, you finished your CINCLANT job. Where did you go?*

ROGERS: Angola.

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*Q: Today is November 5, 1997. You were off to Angola. You were there from 1966 to when?*

ROGERS: 1968.

*Q: What was the situation in Angola from 1966-1968?*

ROGERS: It was still a Portuguese colony. Some guerrilla warfare was still going on in the northwest in an area called the Dembos. In various areas of the country were three competing groups: FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), UNITA, and then the major one was the MPLA. They were competing to a certain extent among each other, but mostly against the Portuguese central government.

*Q: Before you went out there, did you talk to the desk?*

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

*Q: Was this one of these situations that happened in Algeria? First of all, was it part of the French desk?*

ROGERS: No, Africa.

*Q: But it was Portuguese territory at the time? Was there the normal tension between NATO people and the Azores and all that?*

ROGERS: Yes. I think the EUR Bureau was supportive of Portugal because of our interests in the Atlantic Alliance. The Africa Bureau was more inclined toward decolonization. I don't think we had a very fixed policy at that time. It was more or less to monitor the situation and see how the internal struggle was going. The South African government clearly supported the Portuguese. The Congo, Zaire, supported the FNLA, Holden Roberto, who actually lived in Kinshasa. Gradually, the war struggled on.

*Q: What was your job?*

ROGERS: I was in Luanda. That's a beautiful seaport, a very ancient town. When the Portuguese explorers first landed about 120 miles north of there at the mouth of the Congo (Zaire) River, they found a very organized kingdom called the Kingdom of the Congo. Its capital in northwestern Angola was renamed by the Portuguese Sao Salvador (Savior). The Portuguese regrettably, although they were most welcomed by the indigenous people, didn't take too long in corrupting them. The Catholic priests who were then headquartered at Sao Tome, a Portuguese island out in the Bight of Benin, gradually became slavers themselves and got into the slave trade, had numerous fights with the indigenous tribes who believed, sadly, that if they became Catholic, they would be saved from these rapacious priests. They were sadly disappointed because their kingdom was destroyed. As with many parts of Africa, part of that kingdom was inside what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or old Zaire. The straight lines that the Europeans drew had nothing much to do with where the tribes were. When I was there, the Portuguese were still very, very severe with the population, forcing them to do road maintenance. Essentially, the local chief would be assigned work products and he had to get those accomplished. The Portuguese were still fairly brutal in those days. There were

harsh physical punishments for not completing a task. They had another concept for persons called "assimilados" (to assimilate). Africans who would adapt a veneer of European (meaning Portuguese) civilization were treated a good deal better. There was a great deal of intermarriage. The Portuguese, wherever they went, often married into the local population. The country was certainly very, very rich. It had diamonds and wonderful coffee, the largest coffee plantation in the world. "CADA" is south of Luanda. There was copper and marvelous forest products. Of course, Portugal exploited that. Luanda was one of the stops around Africa where the caravels or small ships had station stops on their way to the spice islands, the East Indies and India. These were more important to them as waystations to their greater goal rather than just in their own right. When I was there, the revolution, the guerrilla warfare, was not resolved. Portugal put a lot of effort into it. At the same time, Portugal had revolutions going on in Guinea Bissau and, to a lesser extent, in Mozambique, so they had their hands full. When I left in 1968, it was not by any means over. Portugal controlled all the main cities and towns, and the Benguela railroad from Lobito port, all the way to Zambia. That was absolutely fascinating. I rode on it. It had coal burning trains. The train would often catch on fire from its own fireboxes and they would stop and put it out and keep going. It was a very, very beautiful country. There were great deserts in the southwest, deep jungles in the northwest, and in the center a beautiful 5,000 foot high plateau of great beauty and perfect weather.

*Q: What were you doing at the consulate general?*

ROGERS: I was the deputy principal officer.

*Q: Who was the principal officer?*

ROGERS: Harvey Summ (He is still living in Arlington).

*Q: What were we doing there?*

ROGERS: The main task was to report on the revolutionary activities and to assist U.S. Navy ship visits. In those days, COMIDEASTFOR had what are called short hull destroyers. They couldn't make it all the way around to the Middle East on their own. They had to make at least one stop. At that time, the Suez Canal was closed, so they had to go the hard way around the Cape. They often stopped in Luanda. In fact, one of the most fascinating visits was the USS Liberty, AGTR. Commander McConaughy was the captain. They had been there at least twice. Their last visit was cut short. Of course, the rest is history. They went up to offshore Israel, where they were severely damaged and took heavy casualties from the Israeli Air Force. McConaughy [Note: McConaughy died in 1999] received the Medal of Honor and invited me to the ceremony. Other than that, U.S. commercial interests were important. Oil had just been discovered in Cabinda while I was there. That was U.S. Gulf Oil. Later, Texaco and one or two other American companies came in. The oil exploration in the northwest of Angola was of great value. We had a number of American citizens throughout Angola. There were about 150 missionaries who had been there for generations, Seventh Day Adventists to evangelical

groups. We tried to look after their safety.

*Q: Were you under any constraints? You obviously could talk to Portuguese authorities, but what about the rebels? Did you have any contacts with them?*

ROGERS: Not knowingly. I knew a lot of people who later turned out to be MPLA sympathizers. These were mulattos, people who at least for one or two generations had been Portuguese assimilados. The MPLA was essentially a mulatto structure, while the FNLA and the UNITA were totally African tribal based. The famous Jonas Savimbi, whom I've met in this country, was raised in a U.S. Protestant mission in central Angola, which I had visited. He learned English there. I don't think he was a physician, but was sort of a nurse's aide in that compound. The center of Angola was very sympathetic toward UNITA. There were no particular restrictions. I could talk to anybody who was willing to talk with me. I traveled extensively.

*Q: Unlike some of the other places, you mentioned the assimilation that was happening. At your office or at receptions, were Africans as well as Portuguese attending?*

ROGERS: Yes. There were a lot of, in the academic world, Portuguese-trained Africans, a lot of teachers, some in what was called the merchant class. Given another century or two, they might well have developed, as the Portuguese had hoped, into "good" Portuguese citizens. Ultimately, most of them decided that their future was with their African roots and when the opportunity came, cast off the Portuguese. What happened was, a coup in Portugal ended colonialism. That happened after my first service in Angola.

*Q: What was your impression of the Portuguese government then?*

ROGERS: They espoused a very strong, almost zealot-like, missionary creed that they were right, they were civilizing this African nation, and that, eventually, it would be understood that this was merely a part of Portugal that happened to be in Africa. One of their examples was, well, after all, Alaska is not contiguous to the U.S., but it is nonetheless part of the U.S. They would say, "See, we have parts of Portugal that just happen to be overseas." They had great pride in the glorious age of discovery and Diego Cao, who was the first explorer there. Henry the Navigator sent these fellows out. Portugal had been in Angola for more than 400 years. It had been partly occupied by the Dutch at one time. They had to deal with that, eventually. They were very proud of their heritage. As far as I could tell, they all felt that if the world would just be patient enough, everyone would understand that they were civilizing responsibility to an indigenous people.

*Q: How did we act there? This was still part of the changes in Africa. Basically, we had welcomed the expulsion of the Europeans and new African countries developing. How did we all play it in Angola at that time?*

ROGERS: I think the policy of the Africa Bureau was in due course: independence. At

the same time, the European Bureau said, "Wait, don't forget that we need the Azores and their friendship in the Atlantic Alliance and SACLANT." So, there was a dichotomy in policy, no question about it. The Africa Bureau did not have the influence, strength, or perhaps even access to overcome the stronger hand of the European Bureau. Angola was an absolutely beautiful country, very unforgettable. We had a lot of sickness. My wife got malaria there and our child did, too. I had met many American missionaries. He was in town and I went to get him. I hoped he would help me with this malaria. His theme was, "Oh, well, of course, there is no medicine. You just pray by them, and it will work out." I wasn't too pleased with that.

*Q: Were there any developments or incidents while you were there?*

ROGERS: Not this time, but later when we get to 1975 when I go back to Angola, we'll have some.

*Q: You left there in 1968. Whither?*

ROGERS: Jamaica.

*Q: You were in Jamaica from 1968 to when?*

ROGERS: July 1972.

*Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?*

ROGERS: The first was Walter Tobriner, who was one of the three District of Columbia commissioners when there was no mayor in the District. At that time, there were two civilian appointees plus a U.S. Army engineer. Walter Tobriner was a Democrat and was appointed by Lyndon Johnson to be the ambassador. He was there when I arrived.

He was replaced by a Republican, Vincent De Roulet, whose mother in law was a contributor to Richard Nixon. When the parties changed, he got that assignment. She was the owner of the New York Mets baseball team at the time.

*Q: He was a controversial figure.*

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

*Q: Could you tell me about him?*

ROGERS: He died at 48. He was tall, a little bit frail. I think his father owned Foremost Dairies in California. He married Lorinda Dayson of the Witney family. He was eccentric and fancied himself a certain stature in U.S. society which, if it exists, I've never seen it. When I was first assigned there, he asked me to come and meet him on his estate on Long Island. We got to the house and the front gate was enormous. It was really his wife's estate. He had a 90 foot yacht, "Patrina," and looked upon the Jamaicans perhaps as the

Portuguese looked upon those from Angola that they considered must be looked after, so that they could eventually develop. Civilizing nonsense. When my tour was up after two years, he kept getting extensions of six months for me because I had become a very dear friend of the person whom I had claimed would become the prime minister of Jamaica. De Roulet said, "Oh, that's impossible. He couldn't possibly win the election." So, I said, "Okay, there are 52 parliamentary seats. Whoever takes half plus one, the leader of that party will be the prime minister." I gave him a list of 52 and I said, "These are the seats that will be won by the People's National Party (Michael Manley's)." I'll never forget, the night of that election (That was in 1972.), Vincent De Roulet had a party of the country team and friends. The symbol of the Jamaica Labor Party was a bell. He had on every table a bell that was to be rung when Hugh Shearer would have been reelected. Shearer was a lovely person, a very nice guy. I saw him not too long ago. The news came through that the People's National Party had won. The phone rang and whoever took the call said to the ambassador, "Well, it's Michael Manley." He said, "Oh, I'll take the call right away." He said, "No, Mr. Manley wants to speak to Mr. Rogers, not you." This was the end of my career in Jamaica.

*Q: Oh, God. So Manley knew what he was doing.*

ROGERS: Oh, yes. Worse, Manley said that he wanted me to come right over to his home. I asked permission. He said, "Yes, go ahead." When I got there, the chief of the Jamaican army arrived in his uniform at Manley's house drunk. Manley kicked him out and fired him from the army the next day. All these people are dead now, sadly. But that was a fascinating time. I was still there for several weeks. Michael used to call me and De Roulet would say, "You can't go to his house anymore." So, Michael Manley would come over to my house and sit on the front porch at six or seven o'clock in the morning. He said, "What is this? What are these things?" I said, "Well, they're all things about voting at the United Nations, oceans, and so forth." He said, "We're going to decide in the cabinet what to do about a vote." So, I would brief him on all these things. He had no background in it. He had no idea what it was all about. So, it was great fun for a few weeks. I had been there double the length of time I was supposed to have been. But it was very exciting.

*Q: Didn't De Roulet do things like forbid visa applicants from using the toilets and things of that nature - or was that someone else?*

ROGERS: There are a lot of stories about Vincent De Roulet, some of which have been embellished and unfairly so, but by and large, 2/3 of them are true. They are mostly rather petty, silly things that are hardly worth mentioning. He made a mistake when he, after that election, went back to the U.S. and said in an open session of Congress that Michael Manley had promised him that he would not nationalize the bauxite industry. That was of great interest to us because four out of the five bauxite aluminum companies in Jamaica were American (one is Canadian). I had only left a few weeks before. The government in Jamaica informed the Department of State that Vincent De Roulet was "no longer persona grata." He was not permitted to return. They always make that distinction. He wasn't PNGed; he was "no longer persona grata." What they did was very polite. They

said, "However, later, if he would like to come down on a holiday, he is always welcome." It seemed to me that he listened to the station chief, who was certainly a conservative Republican as well, and he read things as he wanted them to be, rather than the reality that they were. Incidentally, of the 52 seats that I predicted in advance and reported to the Department of State, 51 were correct. The 52nd on a recount was also correct two weeks later. That was the brother of Michael Manley, Douglas Manley.

*Q: What were you there?*

ROGERS: Chief of the Political Section.

*Q: Before Manley came in, what was the political situation in Jamaica?*

ROGERS: Since independence, it's always been parliamentary democracy, the Westminster system. When I arrived, the Jamaica Labor Party was in power. Hugh Shearer was the Prime Minister. Earlier, Michael Manley's father, Norman, had been the premier once of what was to have been a West Indies Federation of Trinidad, Tobago, all of the British Antilles, Windward Islands, Jamaica, etc. But it was so scattered and diverse that it just couldn't hold together. It didn't sustain itself and didn't work. So, the parts broke up into separate units of the Commonwealth. I remember when Michael Manley made his first speech in Parliament, when he was first elected to a seat, the Jamaica Labor Party still being in government, his father saw me and he said, "How did Michael do?" I said, "He did fine, but why didn't you go?" He said, "I didn't want to make him nervous." Norman Manley died in 1970. Michael Manley died early in 1997.

*Q: What was your impression of Manley at that time? He was rather controversial.*

ROGERS: Oh, yes. I liked him very much. He was then a labor leader, the National Worker's Union. He was called "the island supervisor" of the union. That union was mostly in sugar, but later in the bauxite alumina industry. Both political parties, the PNP and the JLP, had as their power base labor unions. One, the ILB, developed out of a labor union, BITU, and the other party, PNP, formed a labor union from itself. So, they were very work-oriented. I saw Michael many times after I left. He used to come and visit. He kept writing to me. He kept worrying about what he called his "Third World credentials." I used to argue with him that the Third World is a myth. It isn't there. It's all self-interest and puffery. But he said, "That's not true. I've been to Algeria and Cuba and these people understand that." I said, "They're taking advantage of you."

*Q: You had this time with him, but did you find that basically most of the rest of the embassy considered him beyond the pale? Was there a problem?*

ROGERS: The assumption was that he would never amount to anything. They couldn't believe it when he got elected the first time to a parliamentary seat. They couldn't believe it when his party won the general elections. "Why, this can't happen. This is a conservative government." Otherwise, the theory was that because Manley was a "socialist," our mining interests would be nationalized. They were. To put it in the terms

of the time, they were “Jamaicanized.” Curiously, when I returned from Jamaica, I was first assigned to be the desk officer for Uruguay and Paraguay and then Argentina. After some months, I was loaned back to be the Jamaica desk officer during the negotiation on the Jamaicanization of the bauxite aluminum industry. I made a number of trips back and forth to Jamaica in that regard and to the corporate headquarters of the various companies such as ALCOA. That thread of contact carried on even after I left.

*Q: Were we saying that if he were to win the minds of the nationals...*

ROGERS: That was the concern, yes. That is because bauxite in its first stage of refined powder, alumina, has no value at all until it is extruded into alumina, then to aluminum, which is done in Canada and the U.S. Bauxite has no real value in its form in Jamaica. Manley and his economic aides wanted to assign to it a “national” value. That is, to find out what the market price of tubing and sheeting would be in Toronto and Pittsburgh and then back down from that and say a certain percent of that value was what we should have. That was how they tried to change the value. Of course, the Jamaicanization and the nationalization after that meant that almost every major aspect of the economy was nationalized: tourism, hotels... The government of Jamaica did not have the manpower, the skill, and the talent to operate any of this stuff. Eventually, it was permitted to revert to the private economy.

*Q: How about tourism while you were there? Was this working well or not?*

ROGERS: It was. Just as in some parts of Washington, DC, I wouldn’t want to walk at night, or even in the day, now, certainly in the tough areas of Kingston, it was not wise for anyone to be there unless they lived there. People were desperately poor. Even though I was well-known in the ghetto, it still was terribly unsafe, even for me.

The Rastafarian cult was very interesting. The followers felt that Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who was then still living, was in fact the personification of God on Earth. They literally worshiped him. Some people who really didn't have that “calling” adopted that lifestyle, which was associated with some musicians. To understand the true nature of Haile Selassie, you had to take the “herb.” The herb is ganja, or marijuana. I think so many of them who had adopted that faith system were not particularly sincere in their ecclesiastical orientation, but wanted a little pot.

*Q: Was drug smuggling or marijuana smuggling a problem when you were there?*

ROGERS: Yes, but much less so than now. Jamaicans had been using marijuana for countless years as a medicinal supplement called “bush tea.” It was said to be good for a toothache. The toothache didn’t go away, but you didn’t feel it anymore. It was an old traditional herbal medicine.

*Q: What were you getting from the desk? Was Jamaica at all in the Cold War calculation with Cuba nearby?*

ROGERS: No, not then, but Russian ships used to visit after they visited Cuba. I actually used to go down and go on the Russian ships and visit. They were all electronic surveillance ships, no warships. They had giant masts and huge globes on the top with listening equipment on board. The personnel were very pleasant. I would come aboard, call on the captain, and give him a bottle of Jamaican rum. He would give me some phonograph records. There was no problem at all. It was after I left that the identity with Castro became so close. In fact, Castro went to Michael Manley's funeral last spring.

*Q: Back to Ambassador De Roulet, how did he get along with his staff? Did it work?*

ROGERS: By and large, they felt that he was artificially presumptuous, as if he were from a royal class that didn't exist in our country. In many respects, I really liked him in spite of himself. But he was terribly insecure, didn't know what he was doing. But he had been a spoiled, privileged person all his life. He would make fun of it, too. He would say, "I'll never forget when I first went into the Air Force and my chauffeur drove me up to the camp. The boys thought this was great. But strangely, the drill sergeant didn't think that was appropriate." He made fun of himself in those regards. I liked him. His wife was very nice. But he didn't understand that setting.

At that time, I'll never forget, Herbert Kalmbach came through. I didn't know how things worked in this way. Well, that was for De Roulet to make a contribution and then make a "wish list." How they did that was so funny. Kalmbach would say, "Write a letter to your mother or your mother in law and tell her what you would like to do next." He would take that. This was the wish list of the contributors. But you don't write to the President. You write it to your mother and he took it away. I thought it was very cute. De Roulet asked for either Paris or Madrid. It turned out that coterie went down the tubes. I remember now, he took me to see Maurice Stans, the Secretary of Commerce, in Washington. He knew those people very well, the Republican inner circle.

*Q: Until Michael Manley didn't call him.*

ROGERS: He deliberately called where he knew he was and said that he wanted to speak to me.

Initially, I didn't really like Jamaica, but it grew on me - the music, the food, the personalities of the people were just delightful. I still count them some of my very close friends and see them often. It probably is, mile for mile, the prettiest country in the world that I've ever seen.

*Q: In 1972, whither?*

ROGERS: Uruguay and Paraguay desk officer in July 1972.

*Q: This was ARA?*

ROGERS: Yes.

*Q: You had Uruguay and Paraguay. Incidentally, where does the Guay come from? Does it mean "land" in one of the languages?*

ROGERS: I don't know.

*Q: You were doing this on this desk from when to when?*

ROGERS: Probably slightly less than a year. The two important things that occurred during that time... An American public safety advisor had been captured by the Tupamaro guerrillas. I never knew him. That was one of our terrible problems. He was murdered by the Tupamaros. On my briefing trip, I went to make a call on President Stroessner. As I was coming out, Juan Peron walked in. Juan Peron was a citizen of Paraguay because when he escaped across the river some years earlier, when they were after him, Stroessner made him a citizen of Paraguay and gave him a passport.

Siracusa was ambassador to Uruguay. He was a charming fellow.

*Q: How did we view the Tupamaro movement at this time? We're talking about 1972 to 1973.*

ROGERS: As a terrorist organization. I think they made a tremendous blunder by capturing and ultimately killing this American official. That is not the way to win friends and influence people. Even though the government of Uruguay was then very repressive and rightist, as certainly was Paraguay, they didn't have that kind of problem. Paraguay's big issue then was building an enormous Iguazu dam on the Brazilian border. I went there a couple of times. It was extremely interesting. I had a wonderful boss named William Stedman, who was director of that unit. He went off to be ambassador to Bolivia and Frank Ortiz replaced him just at the time when the Jamaicanization or nationalization of the bauxite alumina industry occurred. So, I was assigned to be the Jamaica and Guyana desk officer. I worked those talks. I made trips to Jamaica to review all aspects of U.S. investments there.

*Q: You were there on the Jamaica and Guyana desk from 1973 to when?*

ROGERS: 1973 to 1974. Then, I was assigned to the only bad assignment I ever had at the request of a friend from Vietnam who had become a very senior officer in ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). He had me assigned to ACDA. It was interesting. I learned a lot about nuclear weapons proliferation, and chemical and biological warfare. But, suddenly, this mentor, who shall remain nameless, was transferred elsewhere. I was isolated high and dry. The Arms Control people who worked there had no interest in arms control at all, but quite the reverse. I was sent on a trip around parts of South America having to do with nuclear weapons proliferation. We were concerned that Brazil and Argentina were making nuclear weapons.

*Q: I've had many other people discuss this issue, so I'd like to get your view.*

ROGERS: We were really worried about that. Because I had had Latin American experience, I was assigned by ACDA to go with a physicist and another person to try to ferret this out. The trip also took us to Chile, Peru, and Mexico. Argentina and Brazil were the main targets of the trip. The concern was that they were going to buy a reactor called the Becker Nozzle System. This would permit weapons grade untraceable byproduct to come out of the reactor so that they could, without IAEA monitoring, make nuclear bombs. There is a Westinghouse similar product of similar price. We were trying to encourage them to buy not the German Becker, but the Westinghouse model which we could monitor well for a lot of reasons, partly because our engineers were supervising it. That was the main project. I was assigned to write the report on this trip and I did so. As an experienced FSO, I cleared each part of the report with the desk officer of each of the countries we visited. The then director of ACDA, Fred Iklé, sent word down that I had shown my trip report to the State Department and this was a terrible thing to do. I said, "What are you talking about? It's the same government. They have to do the work after we leave." They were furious. I was so shocked at attitude. I was in shaky condition, then. Suddenly, a call came that "We need somebody in Angola right away, because there has been a coup in Portugal. They're going to have independence in about three months. Could you go? We have all kinds of terrible problems on reporting, refugees, American citizen protection, that sort of thing." I said, "Sure, whatever is needed." I was delighted to escape ACDA. It still was an exciting and dramatic challenge. Within 36 hours, I was on my way to Angola.

*Q: This was when?*

ROGERS: I will say early September of 1975.

*Q: You were there until when?*

ROGERS: Four days before independence. That was approximately November 10, 1975.

*Q: So you were there a relative short time, but a very crucial time.*

ROGERS: Oh, yes.

*Q: What was the feeling when you went out? They said they had to get somebody out there in a hurry. What were our concerns?*

ROGERS: There were three parts to it. They needed somebody who knew the country to go out and find out what was going on in the bush and who spoke Portuguese. At the same time, there was an enormous refugee problem, airlift and sealift. They reached back in history and found out that I had a lot of sealift experience in the Navy, moving people about. I don't know if they could find anybody else or not, but they sent me. It worked out. It was very exciting and extremely dangerous. When independence was about to occur... We were phasing down. We had tremendous difficulty with our missionaries who were in danger. We had to help some of them escape. They had radios. The MPLA,

which was winning, felt quite correctly that the missionaries were sympathetic toward UNITA. I went in and helped a number of them get out. Some of them went south across the border into what is now Namibia. Some went out by air and various other ways. It was an exciting time. I went all over Angola at that time in a small one engine airplane. There were refugee movements...

*Q: Who were the refugees?*

ROGERS: The Portuguese who wanted to get out of there and go back to Portugal. There were hundreds of thousands, poor farmers, shopkeepers deep in the interior, colonists who had planned to stay there for their lives and were suddenly terribly frightened. The Portuguese government, with help from Germany, Britain, and Belgium, helped move them out. It worked out pretty well. Curiously, it was on the news (my wife heard it) that our post had closed and that we had withdrawn except that they had left one officer behind. She said, "I know who that is." It was indeed going to be me. I was supposed to stay behind with one radio man to describe the transition from independence. But I later learned that Kissinger personally said, "Don't leave anybody." I was ordered out on the very last airplane, which was a charter flight from World Airlines. We packed it with everybody. Some MPLA armed youths tried to stop some of our non-American passengers. I said that they could not be released because they were my prisoners. I got away with that! We knew it would be the last plane. When we got on the plane, the tower operator, whom I knew, came down and said, "Can I go, too?" I said, "Sure." His name was Coehla, which means "rabbit." We flew to Abidjan for refueling, then to Lisbon, and a couple of days later went to New York. Curiously, that very same airplane crashed and burned six weeks later on a runway in New York. No one was killed, but it was destroyed. I have a photo of that.

*Q: Why were we trying to keep a presence in Angola at that time?*

ROGERS: My memory of it is that because the MPLA appeared to be a communist government and would provide base rights to the USSR, we were hoping that UNITA would prevail. The U.S. and South Africa were supporting UNITA at that stage. We didn't want to recognize the MPLA government in Luanda until UNITA had taken over. I think that's historically an important building block. In fact, the South African Army got as far north as about 50 miles south of Luanda. When I was there, I drove to the port of Novo Redondo and saw the first Cuban troops come in by ship. The Cubans had several major fights with the South Africans. Eventually, the U.S. disengaged and the South Africans withdrew. Later, the South Africans again engaged the MPLA and their Cuban allies. Some years later, The USA recognized the MPLA.

*Q: How did you feel about this and what were you reporting back? Did you see an opportunity for us to stay on or was this really called from Washington as far as them trying to send a message or they were too pessimistic?*

ROGERS: My estimate is that Washington saw that the MPLA, with Cuban support was going to win - and they didn't want to have American staff there with the issue of formal

recognition. Several Americans and British mercenaries were captured. One American was executed after I left. He was from Wheaton, Maryland. The whole thing was in utter chaos at that time, really a mess. Our leadership decided everybody would leave, probably rightly so.

*Q: With the airlift and the seairlift, what were some of the problems you faced? Were there other people there during the same time?*

ROGERS: The Red Cross from Switzerland was helping. They were a marvelous help. But other than the Swiss, I don't remember anyone else. The Portuguese Red Cross helped, too. There were large camps outside of Luanda where these people would assemble deep in the interior. They would go to the army camps and then they would try to compose lists, put the families back together again before they left, but if not, ship them out and sort it out in Portugal. It was ordered confusion.

*Q: As the Portuguese pulled out, I recall dimly somebody saying that the Portuguese military deliberately turned all the arms over.*

ROGERS: That was a Portuguese Army unit in the southern Port of Moçâmedes, who turned over their weapons. A motley crew, I remember them well. In some of the barracks east of Luanda, the Portuguese were pro-MPLA. Why? Because they were "assimilated" and they wanted the MPLA to prevail. Indeed, at that time, the coup in Portugal was certainly radical socialist.

*Q: They were leftist. The officers were way over to the left, but the people in Portugal were mainly communist.*

ROGERS: Yes. So, my memory of it is, the Portuguese left arms not to just anybody, but to the MPLA, which was seen as communist. Angola became the victim of the East-West struggle that went on for another 15 years. I was given the Award for Valor for this exercise, which is a rare decoration.

*Q: It is. I'd like to get some personal accounts. Were you fired on? What was happening?*

ROGERS: I rented a car from a friend of mine who owned an automobile rental agency. There was firing on the street. I don't know if they were trying to hit me for sure, but my car was fired at. I could have been seen as a white South African. The South Africans had deeply penetrated. I suppose I look South African. But it was, in the end, a terrible tragedy. There was enormous suffering. Of course, that was just the beginning of the terrible suffering in Angola. It was utterly unnecessary. It could have been handled so much better.

*Q: What were you getting from our consulate in Luanda? How were they seeing the situation?*

ROGERS: The principal officer at that time was Tom Killoran, a wonderful, very brave

guy. He lives in Cape Cod. I hope he is still living. He got malaria while I was there and he was very weak. One of our last tasks was to destroy all the communications equipment. Tom came out with us. I haven't heard from him in a long, long time. He was very calm and relaxed and was a good leader. He gave the feeling of "everything will work out if we remain calm."

*Q: Had we made at this time any contact with the MPLA?*

ROGERS: Yes. At one stage, just before I got there, the three groups came together in Luanda and set up a committee to organize the government, except that on one fateful night, the MPLA shelled the compounds of the other two groups who had to flee to the forest again. So, only the MPLA stayed in Luanda. We knew who they were, sure. Killoran was in close touch with them.

*Q: Sometimes, you have a situation where the people on the ground (the people at the consulate) would say, "Let's stay here and work with them" and back in Washington, the concern is "This situation is beyond control. Let's get out." Was there any of that or was it pretty well agreed?*

ROGERS: I don't think our opinion was asked. We were just told to leave. For a time, it was proposed (I don't know who proposed it.) that I stay behind. Then the Secretary of State himself said, "No."

*Q: You left there in 1975. You had only been there really for a very short time.*

ROGERS: About 12 weeks.

*Q: But it was a long 12 weeks. What happened then?*

ROGERS: I became a Foreign Service inspector.

*Q: You were an inspector from 1975 to when?*

ROGERS: Probably from 1976. After I came back, I worked in AF on Angola problems and then was a Zaire desk officer for a while awaiting the arrival of the person who was assigned that job. In the spring of 1976, I became an inspector, and did that until August of 1978.

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[December 4, 1997 session]

*Q: It's 1976. You're off to be an inspector. How did that come about?*

ROGERS: I had just come back from Angola and was the Zaire country director temporarily awaiting the arrival of Ed Marks, who was going to take over. At that time I

started that particular job, it was 1976.

*Q: What was the role of the inspectors at this time? It has changed over time. Could you talk about how you saw the role and what inspectors were doing in this 1976-1978 period?*

ROGERS: We would have a team with a leader, the senior officer often, but not always, a former ambassador. We would divide the work up among various sections of the embassy and its components - political, economic, consular - those are the functions I usually looked after. Someone else would do administrative and audit work. We would also divide up looking at, if they were there, other elements of the country team to the extent that that was deemed helpful. Part of the issue, as I always saw it, was not merely fault-finding, which is not helpful, but to help people do a better job, to try to assist them in efficient and practical ways to do their work, maybe to stimulate, encourage, and cheer them up, and if they had special problems, try to address them either at post or when they got back. So, in part, it was a visit from the "home office" to try to help them do a better job, to understand their task and to get them to focus on it. The important part of the exercise was the pre-inspection mode where they had to write a few papers and think about where they were and what they were supposed to be doing. That process in itself was helpful as sort of a self-evaluation critique. Of course, very rarely, once in a great while, it would turn up some unfortunate situation which had to be addressed by perhaps sending someone home or dealing with it properly whether it was a health matter or a severe disciplinary problem or, once in a while, misconduct.

*Q: One has to in this type of thing focus on more or less the more unusual rather than the normal because the normal is you go around and make sure the files are in order and that they're doing what they're doing. But did you find on what we will call the substantive side any problems with embassies, posts, not really focusing on what they should be doing, getting more involved in internal administrative stuff and not reaching out as much? Was this ever a problem?*

ROGERS: One example was in Teheran. I was an inspector there. Just a few months before the fall of the Shah and the complicated problems that happened after that, my impression was that there were a lot of wonderful people at the embassy, but they didn't realize what was coming down the pike. There was enormous dissent in the population. We were so closely tied to the Shah, in effect, saying, "We'll let him have whatever he wants," not realizing that we all have to go one way or the other, and we did not build for the future, did not look at alternatives to the Shah. On the other hand, it was very difficult for the embassy to do that because SAVAK (the Shah's secret police, the state security service) didn't like that. I've always looked around to see what other political forces might be coming along, whether they were legitimate opposition or underground, just to try to evaluate them. I don't think we did that well in Iran. I'm not positive much better could have been done, but we certainly missed the boat.

*Q: When you were there at that time, the thing I've gotten from other interviews and also sort of general knowledge in the Foreign Service was that both the Nixon administration*

*and Ford (and it was picked up by the Carter administration) we've got to give all support to the Shah and that the Shah had more or less stated a condition that "You will not report on internal things within here unless you have my approval," or something to that effect.*

ROGERS: That is a good capsule of what I've just tried to verbalize. But still, the concept with the central government was, "If you want to know about the opposition, come and ask us. We'll tell you about it." That wasn't very practical. But there was certainly ferment just waiting for some new messianic type leader to pop up and deal with. That does underscore the reality that our people did not reach out as well as they could.

*Q: When the inspectors came, were you seeing this as a problem and discussing it with the ambassador and the Political Section?*

ROGERS: Certainly with the Political Section. I don't remember whether or not the team leader, Chuck Cross, discussed it with the ambassador. Normally, only he would do that. He would normally debrief the ambassador, who was William Sullivan at the time, a wonderful person. We went to the various posts: Shiraz, Isfahan, and Tabriz in Azerbaijan. It was extremely interesting and most useful. Even at that time, it wasn't very comfortable.

*Q: We're talking about 1978, aren't we?*

ROGERS: That's right. I started being an inspector in 1976. I inspected a number of posts before Teheran: Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, and the Republic of South Africa. That occurred in 1976. I remember that distinctly because it was the bicentennial celebration and we just happened to be in Krueger National Park on July 4, 1976. I rented a car. We were driving near Soweto and people threw rocks at the car. I thought, "That's strange. Why would they do that to me?" Then I suddenly realized, "I probably look like a nice, chunky white South African." On that particular trip, my wife, Millicent, and daughter, Kate, came along to see South Africa. They were in Pretoria. We went through Krueger National Park, which was absolutely fascinating. At that time, Bill Bowdler was ambassador in Pretoria and Bill Edmondson was his DCM. Two years later, Edmondson became the ambassador there. Incidentally, I see Bill Bowdler from time to time. We happen to live near each other in the northern neck of Virginia.

*Q: Let's go back to Teheran and then we'll come back to South Africa. You say you didn't feel very comfortable in Iran.*

ROGERS: No. There were tremendous traffic jams. Everywhere we went, we had SAVAK guards with us almost without exception. I think the only time that I didn't have some kind of bodyguard with me was when I went off to see the rug museum. But by and large, it was a cheerless place, oppressive.

*Q: How did you find the outlook of the political officer and of the others in the embassy?*

ROGERS: On a personal side, I think they lived pretty well. But again, their activities seemed to be somewhat curtailed. I think they stayed pretty much at home and just visited friends. I don't think they got out as much as they perhaps should have. Some of them later became hostages, some of those that I knew very well. But it seemed to be a restrictive atmosphere all in all. I was glad I got to see it. I just had a feeling that it was going to blow up in some way. The lid was going to come loose. Indeed, that is what happened some months later.

*Q: Had the embassy been overrun the first time when you were there?*

ROGERS: No. That happened the first time perhaps three months after we left.

*Q: Was there any question on the part of the inspectors about curtailing our activities and having a smaller embassy at that time or did it make sense?*

ROGERS: I don't recall. If I knew, I've forgotten.

*Q: We're going to go back now. In South Africa, this was during the Carter administration, which was very strong on civil rights and all. How did you find that was translated in a country that was still ruled by apartheid?*

ROGERS: During that time, they were trying to get American companies to disinvest and to isolate the country. Some of the U.S. companies did indeed cooperate with that while we were there. I remember that being a very big issue. I liked South Africa. It is a very beautiful area physically, but terribly sad the way the system worked. I remember that we had an African driver assigned to us. I realized how hard their life was when if we got back too late, he would have to stay in the embassy overnight. He couldn't go home, then. So, we became sensitive to not staying out after a certain point so he could go home. The country was very beautiful. We went to Cape Town and Durban as well. We traveled extensively throughout. William Stokes was our team leader at that time. I inspected the Political Section, among others. They were certainly committed to looking for greater democratic expression and peaceful resolution. There was a great concern that the struggle would turn out to be very brutal and bloody. That was of enormous concern. Mercifully, it wasn't quite so bad in the end.

*Q: I was in INR back in the early 1960s. When we talked about South Africa, we talked about the night of long knives. This seemed to be inevitable there.*

ROGERS: And it would have been a great tragedy. It worked out reasonably well. We're now seeing these events in the Truth Commission. So much of that is becoming general knowledge.

*Q: This is today's story about Winnie Mandela, the former wife of Nelson Mandela, and her dictatorial rule over her followers and allegations of murder and all of that.*

*Where else did you inspect on other trips?*

ROGERS: Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. That was also very interesting. I had never been to Indonesia. It was just delightful to experience an enormous country, a very diverse and different country with marvelously interesting music and theater arts (masks, shadow plays). I knew nothing about that and was just so delighted to learn.

*Q: While you were in Indonesia, Suharto had been in power about 10 years. Was there any concern about our ties with Suharto at that time?*

ROGERS: No, I don't think so. Issues of geopolitical concern included the Chinese minority which had been suppressed by the government a lot in the past and the issue over Timor and even West Irian, the western half of the island of New Guinea. We had an enormous aid program at that time. The vastness of the country - 3,000 miles long and very heavily populated - was fascinating to see. I think Indonesia is one of the countries that the U.S. generally doesn't pay too much attention to, but should.

*Q: Was there any concern while you were dealing with that whole area about Vietnam? We pulled out of there in 1975 and you were there in about 1972-1974?*

ROGERS: Approximately.

*Q: Was there any concern about communist influence spreading throughout that area at that time?*

ROGERS: No, I don't think so. But it had earlier when the massacres of the Chinese in general occurred. A lot of it was ethnic struggle. A lot had to do with communist suppression. But that happened many years before we got there.

*Q: On these inspections, how did we deal with problems such as alcoholism? Would you be briefed and on the lookout for this as a problem?*

ROGERS: We knew of one or two people who had such a problem. I must say, they were on very good behavior when we were there, being perhaps alert to that. There was one secretary along the way who had a terrible drinking problem. I did suggest her transfer and that did occur. She died shortly thereafter from cirrhosis. But that was the only one I recall.

*Q: How about what we would call today sexual harassment, was that at all on our radar?*

ROGERS: No, I was never aware of that happening. I don't think anyone gave it a thought. If someone were to mistreat someone, whatever the basis might have been, that wouldn't be tolerated, but I never was aware of any sexual harassment of any type.

*Q: Were there any other problems that you saw?*

ROGERS: As a footnote, not as an inspector, but at one post our principal officer was

notorious for patting the behinds of all the wives, so they all avoided him very quickly as they went through receiving lines. He is still living. He is a wonderful fellow. I liked him very much, but he had that strange quirk.

*Q: I've never quite understood what's in it for anybody, but anyway...*

*Were there any major problems that you saw that you and you colleagues were discussing about the structure or how the Foreign Service was performing in this period?*

ROGERS: People were terribly concerned about being selected out. Time in class was a big issue. I guess it still is. I know it still is. They felt that, "If I don't get a good assignment so that I can be noticed and, thus, have an opportunity to be rated highly, I'm doomed." So, they tried to do a good job and a useful one. My impression, at least during my career, is that Foreign Service people are certainly not lazy. They are highly committed, motivated, or they wouldn't be in this profession. There were a few people who weren't wedded to the Foreign Service who didn't quite have that motivation, but my impression is that they all did their very best.

*Q: You were an inspector during the Carter administration, which placed quite a premium on human rights. Was it part of your portfolio to go out and make sure that the posts were working on human rights, reporting on it? There was a certain reluctance initially with this.*

ROGERS: That's right, but it was pointed out that it wasn't optional. It was a legislative requirement to fulfill this and you have to do it because it's a major component of the Annual Civil Rights Report to the Congress, which curiously, I was the editor for in 1979 under Patt Derian.

*Q: What was the reaction you were finding at posts?*

ROGERS: Some people said, "That's interesting and we'll do it" and some said, "Well, it's not important." I said, "Whether it is or not, we have to do it and we have to do it thoroughly in every respect. There is a checklist that you have to go through. You can't just say everything is fine. You have to report line by line on this checklist of every aspect of the human rights envelope and that includes positive reporting. We're not just looking at it to be critical. Yes, they're doing well in topic A, but in topic B, because of centuries-old tradition, certain things happen in this culture this way. You don't have to preach about it, but just try to analyze why things are the way they are." This usually had to do with the treatment of women in terms of access to education and jobs. We did try to get them to focus accurately and candidly.

*Q: Were you getting people saying, "Yes, if we report on this, this will be published and this is going to cause us problems with the government because it's sort of gratuitous pointing out their flaws, which will be made public knowledge and therefore it will be harder for us to work?"*

ROGERS: I did get that. The answer was "You don't know what the final report is going to say" when it goes through the country director editing, and then, the Bureau of Human Rights itself will put it into context. It may or may not come out the way you prepared it. You just have to conscientiously do your best. On the other hand, if this is the way you feel about something, it may be beneficial for that country to read about how others see them. So, I think we were able to get them to focus on it. This was always a key interest area of mine. I certainly stressed that.

*Q: While you were an inspector, you also became involved in the politics of the Department of State, is that right, with AFSA (American Foreign Service Association, the trade union and professional organization of most of the foreign affairs agencies at that time)?*

ROGERS: I was a Governing Board member of AFSA for four years from 1976 to June of 1979. I ran for office and was not elected the first time, but a person who was elected to be a governor, a State representative, Alan Lukens, was suddenly transferred to Denmark. As I had the next number of votes, though that is not necessarily a criteria, I was put in his place. While I was in South Africa, the then vice president of AFSA was transferred overseas, and I was made vice president for about a year and a half.

*Q: During this period, what were the major issues?*

ROGERS: Negotiating performance evaluation criteria, the standards that selection boards would look at in order to rank order officers and staff on the basis of relative merit and how to define what that means. I worked many, many hours on drafting those guidelines and negotiating them. Additionally, the guidelines for selection out for cause and for low ranking. Totally separate criteria were used. This was an ongoing process. Each year, management would propose a change and we might or might not accept it. Those were the so-called bread and butter issues, but it was terribly important how a person was rank ordered. Of course, no matter how wonderful you might be, if there are no vacancy opportunities, there is no promotion. One of the great issues that I worked on was the Foreign Service Act that is currently in place. I worked on that a great deal. I remember the first discussion we had with senior management at the time, including Secretary of State Vance. They were going to call it the Foreign Service Reform Act. I said right at the beginning, "Please don't use the word reform. The implication is that these are juvenile delinquents and they need reformation. Just say 'The Foreign Service Act.'" Vance said, "That is a good idea." So, I made that one small historic contribution. One other fellow said, "Let's call it 'The Improvement Act.'" I said, "No, no, just make it neutral: the Act, not imply anything about reform." Part of that was, by executive order, the trade union representative for most of the foreign affairs agencies, not all (AFGE, the American Federation of Government Employees) represented one at that time). But part of the legislation was to, by statute, make an organization (It didn't specify AFSA) the collective bargaining unit by law, not just by executive order. So, that was beneficial. Each foreign affairs agency could, within its own constituency, elect the representative they wanted. Then, AFSA or AFGE would represent the entire workforce, not just those who happened to belong to the trade union representative. That is very important because

you can't just say, "We'll only represent those who pay their dues or happen to be members." That would not do. So, we had constant meetings on all kinds of issues. They were very useful. We generally were able to do it in a collegial way, even though it was inherently competitive. Management had a view and we argued it was always to do what's best for the employee, officer or not officer, as best we could. This was the epic that John Hemenway became the president. Many, many months later, a referendum recall vote, removed him, and Patricia A. Woodring, a lovely lady, became president. I could have, Lars Hydle could have, several others could have, but that would have looked so bad that we were in combat on this and she was not. I gave Pat a beautifully carved gavel that I had picked up in Indonesia to start her presidency.

Then, I was encouraged to run for president in 1979. Strangely, it was a three way race. Kenneth Bleakley won. Another fellow and I drew pretty much from the same pool of employees. He was a labor officer. I was essentially a political officer, though I had been a consular officer as well. We both drew from the sort of middle of the group. Shortly after that election, that fellow dropped dead of a heart attack. Kenneth Bleakley's position was rather more elitist and he and some others had this concept of flow through, which means "Everybody who is senior to me, get him out quickly so I can rise to the top." They had this concept of excellence. I said, "Everybody can't be excellent." They accused me of being "the champion of the mediocre." I said, "Well, I'll accept that because most of us are sort of mediocre. We are all more or less in the middle. Sometimes the people who are self-appointed people of great excellence are full of beans anyway, full of self-importance and self-selecting."

The one thing I fought very hard against at that time was the career window issue, which was critically important. People didn't seem to understand that. While you may elect to open your competition availability during the six-year stretch, you have no idea no matter how well you do what the size of the Service is going to be at that time. So, you're betting against a stacked deck. How beautifully you might do and be a grand, brilliant, super performer is of no use if there are few promotion opportunities. You're gone in six years. I did get management to build into the legislation, at the option of the Secretary of State, the opportunity to change that without going back to the Congress, saying, "He or she, the Secretary of State, can direct that the career window opportunity length of time can be changed upward only, depending on supply and demand." This did get into the legislation. Regrettably, as far as I know, up to today, no one has taken advantage of it and used it. Thus, we see this tremendous slaughter of wonderful people before their time.

*Q: One of the things that struck me at that time was something referred to obliquely, that one of the driving political forces within the union, AFSA, was relatively young, quite effective officers at the middle grades, mostly political officers, who mainly just wanted to get rid of everybody so they could get to the top. All of a sudden, they would become the dead wood as soon as they got to the top.*

ROGERS: In my position, it was that the organization has a duty to all of the constituency, including members and non-members alike, to do the best for the

employees, not for a coterie of elitists that they claimed to be. We're all going to flow through eventually and our duty is to everyone, to protect them.

*Q: You were in a position to look hard at this group. It seemed to be a rather closed group.*

ROGERS: These were people who became staff assistants to people, the seventh floor principals, often people who were really very bright and very articulate, but not necessarily managers or anything else of that nature. They just knew how to please their superiors more than anything else. They looked pretty, too. They were usually well groomed.

Most people are, I hope. But I think that's right. I remember several of them being staff assistants. Bleakley certainly was to then Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, Holbrooke, whom I knew in Vietnam. But he is retired now, too. As I say, the key issue was the matter of the very best and the brightest, as they claimed to be, getting ahead. But the best and the brightest will always get ahead anyway, in principle, unless something tragic happens. But we had the duty to look after the grand mass. I lost that election. At that time, I was working in the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and did enjoy that job very much.

*Q: I'd like to come back to the period of Hemenway. What was your experience? As I recall, John Hemenway came in and he had actually been selected out of the Foreign Service, which was a very unusual occurrence anyway (There isn't much selection out of the Foreign Service.). He came in sort of as a minority candidate and appealed to the disgruntled or something. He came in with really the agenda to destroy the Foreign Service and, quite frankly, was looked upon as kind of a nut, paranoid and all that. Could you discuss this?*

ROGERS: Sure. He had a coterie of friends and supporters, all of whom had tragedies in their lives or felt that they had been misserved or ill-served, in many cases, with some justification. John Hemenway seemed to have almost a vendetta to cause chaos and problems - utterly unnecessary. We used to have remarkable battles in the boardroom. At that time, DACOR used to assign or appoint if someone was willing to be the retired representative on the AFSA board. Now, it's an elected position. Glenn Wolfe was a vigorous fighter and a very active retiree member. One day, John Hemenway got so vexed with him that he hit him over the head with a pitcher of water. This was a bizarre event that was just unforgivable. Wolfe was 80 or 90 years old, a sweet fellow. Eventually, Hemenway became so destructive that we mounted a recall petition. Bill Trueheart was a great help in that, along with many other marvelous and good folks, almost all retired. We had big meetings in the State Department about it and tremendous stress over it all. Two lawsuits popped up because of it. Both were eventually thrown out, as they did not formulate a rational cause of action, but they still cost us a lot of time and effort to defeat them. I think that Hemenway did appeal to many people who felt that they hadn't been appreciated, maybe with good reason, or sometimes people remember selectively (They remember that they did a wonderful job, but they kind of forget the

screwups.). Some of the people were almost mesmerized by Hemenway. In the end, he left and became a taxi driver and went to Howard University Law School. About once a year, I accidentally see him. I say, "Hello, John, how are you doing?" He was very cranky and I said, "Oh, John, stop living in the past. Forget the past. Brighten up. There is another day ahead." He grumbles. He just can't get over it. I say, "John, you are planning the past. Forget it. It's a sad epic. Cheer up and get on with your life." It was a sad epic and a lot of energy misspent. I once got an efficiency report and the report writer said, "He does a lovely job at his work, but he spends far too much time on AFSA." That was a poison pill. You can't say that anymore.

*Q: You had somebody who really represents a small group of very unhappy people, but one of the functions of the AFSA president is to appear before Congress, talking on various things, foreign affairs, etc. Often, it's really the head of the American professional Foreign Service establishment talking to the Foreign Relations Committee or something like that. How did this work out with somebody who was coming from a different perspective?*

ROGERS: We did have a number of hearings on various subjects, all on personnel issues and the Foreign Service Act. Either Lars Hyde or I made the presentations. I don't remember Hemenway ever doing that. I remember very well that Claiborne Pell, a senator from Rhode Island, who, coincidentally, I met in Vietnam many years earlier, was keenly interested. He asked me about what was going on. I briefed him on it. Claiborne Pell's college roommate was the first person killed in Vietnam. His name was Albert Peter Dewey. For many years, they didn't know where he was buried. When I was in Saigon, I had been there just a little while and was the only officer in the Consular Section when Claiborne Pell and his group were in Laos. Mike Mansfield was the leader of that trip. They sent a cable from Laos to Saigon relating to their visit. There was a little footnote, "By the way, see if you can find the grave of Albert Peter Dewey, Claiborne Pell's college roommate." It was routinely sent to the Consular Section. I didn't know that no one knew, but I stirred around with a French friend who was a dear neighbor. He came up with a French Vietnamese Catholic priest, who said, "Oh, yes, I remember that. Come on, I'll show you where he's buried." Then he gave me a copy of his death report. We actually found the grave. When Claiborne Palled came, I took him to the grave and showed him where it was. He was so thrilled to find it. This priest's name was Tri Core. He gave me his report of this whole incident. He had taken the body. There was a false report that he had been decapitated, but he wasn't. So, I sent that report to Peter Dewey's father and brother, who were both living at the time. They were very pleased to know that. I also sent photographs of the grave.

*Q: During the time you were with AFSA during this period from 1977-June 1979, did AFSA get involved at all in sex discrimination, racial discrimination, anything of this nature?*

ROGERS: Not that I recall. We had one issue about an FSO who became blind. He wanted to get a helper to help him do his work. We were supportive of him. He is still living.

*Q: Was he later ambassador to Mauritius?*

ROGERS: Yes.

*Q: I've interviewed him.*

ROGERS: He is retired. He lives in the middle west.

*Q: He was here in Washington for a while.*

ROGERS: So, that was an illustration of a special effort we made.

*Q: You were with the Bureau of Human Rights from 1979 until when?*

ROGERS: I was in the National War College class of 1978-1979. When that ended (and I was very active in AFSA then, too.), I was assigned to the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to be the editor of the Annual Human Rights Report. Patricia Derian, a lovely lady, was the Assistant Secretary. A lot of people found her controversial. I found her fabulous. I loved her.

*Q: I'm interviewing her.*

*Why don't we cover the War College? What was your impression, what did you get out of it?*

ROGERS: I loved it! Having been a naval officer earlier was not such a big switch for me. I had worked on the Joint Staff before in CINCLANT. I enjoyed it very much. I got on exceedingly well with the members of the armed forces and just learned a lot. I enjoyed every day of it. My wife took many courses that were available to spouses. I remember, we all had to write a big theme paper. I selected "Can China Feed Herself," which I thought was a good question at the time. Our field trip was absolutely fabulous. It was the first official trip to the People's Republic of China since George Marshall's trip in the forties. The trip included two or three from each of the main services: Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, State, and CIA. Peter John De Vos and I were the two from State. We had a wonderful trip through China at a time when it was just emerging from the Great Cultural Revolution. The faculty member who went with us had written a book about the Great Cultural Revolution, so we had expertise with us. Having worked in various capacities all around the rim of China for many years, I always was interested getting in there, but never had. We went to Shanghai, Beijing, saw the wonderful tourist scenes such as the Great Wall, down to the North Korean border at Antung, and Nanjing. They used to say, "What would you like to do?" We used to sit around and I would say, "Let's give them something tough to see if they'll let us do this. Let's ask them to see Mao Tse Tung's cadaver because the mausoleum has been closed." "Oh, he's not on view at the moment." I said, "Wait a minute. Mobutu Sese Seko is coming to town. Are you going to show it to him?" "Yes." "Well, let us go in after him." "Oh, well..." Then they came back

the next day and said, "Okay, we'll do it." So, Mobutu went in and then our little group trudged along after he came out. We asked to see the air raid shelters under Beijing and they showed us those. I said, "Let's see... How about we visit a submarine?" "Oh, you can't see a submarine. That's off limits." But later they took us to the Shanghai naval base and took us down in a Chinese submarine. It was a pretty rickety looking old diesel. I wouldn't want to go to sea in it. I don't think it was particularly seaworthy. It was fascinating just to visit.

Then we went to Guangzhou (Canton) and out through Hong Kong. Jack Kubisch, who is still living in South Carolina, was the State faculty representative. I knew him in ARA when he was Assistant Secretary there. His staff aide then was Pete De Vos, who went with him to Greece when he became ambassador there. Pete De Vos replaced me in Angola, so we went back a long, long way. He has just retired. He has had a fabulous career, and ambassador to five countries.

The War College experience was delightful. I am very grateful that we were able to do that. Some people resist senior training, say, "Oh, that takes you out of the competition group," but I think it was worth it.

*Q: You went to the Bureau of Human Rights in 1979 and you were there until about when?*

ROGERS: Until I went to Morocco in July of 1980.

*Q: What were you doing in the Bureau of Human Rights?*

ROGERS: My main task was to take these reports from all the posts in the world and then try to make them into a coherent, readable format. Often, I would have to cable back for more information for delinquent reports. It was exceedingly interesting. I learned so much about countries I knew nothing about. Then I had to work the report through the country director, though not necessarily to "clear" it. Sometimes, they didn't like it and I said, "Well, that's the way it is." Sometimes, they would say, "Can't you put a little more balance here and there?" We tried to be very objective. I was very strict about it. So was Patt Derian. Some of the posts did a much better job than others which required a great deal of editorial work. It was not just compiling what everybody sent in. It had to be sensible. Patt Derian and I went to the Congress when the report was delivered, to testify. That was a rewarding event. I remember, there was an editorial in the New York Times about it. It was very complimentary about its candor. I received a letter from Warren Christopher complimenting that product.

*Q: He was the Under Secretary of State at that time.*

ROGERS: Yes. I had never met him, but he wrote me a lovely letter.

*Q: First, could you talk about Patt Derian, how she operated and what you were hearing from your colleagues within the State Department about her?*

ROGERS: I just adored her from the start. She and I were on the same humanitarian wavelength. I had earlier been a social worker. My whole orientation made it a perfect fit. I was offered at the same time a good job in the Bureau of Narcotics. I went with Patt Derian and just had a wonderful time doing that. I helped with other aspects of the office as well, but my main task was the Human Rights Report. She was fascinating. She was keenly interested in important issues in Chile at the time and just wouldn't let go. She was very vigorous and forceful.

Richard Holbrooke was then Assistant Secretary of East Asia and the Pacific. He sent to Patt Derian a memo complaining about the draft of some of the countries in his portfolio which were highly critical on the human rights and rightly so. But he made a comical mistake. He wrote the memo to Patrick Derian. With great enthusiasm, she took a green pen and wrote on it, "Try the Irish embassy. No Patricks here" and sent it back to him. I thought that was a great show of charm and good humor.

*Q: I would have thought that there would have been a whole lot of emotion and very difficult bureaucratic wrangling over a couple of things: one, the British in Northern Ireland and, even more so, the most sensitive one, which is Israel and its treatment of its political prisoners and the Palestinians. Can you comment on those particular ones?*

ROGERS: The Israel Desk might as well have been part of the Knesset. It was just blindly devoted to the cause of Israel and didn't want to have any unkind, objective words. They resisted, but we wrote it up exactly as it was about their rough handling of Palestinians in many respects in prisons, as well as out on the street. That stuff all got in, nicely phrased, but quite accurate in my view.

I don't recall the UK desk commenting harshly about that at all. I knew the country director for the UK, who died about two years ago, but he didn't resist. That all got in. Clientism was always an issue with some people who identified too much with the country with which they were working. That is a natural, though unfortunate, frailty sometimes in the Foreign Service. "Oh, you can't say anything bad about the country I'm working for." But, you have to take your castor oil. It's not optional. The Congress has mandated that we will write this report.

*Q: Did you find that you were getting any pressure from the very strong pro-Israeli group in the United States and in Congress, too?*

ROGERS: A couple of organizations wanted an advance copy, but I refused to give them out. You just can't do that. It's unthinkable until it's delivered to the Congress. What they wanted to do was get a hold of it and use various tactics to get it watered down or made into bland pat.

*Q: Who wanted this?*

ROGERS: I think it was the B'nai B'rith League or the Hillel Foundation, one of those

groups or both.

*Q: How about staff members of Congress? Was anybody imparting to you the concern that we didn't want to be too rough on the Israelis?*

ROGERS: No.

*Q: How did Patt Derian feel about this? This is so politically sensitive in the United States.*

ROGERS: They may have directly and privately contacted her. I have no knowledge of that. But she was very, as far as I'm concerned, objective, balanced, and would not contenance any interference. I'm not aware of any diluting of any report that I prepared because of any outside influence.

*Q: Other than Britain and Israel, were there any other reports that caused at least difficulty for you?*

ROGERS: I can't remember now. There may have been.

*Q: Korea?*

ROGERS: Chile and Argentina. Those were both tough reports. But I knew the southern part of Latin America pretty well from my earlier assignments, so that was helpful. I had been in all those countries. Other than Israel, I don't remember any effort to change... It may have happened and it just didn't get to me. I was told, "Do it accurately and fairly." We also got some information separately from Amnesty International because they also had some helpful material. I would not accept it as accurate until I would go back to the embassy for confirmation or comment. So, we would feed that back. Sometimes it was confirmed. Sometimes the response was that we just don't know.

*Q: By this time (1979/1980), were you of the impression that you were part of a movement that was beginning to focus on a world basis on human rights abuses?*

ROGERS: I certainly did and I was very pleased to be a part of it. It was most memorable. I think it was an important period in the awakening. Patt Derian was very strong. I think President Carter let her do her own thing and he was most supportive. At that time, her husband, Hodding Carter, was the press secretary to the Secretary of State.

*Q: I can think of one thing where just from a purely tactical point of view, not from the clientitis or anything else, but during this period that you're talking about, we had 50 or 60 hostages in Iran. Obviously, there were human rights abuses and everything else in Iran at that time. I would have thought there would have been some concern because of the situation of not putting gasoline on the fire. Did we just take the human rights off the agenda?*

ROGERS: I'm going to have to try to reconstruct that. I think that they were out by the time...

*Q: No. The hostages left in January 1981 on Inauguration Day. I have some vague recollection that the report was either put in the deep-freeze or something. Of course, we didn't have an embassy there to write it up.*

ROGERS: A complete report on Iran is in the text at page 744-749. It is tough and not watered-down. I prepared it.

*Q: If you could find out what happened and you can add it when you have this for editing. I think it is an important thing to understand on these reports.*

*What was Patt Derian's management technique? How did she operate?*

ROGERS: She was very cheerful, friendly, and warm. There were colorful people in that office who came in with the administration, all very nice. Perhaps one or two were eccentric. But it gave a lot of flavor to the office. I enjoyed it.

*Q: I would have thought the one problem that you might have is people coming out of the generation of the 1960s and having some people who were crusaders, with no compromise, no understanding of the diplomatic niceties, and a certain amount of a lack of balance. Did you have problems with that?*

ROGERS: In that office, there were only two FSOs: Charles Salmon and myself. He later became ambassador to Laos. In fact, I was offered his job when he left by Patt Derian, but my eight years were up in the U.S. and I had to go overseas. I think that some people in other bureaus were very upset with Patt Derian. They felt that she was rocking the boat and didn't have an overall geopolitical understanding of the Cold War. Of course, she did. That was her job, to do that. They were quite separate in many respects, but she didn't let that bother her. Somebody had to do it and it might as well have been her. Sure, a lot of the middle rank officers in the Foreign Service thought this was not a useful and good thing to be doing. Human rights? What's that? Fortunately, she stuck to her guns and kept going. I was very proud of working in that office.

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*Q: Today is December 15, 1997. At the end of June 1980, you went off to Morocco. You were in Morocco until when?*

ROGERS: To July 1985.

*Q: Wow. Was this just a regular assignment or had you sought it? How did it come about?*

ROGERS: It was one of many listed and it sounded interesting. I was then in the Bureau

of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. I bid on that one. I had to go overseas. I had been in the States eight years. It sounded exceedingly interesting. It was just routinely assigned.

*Q: Did you have any feeling that you were on somebody's shit list for being in the Bureau of Human Rights?*

ROGERS: That is theoretically possible. Somebody could have been annoyed because I wrote about the country for which they had great affection or concern. I thought that would be a nice assignment.

*Q: I would think it would be a very good assignment. I was just wondering whether places like the Middle East were out of bounds because of the human rights reports.*

ROGERS: I wasn't aware of that. Of course, I didn't speak Arabic, so a significant assignment in the Middle East wasn't realistic.

*Q: What was your job in Morocco?*

ROGERS: I was principal officer in Tangier responsible for that portion of Morocco which used to be Spanish Morocco, everything from the Atlantic almost to the Algerian border. I had five large provinces plus, for interesting reasons, Gibraltar and the five Spanish so-called "places of sovereignty" in northern Morocco: Ceuta, Melilla, the Charafina Islands, Pena de Gomez, and Al Huceima.

*Q: When you arrived there, what was the situation in your consular district?*

ROGERS: My predecessor had already left, and retired to Florida. I never did know him. The main problems at that time were mostly consular, but some political reporting. The consular problems were mainly associated with young Americans getting in trouble with drugs, which is true in many, many areas of the world and particularly so there. Kif (converted hashish) was readily available. Folks would sell it to young Americans and get a reward from the police for turning them in. It was just a vicious cycle. Moroccan jails were not attractive. They were really hard. I had visited a Moroccan jail while in the Navy when I went there in 1953 waiting for a plane to take me to my ship. I was asked to go see a U.S. Navy enlisted man who had murdered somebody. He was in the French prison in what was then called "Port Lyautey." It now has a different name, Kenitra. I went into this enormous prison deep underground. There he was. He was a medical corpsman, so they put him to good use in their hospital ward. It was interesting that many years later, I went back and visited jails in Morocco.

*Q: Tangier had the reputation for being a place where you had a really dissolute foreign society of British and other remittance men and women and sort of a wild sexual life and so on. Had those days gone?*

ROGERS: No, there was still a little of that, but I think their wild days had long been

over. They were pretty old by then. But some very famous people lived there. Paul Bowles lived across the street from us. We were good friends. There was a handful of other minor luminaries in the literary world. Paul was the most interesting.

*Q: What were Paul's works?*

ROGERS: "The Sheltering Sky" was one. There were many, many others. He was a very pleasant and rather frail man. He was always interesting. He was married to Jane Bowles [Note: Bowles died in 1999], who died some months before we arrived, so I never knew her. She had a literary following of her own. But obscure American literary talent was never of great interest to me, except a few of the Beatniks that I happened to meet in the early 1950s, such as Jack Kerouac and Alan Ginsberg.

Tangier also had the old legation diplomatic property. It is now a museum, still operated by the Foreign Buildings of the Department of State. It is a beautiful old place of maybe 50 rooms on Zankat America. It was the gift of a sultan in about 1820. It is a museum operated by the Tangier American Legation Museum Society. Ben Dixon is the U.S. agent. That was an interesting small aspect of it, to help keep that running.

One major responsibility was Gibraltar. Access from Spain to Gibraltar did not exist. It was closed until 1984. Therefore, because no American consul from Spain could have access to it, theoretically it was the responsibility of London. Nonetheless, we did it from Tangier because we were neither British nor assigned inside Spain, so it worked out very nicely.

We had major ship visits. That was another huge project. Tangier is at the Straits of Gibraltar. When major units of the Mediterranean Fleet would transit in and out, they would stop at the Straits of Gibraltar, exchange various things, and go their opposite way. Years ago, I had known on a submarine a fellow who then became the Chief of Naval Personnel. I wrote to him and said, "Why don't you have them come in and stay, buy a rug and have some fun?" So, many, many ship visits occurred while I was there. His name is Lando Zech. He later became head of the Atomic Energy Commission (The Nuclear Regulatory Commission). So, we enjoyed those visits. It was a good break for the Navy instead of going straight back. They could bring some souvenirs home. At one time with one visit, we had the largest ever group of nuclear powered warships ever in one post at one time. Normally, that doesn't happen because they are such an enormous target. We had four cruisers and two aircraft carriers and two submarines all at once. All were nuclear powered. It was such an interesting event that the Chief of Naval Operations came from Washington to visit. We had a reception at our government residence for him, the Commander of the Sixth Fleet, the officers of the various ships, and the senior naval officer of COMSOUTH. It was a lot of fun for all.

When I arrived, Angier Biddle Duke was ambassador. I really appreciated him. He did such a wonderful job. He, tragically, was killed while rollerblading in New York last year. Marvelous person. He was very, very kind to me. He was replaced by Joseph Verner Reed. Just before Joseph Reed arrived, my wife became critically ill. She

contracted a disease called "Guillain Barré," which is named after two French doctors who identified it. She became totally paralyzed from the neck down. A local doctor said it could be polio. Unlikely. She had had a polio vaccination. But he said, "You have to get her on a ventilator." I said, "Okay, get one over here." He said, "None exists in northern Morocco, not one. No hospital has one." So, I put her into a car and drove her to Rota, Spain, which had a good naval hospital. She was there for a long, long time. So, Joseph Reed, whom I had never met, called me up in the hospital and said, "What do you want to do? Do you want to go home or stay there and tough it out?" I said, "I'll stay here." I stayed with her in Spain for some weeks. He said, "Fine, we'll do what you want." While I was in Rota, a telegram chases me down. It said, "Do you have any objections of being named chief of mission in Guinea Bissau?" I said, "Sorry, I can't do it." So, that was the end of that. I thought it was weird that Guinea Bissau - GB - and Guillain Barré - GB... She suffered terribly. It was just miserable for her for many, many weeks. Then she spent many months in a wheelchair. Mercifully, today she is in very good shape, although a bit frail. We eventually got her back to Morocco. Happily, because we lived right next to the office, I could go back and forth and check on her during the day.

*Q: How did you find dealing with the Moroccan officials?*

ROGERS: No problem, quite pleasant. They were enormously cooperative. When I showed an interest in a particular person, we had quick access. Sometimes, they let people off a little bit easily if they were young and stupid if they promised not to come back (I'm talking about the hashish nonsense.). I never had difficulty. I became very good friends with many of the officials. Similarly with Gibraltar. I reported on the internal elections of Gibraltar. The elections have always been fascinating to me. I predicted that after many, many years, finally a new person would be elected Chief Minister, of a totally different party: Joe Bossano, an obscure dock worker/labor leader. He was allegedly a communist. I said, "Well, we're going to work on that." With the blessing of Embassy London, I got him on a travel grant around the States. His escort officer was Perry Stieglitz, a retired USIA officer. Bossano did become Chief Minister. He embraced democracy and capitalism. Perry Stieglitz is now and has been for some years the representative of Gibraltar in the United States. Fun story.

*Q: How did Spanish sovereignty in these little enclaves work at that time?*

ROGERS: Two were significant: Cesta and Mellowly. For years, there has been tension, enormous combat in the 1920s between Morocco and Spain in northern Morocco. A lot of fictional stories and movies have been produced about them, but they are 80% nonsense. When Spain gave up northern Morocco to Moroccan sovereignty, many thousands of Spaniards who lived in northern Morocco migrated to Cesta and, to a lesser extent, Mellowly. So, they still have very important relations. They are free ports. They have very strong military emplacements there. It would be very tough for the Moroccans ever to take those two. On the others, Pena de Gomez is a peninsula with a tiny fortress, a small chapel, 16 soldiers, and one sergeant. At high tide, it is an island. It has been there for centuries. All these places were originally Portuguese. The Portuguese and Spanish

crowns merged. They became Spanish and have remained so ever since. The Charafina Islands... There are three. One is a cemetery and the other two are just a few fishermen. That is very near the Algerian border, visible from the shore. The other interesting one is the island fortress of Al Huceima, which is in the Bay of Al Huceima. It looks like an old stone battleship. You can visit all of those places if you want to by taking a small vessel from Cesta, which makes its mail run.

*Q: Were the Moroccans making noises about taking them over or did they really care?*

ROGERS: I think they didn't care. It's income generating. Cesta and Mellowly are free ports. No one can enter those other places at all except by sea. When Spain would make a lot of noise about reversion of Gibraltar, Morocco would say, "Oh, we can't have the same sovereign nation state on both sides of the Straits of Hercules. Thus, the British better stay there." Yes, they would rattle sabers, maybe every few years, but no one ever took it seriously. They are all charming places and well worth a visit.

*Q: In that area, was there pressure from the Algerians within your consular district?*

ROGERS: No, there was no pressure, but there was minor smuggling on the frontier, just local tradesmen selling mostly local products (food and beverage) across the frontier. I did have one interesting incident on that border. I had a call from the embassy saying, "Please get in your car and go to the Algerian border. You will be allowed to cross the border and you will pick up somebody and take him to Rabat." I said, "Who?" They said, "When you see him, you'll know him." So, I zipped over there, crossed the border, sat in the customs area on the Algerian side, and in walked Vernon Walters. I knew who he was. Everybody knows his face. I drove him to Rabat. When he arrived, we got across the border and he said, "I am so glad to be with a safe driver." Apparently, the Algerian police had driven very fast. He said, "There must be something very important done first." I said, "Yes, Sir. What?" He said, "Take me to breakfast." I took him to breakfast. I said, "What is this important thing we have to do?" He said, "We just did it: breakfast!" He was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed him. He was a great storyteller of endless comic tales. If there was such a guy as THE raconteur, it is Vernon Walters. I took him to Rabat and we have been friendly ever since.

*Q: Where does he live now?*

ROGERS: Arlington.

*Q: Did Libya in its confrontation with the United States ever intrude on what you were doing?*

ROGERS: When the shutdown in the so-called "Death Zone" between Benghazi and Tripoli in the Gulf of Sidra occurred, the Moroccans were thrilled. They thought that was great. That showed power. During this time, and to a lesser extent today, the Algerians strongly supported the Polisario and what was the Spanish Sahara. That struggle was going on all the time I was there. I believe it is in the cease-fire stage now and a plebiscite

to be administered by the United Nations, the key issue being who really is a Polisario person, who is a resident, voter eligible in Western Sahara. Some say that Algeria wanted access to the Atlantic, which would have been a strategic concern and something that, thus, with the Eastern Bloc would have access to the Atlantic for obvious value reasons. That no longer matters. As with so many of these things, the hot items faded into ashes when the Cold War cooled down. Joseph Verner Reed was a fascinating ambassador.

*Q: What was his background?*

ROGERS: He was a senior official in Chase Manhattan Bank, a big Republican supporter. He was very close to David Rockefeller, who often visited. He was a very gracious person. He would travel a lot, worked very, very hard. Many people found him too colorful, but I found him delightful. David Rockefeller was not colorful. He was very bland and quiet. Joseph Reed was very flamboyant and full of endless ideas and designs. When he left in 1985, he took a job for the administration at the United Nations as Under Secretary for Political Affairs on the UN staff. George Bush had visited Morocco, and they were good friends. When George Bush became President, Joseph Reed became Chief of Protocol. At the end of that assignment, he went back to the UN and has had several different jobs there. He still has more or less a protocol historical job at the rank of Under Secretary.

*Q: Where does he hang out now?*

ROGERS: He has a home in Greenwich, Connecticut and also an apartment in New York City.

*Q: One of the things that I've gotten through these interviews has been that there seems to be a slight pattern. That is, our Arabic-speaking career ambassadors who have gone to Morocco usually don't get along too well with King Hassan, whereas our political appointees get to the point where they're practically talking about "our King." They become very defensive about Morocco and King Hassan. These are the stories. I have never served there. He much prefers people who are more amenable to identifying with Morocco from the ambassadors than sort of a cold-eyed professional. With Reed, did you see any of this overidentification with Moroccan interests or not?*

ROGERS: I think he saw Morocco and King Hassan [Note: King Hassan died in 1999] as good friends of the U.S., very helpful in delicate matters, especially in regard to Israel, and as a good counterbalance to the more radical Arab nation states. It is interesting historically to turn the clock back a few centuries. Morocco was the only country in North Africa that wasn't conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Turks stopped at what is now the Algerian border. They were defeated there and never went in. Thus, my theme is that Morocco is different from all the others that had this overlay of Turkish hegemony and is very proud of that. Of course, they have a very ancient civilization. Fez was founded in about 600. There is a very ancient university there. It is relatively tolerant of westerners and has vigorously suppressed the sharp fundamentalist inroads. When I was there in 1984, there was severe rioting in several parts of Morocco. Some of the

worst was in Tetouan, which was in my consular district. I drove over there. The Moroccan gendarmes were machinegunning groups from helicopters. It was a general revolt that was sharply suppressed. And brutally. It didn't get too much press play.

*Q: What was the reason for the revolt?*

ROGERS: My memory is that it was a number of things. One was a reduction in a subsidy on basic foodstuffs (tea, sugar, oil, and flour), which meant that real market prices jumped radically and right away. That was the straw that broke this camel's back. There were other issues, such as suppression of various elements that wanted a different system, probably some aspects of religious fundamentalism, too.

*Q: I think it was 1982 when there was the invasion of Lebanon by Israel and the expulsion of the PLO from Beirut. It was a full-scale war between the PLO, the Lebanese, and Israel. How did that play when you were there in Morocco?*

ROGERS: Let's have a little background. Many of the Moroccan families of prominence for six or seven hundreds years had lived in southern Spain. When the "conquest" occurred, they moved back into northern Morocco. At the same time roughly, Queen Isabel kicked the Jews out of Spain.

*Q: 1492 is when they were expelled.*

ROGERS: Yes. Many of those Jews went to Morocco. There are synagogues all over. Most of the artisans and book binders were Jews who were not Arabized, but had lived in the Andalusian context with the Moroccans and had been there for centuries. Now go up to 1982. There was a big reaction against Jewish centuries old residents. The rabbi in Tangier was stoned and hurt on the street because of that incident you're talking about. There was a lot of unrest. As a result, many of the Jews in Morocco who had a long, long heritage moved - some to Israel, some to Toronto, where there must be some kind of an extended family of Moroccan Jews in Toronto. Some went to the U.S.

*Q: Did you find yourself dealing with the governors of the provinces put sort of on the stand regarding our relations with Israel?*

ROGERS: Not at all.

*Q: It just didn't come up?*

ROGERS: I certainly didn't bring it up and they never asked me. They were very proud of good relations with the U.S. They loved the ship visits. They brought in a lot of money. They were very proud of the fact - and I had to research it - that, as they contend, they were the first nation to recognize the United States after independence. Other scholars assert that it was the Netherlands.

*Q: This is a debatable thing.*

ROGERS: They were within the first few. My research could support that. There is a book about Holland, "First Salute," that it recognized us first by lowering the flag to the first American warship that came by some Caribbean islands. In general, they are very proud of their relations with the U.S. and feel that they are a bridge between the Arab world, Islam, and the West.

*Q: Was there any concern when Ronald Reagan was elected President? Here was somebody that most people knew as a movie actor and was coming from the right wing. Did this raise any apprehensions in the people, the Moroccans that you knew?*

ROGERS: I don't recall any such reaction. In fact, Hassan II got along very well, eventually, with Reagan. There is a famous photo of the two of them riding horses together, I think, in Arlington. We were given a big copy of that to hang in the lobby. I think it was at Fort Myers that they rode the horses.

*Q: You didn't end up with any gifts like two lions or something like that which had plagued one of your predecessors way back around 1850. When you have some lions and you're waiting for transport, you have to feed them and everything.*

ROGERS: We're not allowed to take gifts dead or alive, so there was a free lunch maybe, but no gifts.

*Q: What about the Soviet Union? How was the Soviet Union seen during this particular time?*

ROGERS: Aeroflot, the Soviet airline, landed at Rabat. That was an important overnight stop for them. I would go to Rabat at least twice a month for country team meetings, sometimes three times. Aeroflot used the same hotel that I did. Soviet ship visits were very common. I always photographed ships, especially what we call "space support ships." I took excellent pictures of all their radar and other electronic antennae, etc. The Yuri Gagarin was one of them, a huge space support ship. I often went down and walked on the ships and visited. I don't recall ever seeing a combat vessel, but there were many auxiliary ships. Once, a Soviet nuclear submarine ran aground off the Moroccan coast, lost part of its bow and thus couldn't submerge. I got photos of that as it was being towed out by an oceangoing tug. But it's not all one sided. The U.S.S. Sturgeon lost its anchor in Tangier harbor. The anchor is flush with the hull. Thus, when the anchor is lost, the underwater sound signature is very obvious. You can't hide yourself. The Navy sent in a marvelous team of underwater demolition fellows. They had to find the anchor. They said, "Where do you think it is?" By triangulation, I showed them where the ship had been moored, where it had dragged during a big storm, and they went out there and found it immediately. I just happened to get it right. It took a few days to get it up. A special airplane came in to take it away. That captain of that ship later became an admiral. But there were frequent incidents of that nature that were illustrative of the constant utility of the support that the Foreign Service can provide to the Armed Forces and their needs. Unfortunately, as with many other posts, Tangier was closed in roughly 1988 or 1989.

Tangier is still used by the Voice of America, which built an enormous new relay station just outside of the city. That was also exceedingly interesting. The chief engineer of the Voice of America came to Tangier and said, "We want a new station to relay from South Carolina." Then they rebroadcast to the Eastern Bloc and China. He said, "We want a place which is near a railroad, not too far from the coast, has about six or eight inches of salty or saline water in it." I suppose these were engineering needs. And he wanted it flat. I said, "Come with me." I took him out and showed him such a place called Briech and that is where they built it. It's there now.

*Q: You left there in 1985. Were there any other major incidents that happened (earthquakes, disasters, coups, presidential visits - all of these are of the same measure)?*

ROGERS: George Bush visited while he was Vice President. There was no presidential visit. I got to meet him. I think I touched on all the major points of that time.

*Q: In 1985, where did you go?*

ROGERS: Back to the U.S. and retired in August of 1985.

*Q: You still kept involved with the State Department after retirement, didn't you?*

ROGERS: No.

*Q: I thought you had had something to do with appeals and things like this.*

ROGERS: I did free of charge one very complicated employment termination appeal partly because a friend of mine asked me to and the other part was that it would be an interesting learning experience. It was a grievance that followed each and every step down to the final judgment, chief of Diplomatic Security, Under Secretary of State for Management, and Director General. I lost the case, but it was interesting to learn how it works.

But then I started my own law practice, separate from the State Department. That is mostly child abuse and neglect, criminal defense, and juvenile delinquency. I have done some wills and estates free for fellow church members. I also did a lot of work for the largest coffee company in Japan. I worked in Japan, Hawaii, and made maybe 20 trips to Jamaica for them.

*Q: You also have been very heavily involved with DACOR (Diplomats and Consular Officers Retired), both a club and a philanthropic organization. What has been the role of DACOR when you've been involved with it?*

ROGERS: I'll go back to 1986. Bill Trueheart, a wonderful person, asked me to have lunch with him. I did a will for his sister free because she was an old friend and he said, "Now I want you to come to DACOR with me." He was then the president. He was trying

to get some recruitment going. I joined. Suddenly, I was on the Membership Committee. About six years ago, I became a governor. John Burke died about four years ago and I became chairman of the Membership Committee, chairman of the Bylaws Committee. I wrote the bylaws. They really didn't exist before. I wrote them for the DACOR, Inc. and the DACOR Bacon House Foundation, currently an \$11-12 million unit. I do their legal work for no charge, including long negotiations with the city government on trying to get us out of real estate taxes on our house at 1801 F St. In April 1997, I was elected vice president [Note: and president in 1999]. The task can be as busy as you want it to be. We have major programs in educational grants and fellowships, have provided an enormous amount of money each year to three clusters of colleges and universities, one to what I would characterize as the black colleges of the Appalachia region, another to those colleges around Washington, DC, and the third anywhere in the country. Separately, we administer huge bequests to specific colleges (Yale comes to mind.) for benefactors who have left a specific sum. We help to identify youngsters who will benefit from those scholarships. If they do well, they keep it. If they don't, they lose it. There are one year rollovers. Additionally, we have a very good program committee, marvelous speakers. Mike McCurry was one of our speakers not too long ago. He is a member of DACOR.

*Q: Mike McCurry being...?*

ROGERS: Press secretary to the President. He happens to live near me. Mike McCurry is as active as he can be. About 92% of the members of DACOR are retired. About 8% are on active duty. That fluctuates slightly every year. We also have programs where we support educational grants by the American Foreign Service Association. I am glad to say that we support ADST's Oral History Program as its largest donor, and the joint ADST-DACOR Book Series.

*Q: That is our organization doing this here.*

*I guess this is probably a good place to stop.*

ROGERS: Great.

*End of interview*