

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Ralph J. Bunch Legacy: Minority Officers

AMBASSADOR JOSEPH SEGARS

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INTERVIEW

Q: We are at the residence of Ambassador Joseph Segars, this is tape 1 side one of a oral history for the association for diplomatic studies and training. Ambassador Segars, what I would like to do is get started with the early antecedents of your life. If you can just tell me a little bit about your background as far as who your parents were, where they were from and your upbringing, what part of the country?

SEGARS: OK, my roots are in South Carolina. Both my mother and father were born in a little place called Hartsville. My grandmother, grandfather were all from that same area. I guess historic reference would be Darlington County in which Hartsville is a part. I was born in 1938 at home. One of those things that have come back today, called midwifery. This, of course, is according to my parents, my grandparents, my aunt and uncle. I was the third of what soon became six children.

Shortly after I was born my mother and father decided to immigrate because of the rumor that jobs were more plentiful, living conditions were better for colored folks in those days in the . So they moved with my older brother and older sister.

Because of my tender age, I was left behind with my grandmother and an aunt and her husband. They had no children so I guess it was natural for them to sort of care for me during my infancy and they nurtured me through my early childhood years. I went to school in South Carolina for the most part. I visited my family from time to time in Philadelphia and my brother and sister came to visit me in South Carolina. So it was the actions of traveling back and forth by train between Philadelphia, PA and South Carolina. I hoped to join my family at some point in my early childhood but it did not materialize and I am not quite certain why. But I spent more time in the South than I ever wanted to. And it was good and bad in many ways. The brutality of the South in those days had us all intimidated. So it was good to get away to come to Philadelphia to ride on the buses and trams with my older brother and to sit beside white people without any fear of reprisal. So I continued my stay in the South until my high school education. And, there was no reason for me to stay any longer. My aunt and uncle had been very gracious and kind to me. They got me to that stage, so I decided to, on my own, to venture and seek my opportunities there.

So at the end of high school I left Hartsville, Gladly, I left and knowing a little about Philadelphia, I was no stranger there. And so I fit right in. My ambition was to go on to college. No one in my family had gone to college; No one in my immediate family. I had cousins, aunts and uncles who had but no one in my immediate family. So my ambition was to go to college. I mentioned this to my father and he said, well you know that is fine if you can figure how to do it. You go right ahead. He certainly was not in the position to

help me. Speaking and sort of going back in time a bit, my relationship with my father was a drawn one because I never saw him to know him as my father until I was twelve years old. And I am not quite certain why that happened so we had to get used to each other. It was not all that painful. He was a hard worker, in the sense that he worked every day and didn't miss a day's work. He was sort of undisciplined though. (He) Had to be coached by my mother into doing things that the family man should do with respect to her and with respect to the family. By the time I landed in Philadelphia, the family had increased by threefold. We had two younger sisters and a brother. I was ten years old when my next sibling was born and fourteen when the last was born. So, the older children were charged with sort of helping to bring up the family while mom and pop worked. Anyway, back to my father, we had a pretty good relationship. I grew to admire him. I regretted very much when he passed away at a very early age, 52 years old. He had a heart attack and (it) probably was occasioned by poor health habits and a chug of fast life. Anyway it was sad to see him pass away.

Going to college presented a problem because as I said before, I had no money. The family had no money. So I worked a year hopefully to try to save some money to go off to school. But I found I had to use that money to help support the family. I worked for a year still determined to go on to school to further my education. Where was the money going to come from? Well! Thank God an old Quaker philanthropist named William Humphreys bequeathed money at the end of the 18th century to foster education of children of former slaves. And, he set aside in Philadelphia an institution called the Institute for Colored Youth, as a place for kids to go and be trained in mechanics, agriculture things like that; Studies that would make them useful to society. I see why it was moved out into the country on a huge farm in Delaware County, subsequently, and became the Chaney Training School, then eventually the Chaney Training Institute for Teachers. Anyway I ended up at Chaney. Why Chaney? Well, because it had been set aside and because it was state supported, owned, state run. The tuition was minimal. So if I could come up with \$600 per semester I could go there. Of course, mom tried to help as best she could. The first year at Chaney, I commuted back and forth. And we had an old Buick, and I used that for my transport and also as a money maker. Because riders were paying me a whopping sum of \$5.00 a week and I had four riders. So that helped with my transportation for the car expenses and provided me money for meals, etc. books and all kinds of things.

Q: Before you go on I want to go back and I want to ask you a couple of questions about some earlier impressions in high school, I want to cut also. Just one minute. -- I wanted to go back and ask you a couple of questions about earlier impressions while you were still in high school before we got to your college days? Were there any significant studies or any significant experiences that might have impacted on your later decisions for your professional career as we will get to it later on? Were you interested in any international studies, geography, history, reading? What subjects were more interesting to you while you were still in high school?

SEGARS: I was a prolific reader and enjoyed reading. Read everything I could get my hands on. We had very good instructors at the high school level particularly in the areas

of literature and English. I also became fascinated with Africa big game hunters, Carl Ackley and that bunch. I read everything I could about big game hunting and tracking in the bush. I wasn't quite sure why. I was also a fan of Edgar Rice Burroughs and his Tarzan books and later on he graduated to Tarzan classic comics, the big thick books which dealt quite a bit on Southern Africa and the Zulu's and so I was fascinated by that. But, yes, I did read a lot. I had every intention of going to college but I wanted to major in electronics, electronic engineering. I wanted to be an electronic engineer. And during college counseling days I looked very closely at South Carolina State which had a program and also Hampton Institute. Well Hampton Institute was particularly interesting because the young lady that I was in love with at the time and thought I was going to marry her was going off to Hampton. It would have been a nice place to go off to. But that did not materialize and I ended up in Philadelphia. So that was why. But yes, I did not have an idea other than being an engineer. I didn't have my life plotted out at that point in time. As a matter of fact, it was sort of each day as it goes by until I got into college and decided teaching would be something I could do. I thought that I could do it reasonably well. At Chaney they really prepared you quite nicely for that.

Q: So teaching was something that had attracted you early on, in addition that gave you a natural interest for - you mentioned that you were interested in African explorations and these types of things. Do you think that had an impact on your later decisions as to the areas that you would focus on?

SEGARS: Yes, very much so. But as I reflect on this, my earlier associations with Africa and Africans I used the same stereotypes that were factual in those days, that of Africans being savages and cannibals and those sort of things. It was only later after reading a little more about them that I found out that this was probably not true.

Q: Now you did your undergraduate studies, of course at Chaney University in Pennsylvania and your major, of course, was education. Then you went on to do research and lecturing. You want to tell me a little bit about that?

SEGARS: Well let me just back up a bit because I taught when I graduated from Chaney, if I can go back a bit in time. 1961 as a teacher, we were heavily recruited by the Gary Indiana Public School System. As a matter of fact they came to Chaney looking for teachers and seventeen of us in that graduating class signed up to go out there. So we landed in Gary, Indiana in 1961. Gary was a terrible place. A good school system but it was a mill town and politically correct. Anyway, I endured and I met my wife there and that was one of the good things for me. We got married in her hometown in South Bend, Indiana several years thereafter. I taught school in Gary for six years and told her, and she was pretty much fed up too, that it was time for us to move on. So let's go back to my home. She didn't want to go back to Indiana, to South Bend to live because South Bend was also an industrial town; lots of factories and all. Nice little place. So we decided to relocate to Philadelphia. We both got jobs in the school system. And I did reasonably well, but I had my "Sambo" incident.

Q: You want to tell me about your "Sambo" incident?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! Yes!! One of my fellow teachers, she taught next door to me and we were jovial. Learned a lot from her, she had been teaching for a long, long time. And we greeted each other every day. One particular morning, we were standing shoulder to shoulder and the students were marching in and out of classrooms. She looked at me and said, “Good morning Sambo”. The moment she said it, if she could have taken it back she would have because she realized what she had said and had done something terrible. And then she surprised her own self and said, “Oh! Why did I say that?” And I said, “Maybe it is just like a leopard with no spots, you can’t hide them forever. You were thinking all along and it just finally came out”. Anyway, fortunately, that was the only incident we had and I am pretty certain she felt badly enough about it and I didn’t need to pursue it and I did not.

Anyhow, I decided to go back to school to get my principals license. My principal thought I was good material and I would make an ideal principal, so he recommended me for a summer stipend to go to school. At the same time, or just prior to that we had gone to Jamaica with friends on vacation. The tour guide was the lovely wife of Dr. Bernard Coleman. And on our flight from Philadelphia to -- they came to Philadelphia because we flew from there, Jewel and Barney. When I first saw Barney, I thought he was a baggage handler because he was busy helping Jewel taking the luggage of the people who were going on the trip. We for some reason, we were on a charter airline and the flight was cancelled because of some pilots disagreement. So we spent an extra night in Philadelphia and Jewel’s tour agency decided to put us up at the Bella Vista Stratford . You know a lot of angry colored folks and you wanted to treat them nicely. So this is what they did and gave us nice rooms and nice meals, open bar and I got a chance to sit down and talk to Barney at length. We talked about my career and his career. By this time I was sort of actively - although I was planning to be a principal, I was at the same time looking around for the possibilities. So the Foreign Service, and I had read something about it somewhere, I don’t remember where it had struck my interest. Talking to him, a Foreign Service officer, this was ideal. So now several days in Jamaica we talked quite a bit about it. Barney and I sort of latched on to one another. He thought I was arrogant because I walked around with a tennis racket. We spent a lot of time on the beach. Anyhow, at the end of the trip he invited Elizabeth and I to come to Washington to visit with them and meet some of their friends and to pursue this Foreign Service possibility. I was a bit skeptical. Sounded too good to be true.

Q: This is the first time you had heard about the Foreign Service?

SEGARS: I had heard about the Foreign Service but had only read something, somewhere but I don’t remember where.

Q: But nowhere in your studies had anyone approached you about the possibilities of career opportunities during your university days?

SEGARS: No, oh no! In our university days we were focused on getting minority teachers trained and into the public school systems, because they needed them. So our

total focus was teaching. But as I got into teaching, I found out that I really -- If I can just go back a minute. Philadelphia was particularly frustrating for me as a teacher because I taught in a poor neighborhood; Low income neighborhood. But you know basically it was a white community, basically. We had some black kids but they were all bused in and I thought I was a damn good teacher. As a matter of fact, I know I was. I had good kids and sometimes bad kids and sometimes a mixture of both. I worked awfully hard with them. They would leave school fully motivated I thought and go home to be corrupted by uncaring and unthinking parents. So we basically had to start basically from scratch the next day. It was a constant back and forth of trying to get them up to a certain standard. Then, the frustrations of working with an administration which was not sympathetic to the needs of the kids. They were more concerned about the money and where the monies were going to come from. We had these things that worked sort of against my efforts. Getting out, perhaps it is a copout but I just did not want to continue that frustration. At the same time we had Barney and the trip and the Foreign Service. Gee whiz, how about that. Anyhow we got back to Philadelphia and getting ready to go into my summer program, as a matter of fact, I had started getting paid for that. Barney said, "Call me" and said I thought you were going to come and visit. I said, you know, gee whiz this guy was serious. So I said, Okay we will come down. So we drove to DC and spent some time with them. He took me to his office in the State Department. Went in to see the Equal Opportunity Employment people about the possibilities of my interruption about a cord) -- anyway we went to see the people there and that was sort of disappointing because here we are talking to people who are paid to recruit minorities.

Q: I want you to go back on that point and start at the top again about going in to talk to the people in Equal Opportunity before you focused on the cord?

SEGARS: Yea! Barney took me to the State Department and took me in to see the Coordinator for Equal Opportunity Employment and I won't call any names. Anyway, here sat a young man who was interested in the Foreign Service and rather than being encouraging he discouraged me because he said, well first of all I don't think you are qualified. You don't have a Masters degree and you don't have a foreign language. As I recall at that time the only requirement you needed to join the Foreign Service was a high school diploma. And here is this guy who is supposed to be helping me out telling me to forget about it. Anyway, Barney was not amused by this and proceeded to tell him off. In the end, they did arrange a panel for me. Because, at that time you, minorities in the Foreign Service, exam could be waived if the person did well in the oral portion. So they arranged an oral panel for me.

Q: What year was this?

SEGARS: This started in 1969. Arranged an oral panel and Barney sort of briefed me on the kinds of questions they were going to ask me. The kinds of answers they were going to be expecting from me. I thought that was pretty cosmopolitan and kept up with things going on in the world at any rate. So I felt very comfortable with that. I passed the panel and then the whole process began, security checks, medical checks, etc., etc.

Elizabeth and I talked about it at great length because it would mean relocating. We were both working. We had our own housed. We were living quite comfortably. And if we moved to Washington, there was no guarantee that she would find employment or if we could afford to live in that rich city. Anyhow we thought about it, thought about it, thought about it. We had no children, nothing to really hold us in Philadelphia except for my family. We decided we wanted to venture out and get to see the world. The idea of traveling was exciting. We were not intimidated by that. Our only concern was financial and so we made the big leap. Working with the Equal Opportunity Employment, John Gray in particular, was a salvation for me. Despite his bosses concerns about my qualifications, John took the opposite approach and he sort of nurtured us through the process. In January of '70 we were told that we had passed everything. Elizabeth still did not have the final results of her physical but we finally got that in March of '70. As a matter of fact, I was going through my things just the other day and found an old letter from the Foreign Service, I forget which office, offering me an appointment as a Foreign Service officer. We said, let's do it now, if we don't do it now, we never will. So we sold our housed in Philadelphia, packed up our belongings and moved to Washington. We were told we would be in Washington for about a year and then would be shipped overseas somewhere. Where, we had no idea.

Q: At that point did you get to know any other minority Foreign Service officers? Were there many career Foreign Service officers when you came in?

SEGARS: I didn't meet any when I came in except Barney. But I met a lot of Barney's crowd which was pretty cosmopolitan and pretty broadly based. But I did not actual meet any other minority Foreign Service officers except the ones that I dealt with in the office of Equal Employment until he came in to the firm. As a matter of fact in my class, there were 44 in my class, I was one of 4 minorities, African Americans. Arlene Render, Tom Owens, Sallybeth Bumbrey and myself.

Q: Of those four how many of them went on to complete Foreign Service careers as you did?

SEGARS: Arlene is still in the service. She is the only one. Tom Owens retired, Tom did not stay very long I think. He was from a military background. He may have stayed ten years. Sally Beth retired about five years ago. And, of course I retired in 1996.

Q: Any of them were appointed ambassador?

SEGARS: Arlene.

Q: Arlene. Two out of five who made it to ambassador.

SEGARS: Yes. I am happy to say I was the first. Ha! Ha! So we packed up and moved to Washington and we went through the junior officer training program and I got to know the other officers. We were - the average age in my class was 28. At that time it was a cutoff of 31. So there was a rush to get me on board before my 31st birthday and that was

accomplished.

Q: Today is December 13th.

SEGARS: We came to Washington and of course driving in Washington was never fun but anyhow if you stick with it long enough you would find yourself around. Before actually coming here we had done some canvassing, looking for places to live. And we just assumed we could not afford the city so we looked in suburbia; Ended up in Oxon Hill. Funny enough the test, why Oxon Hill? Because we looked at the apartment, it was very nice. Reasonably decent neighborhood and our decision was based on the fact that we could drive in from Oxon Hill in twenty minutes but we did the test run on Sunday afternoon. Ha! Ha! Well lo and behold! Monday morning came around and twenty minutes became a nightmare, not even close. Anyway we survived because we knew we would not be here long. So we went to the junior officer training program that was seven or eight weeks, I believe. We went through all kinds of exercises there. Team building, getting to know each other, touchy feely sensitive kinds of things that you do, learning about the department and how it works, some of the nuisances that you come across, how to be diplomatic, how to negotiate, how to become a consular officer, all kinds of things.

Then, we, it was time to be assigned. As I said before, it was 44 of us. We were looking around at places to go. Elizabeth and I wanted to go to Africa. We wanted to go, there were two jobs on the assignment sheet, Abidjan and Togo. Because we had gotten to know the other officers, we knew a lot of them were interested in Africa as well; particularly, the whites. So I said well let's take a close look at this list because our chances of getting an Africa assignment are not that great. Where else would you like to go? I always made it throughout my career, made it a point of consulting with her and then later on with our son about places they wanted to go because it did not make sense for me to go and do my thing and they be unhappy. So I made a very conscious effort to make certain that this was a place that we could both handle. So we looked at the list and there was, lo and behold Vienna, Austria! Well, "gee whiz" wouldn't that be nice. Vienna waltz, the Vienna woods, sound of music and all that good stuff. We said, okay let's put Vienna as our first choice. Well lo and behold we had assignment day, call them flag-days now and we got Vienna much to the dismay and surprise of all of our colleagues; wasn't quite sure how that happened. But, once the assignment was made and I had to go, of course, to take German language training. I went to see the personnel officer, because this was what we had to do. And I said, "gee whiz" how in the world did we ever get Vienna? Her name was Rea Dolan, never will forget. It was timing, timing is everything. There were no black officers in Vienna. There was one black secretary. The ambassador, John Portner Humes, was a political appointee of Richard Nixon and he was in Vienna and he said his staff was not diverse. A brilliant lawyer from New York, his wife was a neurosurgeon and one of the nicest, you can say what you want about political appointees, he was very, very nice; very kind and giving person. And anyway he told personnel that he wanted some black officers. Well, lo and behold there is a black officer bidding on the job and it was a snap, I mean there was no contest.

Q: What was the position?

SEGARS: Consular officer, vice Consul. We were all vice Consuls in those days, political officer, third secretaries. So we got Vienna and, of course, language training came thereafter and then much to our surprise and delight we discovered that Elizabeth was pregnant. Now here we were, we tried for seven years now with these children and she had surgery and the doctor said the chances were fifty/fifty and so we had pretty much given up on the idea of her conceiving but we got to Washington, D.C. and she got pregnant. Now Barney will tell you that it was all his doing, because, he let her rub his fertility doll. He still contends you know that, that had a lot to do with it. Anyhow, I dispute that. Anyway she got pregnant and one of my German teachers, one morning saw she was not feeling well, looked at her and said you don't feel well. She said, let me see your eyes, you are pregnant. My wife said no way, no way. But sure enough she was indeed pregnant. So we were planning to leave for Austria at the conclusion of my German language training which would have been January but the medical people said, no, we want you to wait because the medical facilities in Vienna are not as good as they used to be and we would rather have the baby born here and then you can go off on your first assignment. So we waited around and I did odd jobs after language.

I learned a lot about the department in those six months doing odd jobs including retiring old personnel files. That is when I discovered that people in those days had two efficiency reports. One they saw and one they didn't see. It was like night and day.

Q: Want to tell a little bit more about that?

SEGARS: In those days officers had two reports written which the ambassador or the drafting officer shared with them and then there was a separate one that was written that they did not see. On one report the guy was a water walker. On the other one was a real asshole. Yes. Anyway I spent some time helping to retire those files. That was the end of that two-tier system at that point.

Q: So as far as you knew, the panels, the personnel panels had access to both files?

SEGARS: I would think so.

Q: And their decisions were based, of course? And that was on everybody?

SEGARS: And during those days all the files that I saw, yes. And during those days, the viewing officer, the rating officer could also comment on the family. You could have comments on spouses, I say wives because in those days they were wives because there were no married female Foreign Service officers. It was not allowed. So anyway, our son was born in April and the first of June we were off to Vienna on our first assignment. That was very interesting to be in Vienna. You learn a lot about people when you travel too. Because you have your own mind sets about people and what motivates them. What makes them tick. But when you see other people react you notice their differences. I discovered early on in Vienna that the prejudicial thing was not just a black and white issue; that there was other people the same color who were prejudiced toward one

another. And it was very, very obvious in Austria with its history during the war and its infamous child born there named Adolph Hitler. But it was very interesting. And then people did not want to believe that our son was our son because pigmentation is something that they did not quite grasp because we were dark and our child had to be dark. But when he was born he was very, very fair, very fair! And he is still fair as a matter of fact until the Austrians were always asking us, where did you adopt this baby? He is not adopted! Anyhow they had a difficult time realizing that. Interesting enough, Barney and Jewel came to visit us our first Christmas there and I took Barney to the office. The Austrians were surprised that Barney had gray hair because they had only seen Africans and because all the Africans that they had seen had black, nappy hair. They saw Barney with gray hair! A lot of myths and misperceptions were sort of set aside. There was another thing that I enjoyed about the Foreign Service because it provided an avenue of two-way learning. You learned about them and they learned about you. This was very, very rewarding for us in South Africa as well later on. We got our initiation in Austria.

Q: Well tell me how you were received by the embassy staff, that is the American staff and how were you received by the Austrian staff and then what do you consider might have been some of your earlier contributions to our foreign policy processes at this first stage of your Foreign Service career while in Austria?

SEGARS: The first part of your question, I was received very well by everybody, the staff, was super. We had sponsors of course and our sponsor lived in our compound. My boss was the consul general who met us. I didn't learn things in the Foreign Service and no one told me but you pick up on things and I decided then that I would never travel on weekends because it meant that somebody's weekend would be disrupted. We arrived in Austria on a Sunday afternoon. Well my idea was to get there Sunday and be ready to go work on Monday not realizing that I had inconvenienced people and took away from their Sunday. So I learned, nobody said anything, but as I had to do these kinds of things, this is not fair. We really should not do things like this. But the staff treated us very, very well. (We were) Very warmly received both in the American staff, (and) our neighbors. Of course we were on the American compound. And the office staff was just super they were just great. If they did not approve of my being there, I never witnessed that. They were very, very discrete in concealing it. In terms of foreign policy contributions, insignificant. Because, as I said this was only a Third Secretary (position). I worked under the visa section. I interviewed Austrians applying for visas. We had a very large American presence in Austria tourism.

That reminds me of an interesting story. They were always losing their passports or having money stolen and things of that sort. Or getting in harm's way with the law. Some lady, the consular section was apart from the embassy, it was down town Vienna right near the opera house. As a matter of fact, my staff in Vienna gave us a lovely picture of the opera house before the war. It must be hanging upstairs. Anyway I got this call from the bank which was just across the street from the office. Some American woman was there, they thought she was a crook because of the strange passport that she had. And she was trying to cash some traveler's checks. Could we come over and have a look. So my

boss asked me to go over to the bank and I went over and there was this lady sitting, white American, with a daughter and she was in hysterics. Because she was frightened to death. She thought they were going to take her to jail and she hadn't done anything wrong as far as she knew. They were concerned about the passport. So I looked at the passport. It was an American passport and it was her picture but somebody putting it together had done a botched-up job. The picture was misconstrued, the laminate was all done wrong. But I had no doubt that she was who she said she was and somebody just botched the passport. I assured the bank manager that everything was on the up and up and so they said, okay, fine. We will take your word for it. And at that moment she jumped up and grabbed me and gave me the biggest kiss. Ha! Ha! Everyone started looking around amused by the whole incident. But I thought that was amusing. So you have these amusing stories, you know that keep you going. But she was genuinely very, very gracious that we were there to help her out.

Q: So that was a rewarding aspect of your earlier experiences. So you stayed in Vienna for how long?

SEGARS: Two years. Had it been left to Ambassador John Portner Humes I would have stayed longer. Because we had a cocktail party one day and he said, you been here now for how long and I said almost two years and he said, well, how much longer are you here. Well Mr. Ambassador I am leaving, I have been reassigned. He said, "What!" Yes, I have been reassigned. I am going back to Washington. He said, "This is preposterous." And without my knowing it he went back to his office and called personnel. "What are you people doing?" "Nobody told me Segars was leaving, he just got here." He went on and on and on. Until finally after he settled down, they said well, Ambassador Humes he is a junior officer and it is better for his career that we move him around as quickly as possible so that he has a wide variety of experiences. It would be detrimental to leave him in one place to long. It is not unique, we do all the officers like that. So with a better understanding of how the system works he was happy with that. But that was just the kind of person that he was.

Q: Were you the only minority officer that he was able to get assigned to his embassy staff?

SEGARS: There was... we had a black secretary; she was there when I got there. Josephine Wallace, she eventually left. There was a communicator working for the other side. But other than that, I don't know what efforts were made after that, but I was the only one during my tenure there.

Q: So what happened at the end of this assignment and you were eventually reassigned to Washington?

SEGARS: They were looking around for people. They were excepting recommendations for the Operations Center. They were only accepting people who were recommended. I was recommended to come back and spend a tour in the Operations Center and, that was eighteen months. We came home in '73 from Vienna and went into the Operations Center

and worked there for eighteen months doing the watch and doing the secretary summaries and all that kind of stuff. That was kind of exciting, very exciting time to be there. So many things happened. Friday nights seem to be crazy, craziest night of all. We worked swing shifts. Two days 8 to 4 and two days 4 to 12 and 2 days 12 to 8 and then you were off for three days. And so, all kinds of things happened during your tour on the watch.

Q: Anything significant during any of your tours that were significant enough that they might have been noted as a contribution to our foreign policy processes?

SEGARS: Well, other than being alert to how the President's traffic coming in from all over the place and all, I can't say that it did. One thing in particular, we had in our system all kinds of printers with messages coming from our own embassies, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and DOD, CIA and all the other agencies, NSA. One night we got this cryptic message and I looked at it and it did not look right. Something was going on and so I passed it on to the senior watch officer. He looked at it and we determined that to convene the Joint Chiefs of Staff because there were some problems in the Middle East. One of the Israel-Egyptian wars was about to burst upon the scene. But in terms of foreign policy from there, no, because basically all you do is watch faxes and monitor traffic and prepare the secretary's summaries based on what is going on.

Q: So far you've had what would be considered as an above average initiation into Foreign Service. You have gotten a first good Foreign Service assignment abroad. Then you got a chance to come back and see the larger picture working in the Operations Center. Were you assigned any specific desk in the Operations Center or was it strictly your tour of duty.

SEGARS: No. It was just sort of sitting at a huge console monitoring telephones and making --

Q: You were not assigned any geographic area of the world?

SEGARS: No. No. Sitting at the desk watching things and making certain, particularly during non-business hours if the White House calls and they want to speak to the secretary and you have got to make the connection that you don't screw it up. Then we had Kissinger come on board who was not a very nice person and then we had Eagleburger on the other side who also was not a very nice person. And we had our own Foreign Service officers and they had very short fuses and making certain that you didn't screw up when Eagleburger or Kissinger got on the telephone to talk to somebody. And, of course, we had Joe Sisco who was the head of NEA at that time, who was a real bear as well. There were all kinds of things going on whenever crises erupted they always convened the crises management teams in the Operations Center. So we had to make certain that they got their share of traffic and they were kept apprised of what was going on. One of the things about the points you were making earlier about getting off to a good start. A lot of that, I attribute to my boss in Vienna. Because here again he was interested in teaching as well as making sure that I learned the job and making certain that I understood about the Foreign Service and about the latter and how to progress up that

ladder. He said early on, of course, I also had to because I was the Foreign Service reserve officer. I had to be trained within five years. So that was always a part of my thinking. And that meant getting a whole language base and everything else. But he told me, if you want to make a success out of this thing you got to think ahead. You got to have a strategy. You got to know where you want to go and have a strategy for getting there. So how do you see yourself four years down the road, five years down the road, ten years down the road. Where do you want to be? You know enough about the service now to have a good idea about how it is structured and what kinds of things you want to be doing. So I developed a plan a ten year plan with his advice and guidance and that is how it sort of helped me move along.

Q: Well this is very fortunate relating positive experiences. You were able to get a mentor early who not only helped you in the performance of your assigned duties but also provided Consul and advice on how to improve your career. Did you maintain contact, did he maintain contact with you after your assignment there?

SEGARS: Yes. Yes. His wife was very helpful to my wife. It was sort of a family thing. That was very, very good for us. No, we had a very good support system, very good.

Q: While you were here in Washington, incidentally, I know this was a period in the Foreign Service where it was not expected that spouses - wives - as you correctly pointed out earlier, were not expected to be involved semi-professionally by being employed in the mission, whatever. Did your wife at any point, participate semi-professionally or professionally in Foreign Service, civil service activities dealing with foreign affairs?

SEGARS: Not initially, no, because initially we had a young child, initially. A lot of her time was taken up with him and he was sick for part of our tour in Vienna and that caused her to have more time spent with him. Back and forth to the hospital in Munich, .plus, she had surgery herself. So, no, she did not become involved in Foreign Service life, professional life until we were back in Washington. Actually she did not get involved with Foreign Service until we came back to Washington. When did she get involved? Because we came back in '73 and our son was approaching nursery school age and so he was enrolled in nursery school and she went back to teaching. We were in Washington from '73 until '76. Thereafter we went to South Africa. She did not really become involved in Foreign Service until 1981.

Q: Well, we will get to that when we get to that stage.

SEGARS: She did work, did she work overseas, no. We left in '76 and we went to South Africa and from South Africa to Jamaica. And she did not do anything professionally during any of that time.

Q: Now when you returned and you were back on the desk here that was '73 you say?

SEGARS: '73, spent one year in the Operations Center, went to the desk in '74 that was West Africa. Liberia - Sierra Leone.

Q: Did you at this point in time have an opportunity, again I am asking about the networking, to meet any of the others beside Barney Coleman, meet any of the other minority African American Foreign Service officers?

SEGARS: Yes, because TLG (Thursday Luncheon Group) was gearing up. They were having their regular Thursday lunches at a restaurant in downtown. I can't actually remember the name of the place. But they used to sit there and talk about issues and I got a chance to meet more black officers. In my office there were several, Howard Walker and George Mitchell. There were a few black officers that I got to know in the Operations Center, we worked together. So yes, I began to be exposed to more, increasingly, more blacks. My earlier reaction to the Thursday Luncheon Group was that they were there sort of looking for a better job for themselves and were not really interested in a whole lot of issues. Interesting, interesting group during those days. Lively conversation and I can't say it got better, it got better. I was not impressed with a lot of substance going on.

Q: Thursday Luncheon Group in those days was mainly just the two agencies, just State and USIA. It didn't have many AID or Foreign Commerce Service officers - This would be a good point for us to change both the video and the audio tape. I will give you a chance to relax here.

Q: Side A December 13th, Ambassador Joseph Segars. My name is James Dandridge, interviewer, for the oral history series for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

SEGARS: On the question of other blacks, yes, Paul Washington and I met early on in the Operations Center tour and I got to know him. We talked about things on a regular basis. Paul's office was right next to the Operations Center. So I got a chance to see him on a regular basis. He, I recall, he was very much involved with the credit union at that time and played a very active role in the credit union. In addition to Paul another black officer of considerable seniority in that area was called SS the Secretariat was then Len Eaton, who was actually executive secretary in that office and I was impressed that he was a guy who was traveling with the Secretary and was helping to arrange the Secretary's schedule and that kind of thing. That was pretty impressive I thought, very impressive.

Q: Did you have a chance to do in the case of Paul Washington, since he was SS and you had an earlier experience on the watch in the Operations Center, did you have any chance to have any exchanges with him during that period?

SEGARS: I am sure that Paul was always there offering some helpful comment, some ideas about how things work and who the players are and who does what, who gets things done, who to avoid, who to turn to. I can't remember anything specific but he was just that type of person, he was always in the position and willing to offer advise. And, I suppose particularly to us black officers because there was not a bevy of black officers doing that kind of thing in those days and when these guys saw people coming in they were sort of naturally attracted to us.

Q: So the major institutional networking instrument in those days was probably the inception of the Thursday Luncheon Group. So you become the desk officer on the Office of Southern African Affairs?

SEGARS: West African Affairs.

Q: West African Affairs. How did that come about?

SEGARS: Well, here again people coming out of the seventh floor, the Operations Center, the watch, the line as they were called it, usually had advantage in term of on-going assignments. Management wanted to reward people, particularly if they had done a creditable job in the Operations Center and to make certain that they got fairly good jobs. So looking at our own assignments and here again, Africa being upper most in my mind, there were jobs available in the African bureau. And, although I had not had any desk experience because I was coming from the Operations Center, gave me an advantage, I suppose, over other people. So I was able to get a job as desk officer, Liberia, Sierra Leone in the Office of West African Affairs.

Q: Who was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in those days, do you remember?

SEGARS: Edward Mulcahy?

Q: It wasn't Cohen was it?

SEGARS: No, no, it was way before Cohen. It may have been Don Easum. Oh, I know that Nathaniel Hawthorne was there during a part of my tenure. Bill Shirley was there and I just don't know exactly who at the time I was assigned to the African Bureau, who was the Assistant Secretary. It may have been Easum. It may have been Easum. As a matter of fact, or was he later. Easum was probably later. So I know that Nathaniel Hawthorne was there during a part of my tenure because of some of the issues we had about Liberia and the perception of some congress people about USA relations with Liberia.

Q: So what were some of the more significant things happening during the period that you were on the desk at West African Affairs?

SEGARS: Well, the people were still sort of recovering from the fiascos of the Nigerian Civil War although this was some period after that. It was still the after effects being felt. Significantly for me, my first visit to Africa occurred during that period. We had regular orientation visits to our countries of responsibility. It was exciting for me to get out in December of 1974 to Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was quite an opening, I tell you. What a fascinating trip. Bi-laterally, Liberia was doing okay. Economy was still in pretty good shape. President William Tolbert was doing a very good job with the economy, very little signs of political unrest. President Tolbert came to the United States on a visit. He came to Washington and I was able to escort him and his party back to New York for their flight, as a matter of fact I knew a lot of the people who were eventually murdered by

Doe. They were on that airplane (also) the foreign minister, Cecil Dennis, the President, of course, and a few other people that I had met during my visit to Liberia. Firestone was doing very well. Iron ore mining was going along at good results. The port of Buchanan was functioning. We had a listening station there, Voice of America. Our relations were very good. Interesting enough, Congressman Rangel, and someone else made the visit to Liberia during my tenure as desk officer and had a discussion with the ambassador and DCM and their concern was that we were not doing enough in Liberia. That, given Liberia's relationship with the United States and the historical significance and cultural significance that the Liberia should be a model of what American involvement in Africa ought to be. Well, our people in Liberia argued that, well yes we are pumping money into Liberia, but there were other issues that needed to be resolved. There are problems here. We just can't blindly pour money in without any physical responsibility. Well the congressman came back and had a session with the assistant secretary over our attitudes and our lack of concern about the issues in Liberia and Sierra Leone. President Stevens was holding forth. Sierra Leone had gone through several coups and was no stranger to coups so it was not surprising that the situation continues today. What impressed me about Sierra Leone is that the country has gone backwards. It has retrograded significantly over the years. When I was there it was poor but it got worst over the years, significantly worst. People are much worst off then they were in the '70's. People talk about being assigned to Sierra Leone and it would have been nice a long time ago but not today's times. But there again there were no real significant bilateral issues during those days. As a matter of fact, to show you how things have changed, evolved, since then I was desk officer for both countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Today's environment there must be three or four officers for Liberia alone given the calamity of problems that sort of embroiled that country in the years to come. But certainly during my time there was no hint on the horizon of the kind of unrest that would lead to massive destabilization and the weight of violence that engulf the country. I was last there in 1976 enroute to South Africa and even then Morrie Bean was Deputy Chief of Mission, Mel Mannford was the ambassador during those days. Morrie was a minority officer. He was from Gale, Indiana. (I) got to know him. There again I think, while I was there I took his advise and guidance. There was a reluctance in the Department to let the embassies know what was going on. And I have always been and I guess as a diplomat you should be more cunning and less willing to share. But I have never been inclined to do that, so I sort of gave my embassies, Freetown and Monrovia, I let them know everything that was going on in Washington. And they really appreciated that, as a matter of fact, Morrie based some rather favorable comments when I left about the fact that I was forthcoming with them and kept them up-to-date because nobody else was doing it. They started publishing the weekly newsletter in the Department but it was status and a lot of things that were going on, well my people out there should know this, so I started sending it to them. And pretty soon somebody got the idea that this information we should share with the field. But my embassies were head and heels above them because they had the stuff already. Why not? These are your colleagues you are dealing with. And so you ought to be in the business of sharing information with them, particularly information that might be of used to them. So I did this and I did it without hesitation. But significantly there were really no major confrontations. The only thing distracting then was the continuing uprising between the Tutsis and Hutus but that was far away and only remotely touched us.

Q: At one period in the earlier days, when we had very few black diplomats and the two or three black ambassadors that we had were on the circuit for assignments, and Liberia was one of those countries that was on the circuit, in your experience being on the desk later did you see any significance later as to the relative importance of Liberia in our overall African policies? Was Liberia considered as a country that we didn't have to worry about there, with us anyway? Did we feel like we had to make any special efforts to address any specific policy needs there?

SEGARS: Yes, it is probably a little more along the lines that they are going to be with us, they are going to be with us forever. It was a tremendous American-Liberian community, lots of Americans living in Liberia, lots of American exposure in Liberia. And there was no pressure to do more.

Q: Now when you say there were a lot of Americans there, that brings up another point and that is non-governmental involvement. I am thinking specifically now about Phelps Stokes Fund which I believe was probably instrumental to increase the education and understanding of African Americans and Africans, more specifically in Liberia. And, in fact Phelps Stokes was instrumental in getting the George Washington Carver Institute started in Liberia.

SEGARS: Was it Carver or Booker T. Washington?

Q: It was Booker T. Washington. I am sorry.

SEGARS: Well you had that and you also had the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital which is more of a white elephant than anything else, didn't function well. But the institute - as a matter of fact - I don't know if Barney talked to you about Booker T. Washington or not.

Q: He only mentioned that he taught there. But he did not go into any details.

SEGARS: That was still pretty visible and doing very well as an indication of what assistance could do in terms of addressing countries specific needs. Other than that, and my memory fails me now, I must apologize, I don't remember any other thing non-governmental (organization) that was particularly significant. When I take Firestone, of course, they were big for the economy. I think Firestone was doing a reasonably good job of liberalization as well. They were unlike a lot of companies, they were training Liberians for key positions in management and that kind of thing. So that was fairly significant. Rubber was still at a premium in those days. So it was easy to do.

Q: Being on the desk, I would assume that you also traveled with some frequency with visits from State, from other government agencies, for instance did the assistant secretary travel much to the countries that you were - Sierra Leone and to Liberia and did you accompany him.

SEGARS: No, no. The only time I went was on my orientation visit during my two years. I don't recall any high level visits during that period. Nixon certainly was not interested in Africa. The assistant secretary may have gone but I don't recall. It may have been because of the military relationship may have been fairly significant this is by military people, but, of course, I would not have been involved in those.

I was just thinking back we had at the ceremony commemorating the Foreign Service officers I recall, what's his name, Charles Hanson, I had the occasion that I reminded him too that we had met way back then, because he was DCM in La Croix when Shirley Temple Black was named ambassador there. And I recalled him coming home completely exasperated by his ambassador. Ha! Ha! They did not get along at all.

Q: Oh they didn't?

SEGARS: No indeed. No, indeed, interesting.

Q: Any other significant experiences during your tenure on the West Africa desk?

SEGARS: No. It was a learning experience for me. And we had some tough task masters. I know my own office deputy director, Jim Bishop, a very good officer, very demanding. I think I learned a lot under his tutelage and I learned the need to strive towards perfection was made abundantly clear. It did not help that I had a secretary who was just learning and we did not have the advantage of spell check and editing and things of that sort. So I spent many a painful night, long hours redoing documents and making certain that they were letter perfect and devoid of typos. We had one deputy assistant secretary James Blake who was a real task master and demanded excellence. Working with those two you really had to produce. They were not reluctant to tell you. I still admire Bishop in particular for that. As a matter of fact, he told me once at my swearing in, because I made reference to him in those formative years and how much he had been a part of that. And he said to me, apart from that, he said, you are really kind of nerdy that I had that much influence on you. So I said, "well you did Jim and I really appreciate it. "He was a very honest person, very, very capable person as well.

Q: What followed the West, Africa desk experience?

SEGARS: Bill Bowdler came to town from Pretoria and complained to the department that here we are trying to move the South Africans away from apartheid, we have no diversity in our embassy. How long are we going to let the South Africans dictate to us who we can and cannot send as diplomats? I want minority officers. I had met Roy Haverkamp, I was talking earlier about my orientation visit to Africa. Well, I went through London because of the foreign office and its involvement in the Ivory Coast working relationship with them on African issues. So the political officer, the Africa Watch, in London at that time was Roy Haverkamp. So I passed through London and Roy took me over to the foreign office and we met the people and we discussed Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Roy subsequently became AFS Office Director. So when the noise from Ballard emanated throughout the department and particularly in that office,

Roy thought about me. He called me and told me the story about Ambassador Ballard and his desire to have black officers. Would I be interested in going to South Africa? And I said, "Are you serious?" He said, "Yes, very serious." Well back to something I said earlier about consulting with family. I said, well let me talk to my wife and see how she reacts, because I was interested, I really was, I don't know why. It seemed like a glutton for punishment. You know it was a challenging, yes. I came home. We were around the corner on Fourth Street and I said do you want to go. Liz said, "are you crazy, and she said, absolutely not!" "No! End of subject." So I told Roy and he said, "Well that is too bad because I think you would do a good job." He said, "Are you sure that she won't go." I said, "I don't think so." Well suppose the ambassador talked to her. I said, sure why not! So we agreed to have Ambassador Ballard come and have dinner with us at our house. He graciously accepted. And he sat down with us and explained what he was trying to do, his mission and his goals and objectives. And how if we are ever going to make some dent on apartheid in South Africa we had to put our best foot forward. We had to demonstrate to the South Africans that people from diverse backgrounds can indeed live in harmony. And what better way to do that then to have a diverse mission. If we decided to come he would protect us, make certain that nothing happened. That, we would not be discriminated against in anyway and asked us to please consider. Well obviously he impressed Elizabeth because she said and he realized that we had a youngster. He said schooling, housing will not be problems. I guarantee you that. As a matter of fact, I will go back and have my people start working on that right away while you think about it. And she softened a bit and said, okay fine, this man seems sincere and honest. He went back and he had people look into things and schooling would not be a problem. Housing would not be a problem. We could live anywhere we wanted to live. Child could go to any school without any questions asked. So we decided to give it a whirl. Liz was second guessing herself right up until the very end. As a matter of fact we left here in late May early June of 1976 and we decided to stop in Monrovia because Pan Am flew from New York to Roberts Field before continuing on down via Kinshasa to Johannesburg. So we were able to use three or four days off in Monrovia. Morrie Bean was still there to sit with them and chat about the Foreign Service and about life and the decision before heading on down there. Backing up a bit and I don't know, the personnel system was not happy with my decision to go. As a matter of fact the director of the assignments bureau and my assignments officer protested. Well my assignments officer because it was done outside of the system and she was perhaps reflecting CA (Consular Affairs) concerns. Here was I still relatively a junior officer going to replace someone who was an O3 or an O4 when I was still very junior. And I was going to run a consular section.

Q: That was equivalent to the O1 now?

SEGARS: Yes. It was a stretch. It was a real stretch for me. And why was this being done. There were other qualified people to do that job. Well you know how the personnel system works. They sort of force the issue at times. So that issue was forced. And, so the director of personnel assignments bureau and the other people were angry and I chose not to argue with them. If you have problems you go talk to the people who made this happen. I think it is good for my career and I want to do it. You don't have a problem

with me, you have a problem with the system. So you have to go fix the system. Anyhow, back to my point, we stopped in Monrovia on the way down because Liz' sister was not prepared to go right there. So we sort of chilled a bit and then Friday came around. Friday morning came around and Pan Am was back there waiting to ferry us to South Africa. So we hopped on board and started signing and off we went.

Q: How old was your son then?

SEGARS: Ryan was five. He had just turned five. We stopped in Kinshasa and then when as we were about ready to take off from Kinshasa the tears started to pour and we are not turning back now the next stop is Johannesburg. Anyway we got there. One of the amazing things about flying into South Africa at night is that you are flying over this huge vast dark continent. And all of a sudden someone turns on the spotlight and there is South Africa below in all its splendor. It reminds me of flying from Dar es Salam to Jeddah. The same sort of sensation you get at night when you fly into Jeddah and you saw the lights out. We landed on Friday night. The Consul General and the Public Affairs Officer and a few press people were there because by this time it had sort of gotten publicity. The Americans were sending another black officer. Jim Baker was the first to go to Pretoria. Jim did not have a good experience in Pretoria and he didn't have the ambassador's support. The ambassador at that time was a political appointee John Hurd from Texas, who enjoyed quail hunting on Robin Island. So that was the type of person Jim Baker had to work with. So Jim did not stay. So we went and we were the first family to go and the implications for that. So we landed in Johannesburg on June 6th, Friday night, Consul General was there. We spent the night with the Consul General and his wife. Anyway Saturday morning we got up and went back to the house and the maid got up enough courage to come back. But the idea of working for blacks, I guess, was just something that she had never considered. But found the idea very –

Q: This was an African maid?

SEGARS: Yes. Anyhow we got through that and she touched us and felt us and found out we were real people. So things got better. That was our initiation into South Africa. In the morning after we got her sorted out and the neighbors came around. Next door neighbors came and introduced themselves and they had a daughter a little older than our son. Made us feel very welcome to the neighborhood.

Q: These were Africana's?

SEGARS: English speaking whites. And they pointed out that just down the street was a shopping center and if we wanted to borrow their Combi (the Volkswagen bus) to drive away, we were welcome to. We actually took them up on that offer. We went to the shopping center later in the day and went downtown. Found our way downtown and looked around a bit. We sort of got the lay of the land. We spent a relatively quiet weekend at home. And all the neighbors came by and said welcome to the neighborhood. All the South Africans weren't racists, they are actually the best people in the world and they don't have any problems with us.

That was our first weekend. And, of course, Monday on the job now talking about reactions there, they were sort of mixed. Because we had coloreds, Africans speaking whites, we had Asians working in the Consular section. It was a new building basically and when they designed the space for the Consul, the engineers insisted that we put in separate facilities.

Q: The engineers?

SEGARS: The owners, you know you got to have separate toilets. So, okay fine we will put in two toilets. Sure we will. Why not? The more the merrier. But, I will be damned if I will say you have to use this or you have to use that. That is our facility. We will do what we want to do with it. Just so we have them. So that was that. Some of the people were obviously happy.

One lady who worked in the visa office and who was very much admired by the guy I replaced had let it be known that I probably wouldn't last six months. We are going to run him out of here, that sort of thing. And we had some problems initially. And at the same time that I arrived we had another officer who was going to do Consular and admin stuff. She was junior to me, I was her boss. She had problems as well. We finally, got the Consul in to intercede and sort of give directions to this employee and gave her a choice. She had to work with us or she had to find another job. After that was made abundantly clear to her, she was having other problems at home too with (her) family. She was into a marriage (with) a husband with two children that were teenagers and she was coming into it. So she had that baggage to deal with, and we understood. But, it ended up getting along very nicely together because once it was made clear to her that this was the situation and it is going to be like this and the only way you are going to change is if you leave. So she got her act together and we worked well together. That was the only real trouble we had with the staff. We got along very well together, extremely well together. Because I was the boss and they had to come through me and they had to accept that. No choice in the matter.

The South Africans came in and out of the office for various services and they got used to the fact that I was there and that they had to deal with me. I know in the visa office we had a Greek lady and two South Africans, both black, and they processed all the visas. South Africans loved to travel to the United States. So we had a constant visa workload and Pretoria, which is just thirty-five miles away was not doing any tourist visas. So all the Africans came up to us.

Anyway Emma, one of the African ladies was talking to this South African who was applying for a visa, and tried to explain visa procedures to him. He was not understanding her. So Bruna who was the Greek lady explained it to him and he still was not understanding. So I walked into the office while all this was going on. She said, wait a minute, I will call Mr. Segars over. I walked over to the window and here is this guy talking to me. What are you doing, obviously you don't know. I explained to him the situation, that what they said was right. Sandy, who was the young white officer comes

sashaying in so he sees her and so he calls her over because obviously we don't know what we are talking about and she would know what she is talking about, called Sandy over to explain the situation to him. And she said what did he tell you. He explained what I said. She said, well, you know, he is right and besides he is the boss. This man did not know what to do. If he could have gone through that floor he would have. What, he's the what? He's the boss? Anyway there are all kinds of anecdotes about that situation that we found so, so amusing at the time. Disgusting at times but other times you just have to laugh.

Q: Your presence was a significant contribution to the execution of US foreign policy at that time in South Africa?

SEGARS: Well, that is what my efficiency report said. So, I guess that's true. Well we did do some things that led to, I won't say led to but influenced the decisions to do away with what they were calling petty apartheid. Like going into a store and trying on a dress or a pair of shoes without having to buy it. Or going into a decent restaurant and sitting down to have a meal. Or, going to a theater and using the same entrance that everyone else used. At the shopping center "Sandton" that I talked about earlier. We did a lot of shopping there. They had stores where they sold alcoholic beverages and I used to go in all the time. Somehow at some point a conversation came up about how things are so separate. Everything is separate. Separate toilets, everything. The liquor stores have separate entrances. I said, "No, they do not." They said, "Oh yes they do." I said, "No, they don't!" Yes, we know, we know. I argued the point and argued the point because I had never noticed that there were separate entrances for blacks and non-blacks. Because I had just always gone into the first door that I saw. And no one had ever said anything. It wasn't until one day I was in Sandton on the escalator I saw around the corner there was a little separate not even a door, just a window where the non-whites wanted to buy beer or something went to that little window and ordered from there.

The first Saturday we were there it was getting ready for mother's day and I had to go buy some mother's day cards. I went to the shopping center and I go and you know how we go look at cards and we pick them up and read them and we put them back. This young African girl came over to me and said, "Boy! What are you doing?" I looked at her. "What are you doing?" She said, "You know that you boys can't come in here and touch those cards." She said, "You point to me what you want and I will pick it out for you." I said, "Wait a minute, let me tell you two things. Number one, I am not a boy, I am a man and if I am going to pay for this card I am going to be damn well sure what is inside. Once you open your mouth, they know that you are not one of them. So they sort of back off. So I proceeded to pick up my cards and I made my selections. I took it to the counter. A white guy was there and he said, "You are not from here are you?" I said, no. He said, I thought so. Well, unfortunately, we do things differently around here. Yes, I am beginning to notice that. Anyway he took my money and off I went. But that was sort of an initiation too.

We determined, Elizabeth and I, that we were not going to be on the defensive. We were always going to be in an offensive mode. If there were problems, they were South

African problems not ours. We are here, you deal with us. And I must admit that initially we were deliberately provocative. We just saw the signs and we ignored the signs. We went to the Kennedy Center which is just across the street from the office downtown, observation tower on top and we took it up to look through the telescopes and to look at the city. Ryan had to go to the bathroom. And I deliberately took him to the one that said, whites. Sure enough there was a guy a little black guy standing with a uniform on and his job is to make certain that people go into the right toilets. And, of course, he argued with us and to no avail, we did it anyway. And once inside the bathroom there was a white gentleman in there taking care of business. He looked up at me and said, "You people have no shame." Whatever he meant by that. I don't know. Anyway, that began our stay in South Africa.

Q: But there were never any overt acts of violence against you. Once they understood that you were not from there, they just let you go about your way without?

SEGARS: No, there were no overt acts of violence. Although we were going downtown somewhere to a play or a restaurant or something one evening and we parked the car and we were crossing the street and we had the walk light and this white bus driver came along in making a left turn and pretended that he did not see us and we had to sort of scurry to get out of his way. We could have stood there and protested but we would have probably been dead. It would not have done anybody any good. Other than that, no, I saw violence being meted out by whites against blacks. It was a lot of anger among the people. I found the Africans more so than anyone else. They are a very angry people, and vented their frustrations, screaming and shouting and banging on peoples cars and things of that sort. Saw a lot of that. There was a lot of crime and violence in Johannesburg, too. But not directed against us. Not overtly, anyway.

Q: Your status as I understand it was that foreign blacks, especially diplomats were considered as honorary whites? Is that a correct assessment?

SEGARS: You heard it from time to time but it was so farfetched that I don't know how they got the label honorary white, because it didn't work. For instance, we had a big incident in a restaurant Chez Andre's and we told them we were from the American Embassy. This was a five star restaurant and apparently at that level of restaurant you should be able to serve whoever you want to. But we were denied admission much to their regret because there was a big stink later on. But I guess the foreign ministry may have coined that label but it was sort of hilarious. No one really, I would not want to be considered an honorary white. I was very happy with who I was. Why would I want to be an honorary white. My color did not prohibit me from doing what I wanted to do. When we did travel, we took pains to ensure that, because of our young child that we would have places to stay and there would be no problems. We were not confined to Johannesburg. We did get out and do things.

Q: This is Tape 2, Side 2 - December the 13th - Ambassador Joseph Segars - my name is James Dandridge, I am the interviewer for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

So in the end this has no basis for fact, this honorary white, this was probably an characterization that was passed on but nevertheless whenever they encountered you, you were treated as an American Diplomat and not as an African.

SEGARS: We did not wear labels. We very early on in my tenure, we had an office downtown, lots of good restaurants. There were restaurants for whites. There were restaurants for non-whites. As a white you could not go into a non-white restaurant. You had to go into a white restaurant. One of the things people always ask about the differences between apartheid and segregation in the United States. Well, segregation here was more de facto and in South Africa it was de jour. In other words it was not just the whites or the blacks it involved everybody. You had your areas and you were confined to your areas. It was illegal for you to be in other areas without permission. For a guy who grew up in the South, if a white wanted to come live in my neighborhood, he could. I could not live in his neighborhood. But he could if he wanted. There was a difference there. We never wore signs and I went into a non-white restaurant one time and it was very embarrassing because my boss wanted to prove a point to me. And his point was that I am denied entrance into a white restaurant, he is denied admission into a black restaurant. That was not the issue at all. But he took us there so that I could hear the guy tell him that he could not be served. He did that for me and I really appreciated that. Anyhow, the young white officer that I was talking about and I decided to branch out into checking out the restaurants. And we'd walk in, and at first it was strange looks and we would ask for a table for two. We sat down. People would come in and look and then a second look and go on about their business. This went on all the time. We just did things to sort of see what the system would tolerate and what it would not tolerate. We got to know a guy who managed theatre, cinema right downstairs in our building. And he said - I'll tell you what it was, one of the Star Wars movies came out. He said, "why don't you take Ryan to see the Star Wars movie. Are you sure it is okay? Sure no problem. So we go to the theatre in Sandton and we sashay up and we go in and sit down and nobody says anything.

And then, after the restaurant incident which caused a major scandal all over the world. The South African, practical thinking people, became more practical. As a matter of fact, I brought along one of my scrapbooks. I bring these out every now and then. I was struck by one of the commentaries after that incident about: "what price a diplomatic dinner", it is a pity that diplomats don't wear hats with DC stamped on them fore and aft like their cars. How else is a restaurant keeper to avoid the kind of incident that occurred at an expensive Johannesburg establishment this week, when a black American Consular Officer was turned away. The sensible thing for a restaurant to do even in this country is to glance at the customer and if he is sober, decently dressed and looks as though he can pay the price for smoked salmon and filet steak, let him in, whatever the color of his skin.

Q: That was in the local newspaper?

SEGARS: Yes, yes, lots of things. No seat for Mr. Segars. Apologies to diplomat barred from restaurant, says sorry to Mr. Segars. You also had protest and they had a wonderful

caricature.

Q: I will make shots of that.

SEGARS: Okay, of the whole incident. But, yes people as these happened and here is a country at the same time they were talking about sports as a very big issue in South Africa. South Africa lives and dies by sporting teams and the fact that they were denied access to international sporting events really worked on their nerve. They tried everything they could do to sort of make certain that there was equality and equity in sports. They were bragging about the fact that there was very little segregation in sports at the same time I am being kicked out of their restaurant. So every time they were trying to do something. They had another incident when they were really pushing soccer. They played very good soccer. They were getting ready to have this match between one of the best black sides and one of the best white sides. Everyone was all excited about it because at last we were putting these things behind us and coming together and doing things as South Africans. The match was scheduled to be held in Soweto. Whites normally need a permit to go to Soweto. It's a black township. You can't be there unless the government says it is okay. So they decided to waive that restriction but then decided the whites couldn't go anyway. Why? Because there were no separate toilet facilities. The brainless things that they did, all the time. For example, on beaches in Durban a skull washed ashore. They spent thousands of rand doing forensic studies on that skull to determine the ethnic origin of it so it could be given a proper burial. The newspapers found out about it and just made a field day out of the whole crazy thing. But that was just the mind set of some of the people in that country. And some of the more conservative provinces in the Orange Free States as you are driving through and it is okay to have toilets for *blockies* and *ne blockies* (black and non blacks) but then in some places like free states they have toilets for whites, blacks, coloreds and Asians. The money they spent on dual advertisements. Everything has to be in African and in English programming. It was wild. I don't want to go off on a discourse here but that was some of the things.

Q: It was a significant experience, diplomatic experience. Did you find that in the performance or execution of your diplomatic responsibilities, were there any reactions positively or negatively? You already talked about one earlier. Were there any other experiences?

SEGARS: There was a case of a white American family traveling sort of vagabonds throughout Africa and they pitched up in Johannesburg. The lady was mentally imbalanced and a young son of about twelve years old who was a real hard case. A father, I don't know where he was. He was three sheets to the wind. He had taken his passport and mutilated it, added pages and taken out pages and all kinds of things. The passport was that thick. So they arrived in South Africa. I don't know how they got to South Africa. Anyway he landed in jail. She ended up in a home for the mentally disturbed, the boy in an orphanage. And we got wind of his incarceration and I had to go down to John Foster Square, the same place where people would seriously be falling out of windows and all kind of things, to visit this guy. Of course he is white and I am going to the white side. And the big Africana cop and you walk into the door, well, what is he

doing here. So before they could chain him, I pull out my diplomatic ID so that puts them at ease a bit. So then we can converse. I said, I am here to see, his name was Forman. He said, Oh you mean George Foreman. Ha! Ha! Ha! I did not crack a smile. I don't think that is the name. Anyway he sort of got back on his job and found the guy's name in the book - your light is blinking is it okay? He found him and so he escorted me to his cell and I go inside and I am sitting and talking to this man and I see his passport. I really start going after him, you know. How could he allow himself in the position with a wife and a child and this crazy story and this big cop is looking at me. Why is he talking to him like that? It is amazing. Foreman was being just as polite to explain and I was sort of giving him fits. This guy could not believe that, could not believe that. Anyway it took us about six months, we had dealt with that family for six months trying to get them sorted out. Finally, got them out of the country, repatriated back to the United States. We finally found the woman's mother living in New York. So we were able to get them out of the country but having to deal with the South African officials who were not very sympathetic in the first place was painstaking, it really was.

Q: This is a good point to stop today's session.

SEGARS: Okay.

Q: November the 20th - My name is James Dandridge, I am the interviewer for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training for the Oral History Bunche Legacy project. Today we are interviewing Ambassador Joseph Segars and we will pick up Ambassador Segars from Tape 2 where we left off and our last discussion about your experiences in South Africa. Would you like to share some of the official and socio-cultural experiences that you had while assigned to the US mission there?

SEGARS: Well, there was a lot excitement generated by the news of us being assigned there and actually arriving in Johannesburg. There were a lot of mixed feelings as well about our being there. While some thought it was high time, most Americans and South Africans, other from both sides saw it as perhaps US interference, involvement that was considered an internal South African affair. So you got mixed feelings from both sides. At the same time there was resentment on the part of some South African blacks over this idea of sending blacks to South Africa. Many felt it led creditability to the apartheid system. And we were very, very concerned about this and concerned about our own posture. We did not want to alienate them, particularly the blacks. So our approach to them was very deliberate. We tried at all times to ensure them of our sincerity and our concern about the situation there and how we felt we could best blend in and help that situation.

The embassy, within the embassy itself, which was located in Pretoria about thirty-five miles from Johannesburg. There were unfortunately some members of the staff who felt that the system was fine and did not need to be changed. Ambassador Bowdler was constantly fighting this battle to sort of change the attitudes and the atmosphere within the embassy. We knew where he stood on it. So people who felt the system was okay had to painstakingly mask their true feelings. The military in particular and I guess brothers in

arms tend to sort of join together. So from a military point of view things were fine because of South Africa's so called support for the West. And she was physically a defensive friend in the neighborhood of the United States. So we had that argument. There were constant battles being fought all the time against the system and the African people who ran the system.

I found the English speaking whites very interesting. They were a conglomerate of British, former British subjects, Italians, Greeks, Israel's. They were, of course, in public the most outspoken opponents of the apartheid system. Of course, they were in a very vulnerable position. They pretended to be liberal. As a matter of fact, we had an expression when it came to discussing the English speaking whites, particularly the British. They talked liberal, voted conservatively and thanked God for the Nationalist Party. Because it helped to keep their status secure.

Q: Did you find that there were - How about the rest of the diplomatic community, was there much interaction between the US mission and other diplomatic missions on these areas of mutual concern?

SEGARS: I can't speak about Pretoria because I was not very much involved in that. Johannesburg, there were not that many official foreign governments present. The Taiwanese were there and of course they were sort of hanging on to their precarious position with the United States and whether or not to recognize one China or two China's. We were at the point where we were about ready to accept the idea of one China. They were very close to us. Others, I did not really notice that much because we were preoccupied with the South Africans and if we saw foreign diplomats it was at somebody else's function. At the Consul General's reception, 4th of July reception, our interaction was almost exclusively with the South Africans.

Q: Did you personally have any kinds of close contacts with South Africans who might have shared with you their concerns about the system as it was and their hopes for what South Africa could be potentially?

SEGARS: Every conversation you had with the South Africans, be they black or white focused on those issues. They are very, very political. Every conversation was about politics. Every social event, every dinner, every lunch the subject of politics in South Africa's position vs. the world, the United States in particular was discussed. White South Africans tried to convince you that they were victims of the system. They wanted to change but they were powerless to do anything about it. Blacks could not understand that. Some could but most of them did not. Blacks, I found them amazingly, surprisingly compromising and willing to live and let live. Despite the hardships they were experiencing. They were genuinely hoping for a better day and hoping the change would come by peacefully. When you have things like Soweto, the prospects for peaceful change sort of distance themselves. Whites see it as Armageddon or the coming of Armageddon and they are afraid. Blacks who hold out for peaceful change are concerned. The older the South African blacks were the more passive they were. The youngsters were the ones who were beginning to raise hell. The youngsters started the Soweto

uprisings. The youngsters were sort of taking over. The older generations, including parents were becoming alienated by these youngsters.

Q: Now, since these were continuing topics of interest at representational functions and representational functions, as I understand, were mixed, did you notice anything unusual about the interaction between South African blacks and the South African whites, the Africana's, the English speaking, did you notice anything?

SEGARS: Yes, very interesting! It was amazing how well they got along. They disagreed but they were not disagreeable in their disagreement. They talked about the issues. Blacks told whites what they needed to do and whites tried to explain what they were trying to do. And oftentimes how they felt their efforts were going unnoticed and certainly unappreciated. But these were always very lively exchanges.

I can always remember Ambassador Bowdler called me one day and said Congressman Diggs was coming to town and it was around Thanksgiving and he asked since he was going to be in Johannesburg, if I would have him and his entourage over for dinner. Of course, I readily agreed. And so we had Charles come over and his friends and we had a marvelous dinner and of course we invited South Africans. It was a good opportunity for them to get together and to have these exchanges. Of course, Congressman Diggs was always an outspoken opponent of apartheid and I remember one session where he actually came into the country in transit and was hoping he would be allowed in and he was not. So we met at the airport and we had an exchange at the airport. Sometimes South Africans gave him visas and sometimes they did not. When it suited them it was okay, when it did not, it did not. Also we had the privilege of being involved in an affair at the ambassador's residence in Pretoria at which Andy Young was the featured guest and so there again we had a dinner. It was mixed. South Africans of all walks of life and all colors were there. They exchanged views and all. Ambassador Bowdler was also a thorn in their side for the South Africans, they did not like his message, did not like his message. I remember one event at the hotel downtown at the Kennedy Center where he addressed a group of white South African business people. He talked about the need to change. That America had sort of come to grips with its own racial problems and the South Africans had to do the same thing. The South African's reaction was, why are you preaching to us? We are preaching to you because your soul needs to be saved! The salvation can be easy, it can be hard but if it doesn't happen soon, it is going to be very, very difficult. So our message to South Africa was always very strong and to the point, particularly after Vice President Mondale met with Prime Minister Foster in Vienna. There were all kinds of funny cartoons in the paper about the dance in the Vienna Woods and about the message that the Vice President delivered to Foster, basically that we are not going to come to your defense because you brought this upon yourselves and we are trying to help you make a peaceful change. And things got out of hand and you are left to your own devices. And, of course, this was good, good, field for us to use in our conversation with the South Africans. I was invited to address the Johannesburg Rotary, the Southern district, which is down near John Foster Square. They wanted me to deliver a message. I gladly accepted. I don't know what they thought I was going to say. But what I said was not very well received because I basically repeated the Vice President's

message. At the end some thanked me, some told me I said what needed to be said, others got the same reaction, why are you preaching to us? Why are you trying to dictate to us? I recall one young lady who was there at the end when we were getting ready to leave. She walked up to me and she said, "Oh, I enjoyed your speech so much." And she told me I always wanted to meet a black. And I said to her, dear lady just a few kilometers down the road there is the largest black community in all of South Africa, it is called Soweto. There are blacks who would love to meet you too but somehow they did not see the connection there. So, these were the kinds of things that you were constantly confronted with. The message needed to be repeated was always very, very, constant.

Q: So in summing up your experiences in South Africa, besides your presences as far as major contributions to the execution of US policy abroad and in South Africa in particular, is there anything that you can think of that you can directly attribute to any action that you took in making a significant contribution to the furtherance of US policy in South Africa?

SEGARS: I think we sort of and I am not saying that it was designed this way but I think that I was surprised, we were surprised at the level of receptivity in the country. We didn't wear signs that said that we were diplomats. And, people did not know we were diplomats or foreigners until we started talking. Of course, the language sort of gives you away. But prior to that, we sort of went about our business and people looked and stared but there was not an awful lot of opposition to our being in places where we normally would not be where the law says you should not be here because of the color of your skin; bathrooms, libraries not just in downtown Johannesburg but everywhere we went.

There were some amusing incidents, of course. And people sort of voiced their displeasure and reacted in ways which said, what are you doing here. I remember going on a walking safari in the Natal Province in Krueger Game Park. We drove to Durbin which is on the coast to meet our people who were the equivalent of the Audubon Society. They sponsored nature walks in the game parks. We had to drive from Durbin, they picked us up in Durbin and we drove out of Durbin up towards Richard's Bay and along the way about 10 o'clock in the morning we decided to take a tea break. So there are seven of us, seven Americans and our game guide. I am the only black and so we stop in this place in Natal, we walk in and we go to a table and sit down. This big fat waitress looked and she said to us, she came over to us and said, I am sorry but we are not allowed to serve foreigners. One of our party was a father of one of our spouses who had come over from Germany, Gruther. My first reaction was, well "gee whiz" she is talking about Gruther. It was not Gruther, I was the problem. Anyway she fussed and she fussed and our game guide who was South African told her we were from the United States, the laws did not apply to us including myself and she went away. She was not happy but to sort of prove her point she came back ten minutes later, we were actually having our tea and cakes by then. She came back and said, well I called the authorities and they said it is okay if you stay. Of course, she had not called the authorities but she wanted to make a point.

So in another time we decided to drive from Johannesburg to Cape Town because this is

the best way to see the country, because South Africa is a beautiful, beautiful country. So many wonderful sights. As you drive through you say, my God! There is enough here for everybody, more than enough for everybody. You are talking about 30 million people in a land-of-plenty. You can share it and you won't even miss it. But anyway we drove to Cape Town and we stopped in route because it is a long, very long drive. We did it in three stages. One night we spent in the KwaZulu, of course that is not a problem. One night along the coast and one night closer into South Africa. But because we were driving and it was my wife and my son and myself and our friends accompanying us part of the way, we called ahead to make certain that they knew we were coming because you don't want to be in the middle of nowhere and have no place to lay your head. So we did make plans and there were never any problems. One place, Grahamstown, we stopped at a Holiday Inn, I think it was Grahamstown and we were sitting, we checked in and no problems because they knew we were coming. We went to dinner and of course the kitchen staff, the word gets around, there is something going on out here. So everyone sorts of peeking through the kitchen door to see this phenomenon. And one couple, seated across from us was very curious. And they were talking obviously about us. So finally the woman's curiosity got the better of her. She got up and she walked over and she said to me and my wife, "I have just bet my husband that you are Donald McHenry.

Q: Ambassador Donald McHenry?

SEGARS: Yes. And I said, how much did you bet him? And she said I bet him 20 rand. That was about 20 dollars. And I said, well you will have to go pay him. Because I am sorry I am not him. They were very bemused by it. But it was this kind of thing that happened. But back to your point about changes, I think that our presence in Johannesburg and going about and shopping and my wife could write a book about her exploits shopping, seeing us act and react and people said, blacks and whites did not have this kind of action and interaction as we had. So I think that our doing so well, people got the idea that "gee whiz" there is nothing wrong with sitting down at a table and having a meal with this person, having a beer with this person or smoking a cigar with this person. They are okay, its okay the water is just fine. In South Africa there were several levels of apartheid. One called petty apartheid. Petty apartheid petty being small and insignificant, I guess, still very compelling to people who have to live under that system. Sitting on park benches that are labeled, or going to the zoo and having to go into a separate entrance. Or, going into a store and being able to try on a pair of shoes or try on a dress or hat without having to buy it. Going to a theatre where people are all mixed up. And we did these things. The downtown merchants association said "gee whiz" a whole lot of black people who come to Johannesburg on a daily basis, a lot of money. So you begin to factor these things in. Well "gee whiz" if I let them come into my store and shop like everyone else it is going to benefit me. And these ideas sort of caught on. So I think that you had there at the beginning of the breaking down the petty apartheid. My wife took kids to Burger King. My son had a birthday party and she took his black friends and his white friends to Burger King. They came to the house to swim in the swimming pool. We had a colored employee who worked for USIS, Basil Lorenza. We decided to spend a weekend in Sani Pass which is in Natal a border between Lesotho and Natal. It is sort of an Africana hot spot but we decided to go anyway and we took Basil and his wife. Now it

is okay for me because I am a foreigner and I can get away with it but Basil has no protection at all. He was willing to go and we went and had a marvelous time. They told us that while we were welcomed that we couldn't dance. So we coined this little phrase. You can eat and sleep but you can't pat your feet. Well we sort of forgot that we couldn't dance. So everyone got up and we danced and we had a marvelous time, including Basil. So, yes we did these things because we wanted to drive the point home that it is okay to mix. Good things happen when you mix. You get to know each other. And once you begin to talk to each other you find that you have a lot of things in common. You are all human beings. We bleed the same color blood, red. Yes, the message we sent, the fact that we were friends of South Africa we are all South Africans. We wanted to help, we wanted to see the country preserved because it had a lot to offer, lots of potential. I always said that if the South Africans could get their act together, they would be head and shoulders above all other Africans because they have that kind of potential. It was just being stuck under the rug.

Q: This is tape 3, Side B - Ambassador Joseph Segars, I am James Dandridge interviewer for the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training for the Bunche Legacy Project. Ambassador Segars how about the situation in some of the areas such as Soweto? What were some of the observations and experiences that you had there?

SEGARS: When we arrived in Johannesburg, of course a few days later the riots broke out in Soweto. We were not in a hurry to get to Soweto because here again we are very sensitive about our position. Very sensitive about how the South Africans, especially the black South Africans felt about our being there. So we did not rush head long out to Soweto in the contexts that we were the saviors, here we come. We did it very gradually. Once things quieted down in Soweto, we begin thinking about going there. Fortunately for us we met a minister, Reverend David Nkwe and his wife at a social event in Johannesburg. David and Maggie invited us to visit their church. So we said, yes, we would love to come. So we had never been to Soweto and we were driving by ourselves and we decided to venture out on Sunday morning and eventually got there. Found the church and we had a marvelous, marvelous time. Struck up a very good relationship with the Reverend Nkwe and his wife Maggie. Elizabeth shared her interest in caring for youngsters and became very involved in a crèche in Soweto which is run by Maggie. I mentioned earlier the risk that people took by mixing, because mixing was just against the law. Whites couldn't go into black areas. Blacks couldn't come into white areas except for specific purposes namely to work. Once the work is done, go back to your townships. So they took chances. In the aftermath of Soweto, there was a tremendous and brutal police crackdown on dissidents, suspected dissidents, people who were accused of being dissidents, people who continued to mix and talk about things politically in those days called the suppression of communism act. And somehow a lot of things could be construed as communistic and you could be arrested, accused of being communist. Oftentimes people who were arrested, although they were quite innocent, often confessed. They confessed because they were being tortured and brutalized. In many cases killed. Of course, the police said that a person who somehow was being interrogated on the 8th floor at John Foster Square tried to flee by jumping out of the window. Well, if you are tied to a chair and you jump out of a window, that is pretty

tricky.

I personally know of people who were arrested as a matter of fact one gentleman was arrested on a Sunday afternoon after leaving my house. He was arrested, taken to jail and lucky for us and lucky for him the embassy became aware of his detention and former Senator Dick Clark who knew this gentleman got wind of it and asked us to remain engaged, involved and to follow things. Well, the gentleman was eventually released from prison and I had a chance to meet him at church in Soweto, Reverend Nkwe's church and we were all glad to see him and to see that he was still alive. He was accused of being a terrorist and harboring terrorists. The police said they found guns and ammunition and dynamite etc. etc. etc., in his vehicle. If they were there, they were probably planted. Anyway, Enoch was released. I talked to him and he recounted some of the things which had happened to him in prison, including taking a pair of pliers and pulling out his pubic hairs one by one. These were the kinds of things that went on at John Foster Square and in other prisons. He was so shaken by that affair. I said what are you going to do. He said I am going to stay and fight. But he had second thoughts and he left. He was just scared to death.

Donald Woods who was a noted journalist came to my office one afternoon just after the Biko murder. Don had given a ringing lecture at the University of Witwatersrand. WITS was an open university, multi-racial. He gave us a ringing lecture and stinging rebuke of the government for actually having murdered Biko. It was murder. I don't care what they say. It was plain and simple, murder. Anyway a few days later Don came to my office. He said he was beginning to feel a little pressure and he wanted to take his family and go to the states for awhile and so he came in about, oh, 11 O'clock on Friday, morning. He applied and got visas for himself and his family. I am listening to the news and watching the news that night and he had been picked up at 4 O'clock by the police. He was held for a few days and questioned at length. And had his passport confiscated. Anyway after his release, he fled the country again it was out of fear. These things happened all the time. And people wanted to talk about it and make sure that we were aware of what was going on.

Q: Now what do you attribute to his being picked up? Do you think they knew he had applied for a visa to come to the US? How did they get that information?

SEGARS: Yes. Oh, they watched us. They listened to us. All the time and we knew it. Remember when we first got there, it took an awful long time to get telephones. People were on the list, waiting list five or six years for telephones. And, of course we needed a telephone. We needed to be in touch with our embassy at all times. And so the telephone authorities promised that they would move expeditiously on getting a phone for us. And, of course, Elizabeth had met people and they wanted to call her and meet with her and take her out and see things. And the only way they could communicate with her was through me, calling me at the office. So, about a week after we were there, still no phone despite the many promises and I am talking to one of her friends on the phone. She said, Joseph I tried, you people don't have a phone, yet. Well, no, the authorities promised a phone for us and it just has not happened. Forty-five minutes later the telephone people

were at my wife's, at our house with the telephone. And they knew very well who came to our house because they watched. They sat and they watched. Yes, they knew. It was called the acronym was BOSS, (Bureau of State Security). It was a well organized apparatus for spying on people and they had lots of informants, including many blacks. People informed because of money, people informed because they were intimidated. You think that somebody could come to your house at 2 O'clock in the morning, 4 O'clock in the morning and pick you up and you could never be heard from again. You just disappear. This was the kind of condition people lived under and it was frightening. I marvel at the strength and courage of those people who lived under that system.

Q: You don't need to go to respond to this if you don't want to. How secure did you feel about your own Foreign Service nationals that were working with you in your section?

SEGARS: Oh they were a good group. I think for the most part with the exception of one who may have been working for the Rhodesians because we did a lot of Rhodesian - when I was there we had no presence in Salisbury, so Rhodesians who were eligible always came to the Johannesburg consulate and I suspect one of the Rhodesians who was transplanted to Joe Burke when we closed our mission down in Salisbury may have had significant ties with the government. But beyond that I think they were pretty good. We had four or five black South Africans, we had in the commercial section we had two Afrikaners, we had coloreds and we had Asians and we had English speaking whites. We were a diverse group. But all in all they were very good people.

Q: Very good. Is there anything else about South Africa that you think would be useful to relate in this series?

SEGARS: When I left South Africa, I left with a deep sense of foreboding. Because I just felt that it was going to come apart in a very, very tragic way. I mean, apartheid and racial hatred was so entrenched and you could understand why if you were an African how you would resist change because you are poor, uneducated, the memories of the Boer Wars with the British which were bloody and a lot of people died, are still very much etched in their minds. The Broederbund, the Afrikaner society which sort of ran everything was created to look after the Afrikaner folk. And to protect them from *swart gavaar*, you know, this black danger to the poor Afrikaner, the black, the non white, even the English were their enemy. They had to constantly be on their guard. If not, they were going to be overwhelmed. You talk about a nation of 25 million blacks and approximately six or seven million whites including the British and the English and Afrikaner speakers. The threat of being overwhelmed was real to them and if somebody is constantly preaching this to your mind, if you give the black the vote it's going to be like the bloody treks all over again. Back to the days of fighting the Zulu at Rorke's Drift and places like that. There was a concerted effort to keep them in their place and on their reserves and in their townships and under watch at all times. Otherwise, they could break out and take over it is the end for you. The Afrikaners were also concerned because they had no place to go. They were African. They left Holland, they left France, they left wherever in Europe, to come there seeking freedom. They found it and now somebody is trying to take it away from them. And the alternative is to be pushed into the sea. So they

fought very hard to hang on to that fragile existence. In their mindset Vorster and Verwoerd and people like that made certain that it was ingrained in their minds so they could never give in. So when I left there was this deep sense of foreboding and this deep entrenchment toward antipathy, hatred of anything that was not white. It was absolute mistrust. I was not certain that there would ever be a peaceful settlement, certainly not in my lifetime, certainly not in my lifetime. But then I went back to South Africa in 1982, an orientation visit in connection with my new job at State as desk officer for Zimbabwe. Although things were a little better, I landed at the Airport. I got a taxi to go into town. Taxis were no longer, no longer two cues. It was no longer a black cue and a white cue, any taxi would take you anywhere. So I was talking to this white taxi driver and we were sort of reliving the good old days and he said well, what changes do you see? And before I could answer, he said well you don't see any because there really have not been any. Those were his own words which I found interesting. So when Mandela was released and taken out of Robins Island and put into a home we were very, very surprised. Then when they called for elections and I was, we were just floored. My wife and I were sitting upstairs in the bedroom on a Sunday afternoon and to see that man walk out of prison, just brought tears to our eyes. We were just so elated and just so happy. I know that many, many white South Africans who shed tears that day as well because they had been spared the apocalypse that certainly would have come. Because Steve Biko said things were becoming so entrenched shortly after the Soweto riots. When you white folks start loving we will return to hating. Exact words. And this was in the minds of many, many whites. The first white person killed in Soweto, Professor Edelstein was a good, good person, a good, good person. The fact that he was in Soweto was proof of that. He was there trying to uplift the plight of those kids. But he was white and the kids were angry and all they saw was a white face. Because little Hector [Pieterse] twelve years old had been shot by a South African policeman. Why? Because in the words of the South African policeman, he was agitating the crowd. He took his rifle and shot him in the head. Killed him. Twelve years old. You have these highs and you have these lows as well. We had fun. People said well, how did you enjoy it. Well you don't enjoy it. You experience it. Your emotions run the gambit. You have your highs, your lows, your peaks and your valley's. Some days were much better than others. But some days were really, really bad.

Q: Before we rush off, you touched on some, I think, some very salient points here. Was there another Mandela. When I say another Mandela. Mandela obviously was the agent, the catalytic agent for positive change in South Africa and you talk about the emotional responses that Africans, Afrikaners and anyone else who was there when he walked out of his imprisonment were there any other potential Mandela's?

SEGARS: Biko probably would have come the closest. Buthelezi saw himself in that role but very few people outside of the Zulu world shared his views on that.

Q: He was having problems with the party.

SEGARS: Thatcher was seen by the blacks as being cooperative. Although he did not accept the concept of an independent homeland, the KwaZulu, he was still seen as being

too close to the government. Buthelezi saw himself as a leader of all South Africans but beyond the Zulu community and whites who thought he could be cooperative, he did not have a lot of respect. He was a charismatic person and we got to know him quite well. Talked a lot with us. But we did not see him as a somebody who would have nationwide acceptance. So beyond Biko, I can't recall any other names that come to mind who could have been a Mandela. As a matter of fact, I doubt very seriously at that time. Because another thing that you have to understand too is that the black leadership was in exile for the most part or in jail. All of them, the members of the PAC, the ANC they were all in refugee camps in Dar es Salaam or just near Dar es Salaam or other places that were not in South Africa because they had all been chased away. There was no one in the country and no one outside of the country with recognition that would be acceptable to both blacks and whites. No outsider and no Black South African outsider would be accepted because he would be accused of being communist. There is a lot of concern about communism in South Africa. Those living on the outside were communist sympathizers, supporters or at least being supported by the communist party. They would not have been trusted by the whites.

Q: Do you know and again you don't have to respond to this, but was there any kind of dialogue between the US mission and the South African government and the US mission and Mandela or was there any kind of dialogue anywhere in there as far as the negotiated terms of not just release but of change in South Africa by releasing Mandela?

SEGARS: Not during my stay. No. We were not there. We were talking to them constantly about the need to change and to open the country up to give blacks a full state book politically and economically in the country. Our message was if you don't, it is going to be awful. You see what is going on all around you. What is going on in Rhodesia and in Southwest Africa? The same is going to happen here on a much grander scale. Our message to them was a need for change. A constant message was a need to change, for peaceful change to avoid bloodshed. Having enough bloodshed as it was. But in respect to Mandela being released, not during my period. I suspect later on in the late 70's, the later 70's and early 80's that may have been part of the agenda.

Q: How did we treat the homeland territories in existence when you were there, the Lesotho and Swaziland?

SEGARS: Lesotho and Swaziland were independent countries. Lesotho and Swaziland and Botswana were all neighboring countries. Yes, the homelands did come into being during my tenure there. Of course, we did not recognize any of them. We saw this as a ruse to get out of - the South African blacks did not accept this. Well, some did. The Transkei, the Bophuthatswana, and a few accepted independence. Mangope was one of the leaders who opted for independence. But you are talking about 15% of the country being divided up among 25 million people. And 15% of the country with maybe one percent of the country's total assets and resources is not going to work. The homeland was a British idea that came about during British occupation of South Africa. They were set aside as reserves for labor and so the government then sort of built upon that. Well since we have these areas that have been set aside let's make them independent and our

homelands. Since you want to govern yourselves and you want a stake in government you can go govern yourselves and Transkei. But, of course, we did not buy on to that. That did not really fly. And then you had the increasing pressure, internal pressure, I always said that South Africa was going to change when South Africa decided was in its own best interest to change. We could talk until we were blue in the faces until the ruling establishment decided that it is in its best interest to change. That is when change would take place. We just could not, no matter how much we preached, force them to do it. I didn't see it happening.

Q: Anything else significant about South Africa?

SEGARS: After I left South Africa and well a few years after I left, I decided I was offered an opportunity to go to the university mid-career training and so I decided to go to Bloomington, Indiana. Indiana University has a very good African Studies Institute. I decided to go there and I did quite a bit of research and writing on Southern Africa. One of the things I wrote in one of my papers was the economic potential South Africa had and how it would influence Africa from an economic perspective once it became independent. It had just that much potential. Even then some African countries were dealing with South Africa sort of under the table but certainly they were having ongoing economic transactions in some African states. I went to Kenya for a conference once from Johannesburg and although South Africans in transit between Europe and South Africa. The plane landed at Jomo Kenyatta Airport, South Africans could not get off the plane. They had to stay there but we got off because we were going to a conference. And would you believe I was able to exchange my rand. That is in Nairobi National Bank. So, we talked about the economic potential, yea and I said that once this country gets its act together it is going to become an African leader in all aspects. That is surely happening.

Q: What happened next?

SEGARS: We left in 1978, we transferred to Jamaica. I guess as a reward I got a decent job. We had the Consul General and I was his deputy. Here again it was a job above my grade but because, I guess, having endured South Africa. If he can do South Africa he can probably do this job. Fortunately for me, shortly after I arrived the Consul General decided to retire. So the ambassador called me in and asked me if I thought I could run the office. We had about thirteen junior officers and a staff of forty-four and a very, very, busy, busy visa issuing post. I told him, yes, I could and he said well the job is yours. So I became the Acting Consul General in Kingston.

Q: Now you mention that again this was a stretch assignment and your last assignment in South African was a stretch assignment. Was there a promotion while you were in South Africa?

SEGARS: No.

Q: No! Any awards?

SEGARS: I got promoted just after I got to Jamaica. That probably was attributed to South Africa.

Q: We are going to change the tape.

SEGARS: Okay!

Q: My name is James Dandridge interviewer for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History, Bunch Legacy Project with Ambassador Segars. This is tape number four side A. We are now in Jamaica and you are now in another stretch assignment. Were there any favorable personnel actions that took place during your prime assignment in South Africa, were there any promotions, were there any awards, any special recognitions?

SEGARS: No special recognition. I learned subsequent to my leaving South Africa that somebody in personnel had indicated that we ought to do something nice for Segars after this is over. I don't know what they had in mind but I don't recall anything really nice happening. As a matter of fact, I doubt that Jamaica was my first choice of a job. But anyhow it was a substantial job so we decided to go. It was close to home. A very pleasant climate, a nice departure from Johannesburg or so we thought.

The only negative about the job was the fact that we could not take our dog. I can recall our son who was about seven at the time saying, I ain't going to that Jamaica. Anyway we convinced him that we could get him a very nice dog in Jamaica because we could not take the dog to Jamaica because of the quarantine problems. Jamaica was an island country, had no rabies and didn't want any rabies on the island. So we went minus "pasha" who was our standard poodle.

It was interesting when we got there. I found in many ways that attitudes, similar attitudes we found that, "we, they, syndrome" in Jamaica. We said it was as though we had never left Johannesburg. This was very, very, obvious from the looking for a place to live. We had a realtor. My boss who was white, the Consul General arrived just before I did, so he did not really settle. We were house hunting at the same time. We were living in a transit apartment compound. We talked and we exchanged notes about housing and I found out that the landlord was showing him one caliber of house and showing my wife and I a totally different caliber. His response, when questioned was well I did not think you could afford it. I think it was more than that. And so we had that we - they syndrome in Jamaica. We reminded Jamaicans about it too. And they denied that it existed but it was there. It was a color thing with them. All the policeman were very dark. All the soldiers were fair. I recall the Foreign Minister P. J. Patterson was one of the few dark skinned people in the government. The others were very, very fair. And engaging Jamaicans in conversations, they always talked about we and they. One day my wife said, "who are the they" and she said aren't you Jamaican? And the person said, yes. But they really talk down to each other.

Anyhow it was a very interesting job very tough job. Because of the Jamaicans desire to

travel to the United States, plus we had a very, very severe public relations problem because of the previous ambassador's attitude towards Jamaicans. We had just moved into a new consular operations which is a few blocks down the street from the embassy. And when it was being put together, the building was being put up, first floor of the building he was concerned about the expenditure involved in putting in toilets. He said, why can't they just go outside. Yes, exactly. So this is the kind of image we had to live down and sort of restore the good name of the United States.

Q: Was the previous ambassador a career ambassador or political ambassador?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! You guess. He was political. I think his name was Sumner Gerard. Who had been appointed by I guess it would have been Reagan. No! Probably Nixon or Ford, one of the two. Republican from Texas. So as I mentioned earlier on, you get one or two political appointees who are really, really top notch but often times that is not the case. Anyway Jamaica was nice, the work was hard but we survived and the two years went very quickly. There were a lot of things you could do to blow off steam, playing golf, and the lovely beaches on the coast which made it very, very interesting.

Q: Now when you got this assignment had you had any contact with the ambassador who was there when you arrived? Did you know anything about him? Did you know whether he passed on your assignment or not?

SEGARS: In Kingston?

Q: In Kingston.

SEGARS: No. Because the ambassador was given considerable leeway in to selecting his deputy and his secretary. Other than that they were discouraged from being involved in the personnel selection process. I must say though that I mentioned to you earlier on in my conversation regarding to South Africa and Roy Haverkamp who was the Director of Southern African Affairs. By the time I was ready to go on to Jamaica, Roy was DCM in Kingston. So he certainly vouched for me. As a matter of fact, my boss when his deputy was reassigned in the interim between that and my arrival had attempted to put somebody else in that position and I would take over the third slot. Well Roy intervened and said, no way is that going to happen. He was assigned to this job and this is the job he is going to have when he gets here. And when he told me about that after the fact, well I am glad that you did because had I gotten here and that job was no longer available, I would not have unpacked my bags. So it was nice to have him there looking out for me. But the point where you talked about earlier about rewards and all, there were no special accommodations for South Africa but I did receive very good efficiency reports. And I suspect as a result of that I was promoted. I got promoted shortly after arriving in Kingston. It was certainly not because anything that I had done there because I had only just arrived. So our ambassador who was a career officer called me on the phone and said, Is that Segars? I said, yes. He said is that Joseph Segars? I said, yes sir. He said, well Segars you have just been promoted, congratulations. Of course, that was very, very nice. And then to the whole personnel system was undergoing a transformation and

positions were being changed around. We were moving away from the FSO 7 through 1 process. It became a bit more accelerated so my position was also changed. So I think I became a FSO 3 which was quite nice. It was also a substantial salary jump.

Q: A FSO 3 then was equivalent to the Class 1 now.

SEGARS: Yes, exactly.

Q: Which, was the last notch before the senior Foreign Service.

SEGARS: Yes. So that was quite nice, quite nice. It made the job even more appealing.

Q: How about the country team, what kind of country team did you have in Kingston?

SEGARS: Well the country team consisted of all the elements of the mission: AID, Peace Corps, Defense, of course, the major embassy components. And I was a very active participant in that. It meant leaving my office and walking a few blocks down the street every Tuesday or Monday whenever they met. But certainly we did that. I took one of my young officers with me. We had our own staff meeting the very next day and that officer was responsible for reporting back to the officers exactly what went on. I wanted to have him involved in the entire process. Except for my first assignment, I always had people working, I always had subordinates. And I felt very responsible for their development just as people were responsible for mine. So I involved them in all levels and certainly that was a big part of Kingston which had for the most part, I think we had for all accounts, the Consul General, myself and another person out of about fifteen people all except three were junior officers, first tour.

Q: So you rotated those areas of experience and responsibilities among the junior officers that were subordinate to you? Did you pick out a particular person?

SEGARS: We rotated it. We all wore shirts and ties. We treated our visitor applicants with dignity and respect. Because I tried to impress upon them, "You are going to say no to a lot of people". And no matter how nice you say no it is always going to be interpreted as a negative response, nasty response. So you have to be very mindful of that. Of course we were at a point where we had a public relations problem to sort of live down.

Q: So those problems stayed on for some time from the previous ambassador, the public relations problems?

SEGARS: Well, we did a better job at crowd control. We took away the bull horns. These are not cattle, these are people. You don't need bull horns with them. You have office hours. We were going to interview so many people per day. We accept applicants until 10:00 after that we don't accept any. Because we just can't do them all. And we are not going to have burnout on the visa line as they called it. Interviewing people from 9 to 5 it just doesn't happen. There are other things that officers have to do.

Q: What were some of the other remnants of the consular-visa activities from the previous chief of mission. I understand that there was a modification of the windows also where visas were issued.

SEGARS: Yes, we had put in place windows. There were openings in them, visa applicants on one side and the interviewing officer on the other side. And you have to make them, you have to improve your acoustics, the audio portion so that it does not appear that you are having these shouting matches back and forth. There must be ease in communications because otherwise it is just chaotic. You have five or six people interviewing along the line and everybody is shouting well it is really, really bad. Also you have to ease transition from the waiting room to the visa interviewing room. And so that you move people around and there again you are not herding cattle you are moving people So, you want to make access easier and you got to be aware of security precautions as well and create a situation whereby there is a tendency for fraud and misrepresentation, for buying visas, for paying people's fees for getting visas. Quitting the perception that people inside can be bought. So you monitor your waiting room to see what is going on. To see only people there who are applying for visas who are not people that exploit those who are applying for visas. That happened and so you have to make your young officers aware of that. The idea that a person can walk into the office with a bunch of visas applications and a bunch of passports and give them to somebody and visas are issued and you find that, that person is going outside with those issued visas and he is collecting twenty dollars for each one and he is saying he needs twenty because the guy on the inside is getting ten. The guy on the inside is not getting anything. So you have to be careful about monitoring the activities and make certain there are no perceptions about malfeasance and misappropriations.

Q: Do you remember who the Public Affairs Officer was when you arrived?

SEGARS: Bill Davis had just left. And I cannot remember the guy who replaced him, I can see him and I can see his face. Oh my God! I can see him now. He wore a white safari jacket, gray hair and he smoked all the time. John, John, who? Can't think of his name. I am sorry.

Q: But did you have much interaction with him since you did inherit when you first arrived a public relations problem in the visa-consular section. Did you have much interaction with him as far as their contributing to help smooth things over?

SEGARS: I don't recall that I did. I don't recall that there was much public outcry and so there was less demand to do that kind of outreach kind of thing. I just don't recall that we did any kind of thing. There may have been one or two radio interviews to explain US visa policy. As a matter of fact, I am sure there were. Because there are always misperceptions about what happens at the embassy. The idea was to educate the applicants, the community, the government on how policy operates and we always explain the burden of proof of concept to people. Plus, in a country like Jamaica where you have a lot of malfeasance and misrepresentation of intention that you have to make

sure the public is aware of the policies and procedures and at the same time I recall in those days we had a lot of congressional interest because of the large Jamaican community in the United States. So we had to be responsive. As I recall we developed a... we were on the outset of MAG-cards and word producers and so you could turn out a whole bunch of letters, error free, without a lot of difficulty. We developed a boiler plate language for letters we could, you know, use to send off to congress. Our volume of correspondence was so great that we had a special correspondence unit. They worked five days a week, seven hours a day, eight hours a day on congressional correspondence. Yes. A lot of immigrant visas, a lot of non-immigrant visas. You wonder, we used to sit down and talk where are they coming from. My God! there are only four million Jamaicans. Where are they coming from?

Q: That much congressional interest?

SEGARS: Yes, yes indeed. We had a special correspondence unit. Jamaicans were very, very anxious to get to the United States, to visit, to study and to stay. They would go to any length to get visas.

Q: What was your rejection rate?

SEGARS: Oh, it must have been 45 to 50 percent. Jamaicans just could not, they were not economically positioned to be able to establish substantial ties to Jamaica. And if you are going to visit a brother or sister, an uncle or an aunt who got there the same way, your creditability is less than more. It was a constant, although I must say, there was pressure outside the office as well. You know, I played golf a lot. On the golf course your playing buddies were always asking for visa favors for this person and that person, not only you but every member of the embassy. We had that visa referral policy too which I insisted that we adhere to. Then you had other members of the mission, country team who have contacts. The admin people in particular and the security people, they wanted to do favors for their contacts and that is understandable. And we tried to accommodate them as best we could. But we had to have it very, very narrowly defined. You know if you had a person who was an admin officer and you have a guy at the port who is very helpful to us and getting our goods cleared and you want to do a favor for him or his family. If his wife wants to go Miami for weekend shopping and it happened all the time. And you feel pretty good about this guy and you are reasonably sure that she is going to come back, no problem. But that service does not extend to his extended family. It applies to him, his wife and his children. Not to his brothers, or his aunts and uncles. You would have to control it or it would get out of hand and people will use you. They will use you because they are trying to satisfy their constituency and it is much more important to satisfy their constituency then it is to satisfy you. So they used you. So we had a policy and we had to make certain it was adhered to pretty rigidly. And to make sure that you had the ambassador's support and the DMC support in and it if it was fairly administered, getting that support was not a problem.

Q: I would assume that most of the congressional inquiries that you were receiving had to do with just those kinds of things.

SEGARS: Jimmy Smith was refused a visa and I am convinced that his intentions were honest. You know. Why was he refused? And what are you going to do about it? And you have to be very frank and candid with the congress people and very firm. He was refused ABC. The people going to immigrant you had to make certain that they had the wherewithal to support themselves, once they got there because a lot of people did not have a lot of financial means. They were going to immigrate, so what were you going to do. And if you are going to be supported by family then the family had to provide proof that they were able to do so. There was not an awful lot of visa fraud in Jamaica with respect to relationships with the United States citizens but that can be a problem, too. We did not have a lot during my stay there. And of course we had the responsibility for the Cayman Islands as well so we had to provide visa services there. So we made periodic trips to Grand Caymans to do services. And American citizens services as well.

Q: I was going to ask you, how about your American services operations?

SEGARS: Passports, issuing passports figured prominently in that. We had an American Services Section. We had one officer who did that full-time, he and another person worked for him on a part-time basis and four, probably five Jamaican staff. Passports and welfare whereabouts because a lot of American tourists in those parts and, of course the tendency to smoke marijuana which is illegal and to get caught and get thrown in jail. Or even to drug enforcement agencies was very, very busy in Jamaica. Jamaicans had some very unique ways of trying to smuggle marijuana into the United States. And of course the Coptics were there and they smoked ganja as it was called. I recalled once sitting in my office and I had this strange sensation. What is going on? And who would be smoking marijuana. So I go out and who is there and it was Bob Marley who had come in to apply for a passport for one of his children. Good morning I said, is he sitting here smoking a joint. He said sorry, yes. Well, you can't smoke that in here. Ha! Ha! Ha! See all these kinds of things going on. Then too toward the end of my tour in Jamaica, the People's National Party, which was Michael Manley's party was having a rough time and the chances of the party being returned to power were sort of waning. Eddie Seaga who was with the Jamaica Labor Party was challenging him, and challenging him very strongly. It was a good chance that he was going to win. Manley, supported by the Cubans implied that the Americans were helping Seaga and trying to destabilize the country in the process. Of course this got a lot of people excited. And they really came after us to the point of shooting up a couple of homes where people were living, putting up pictures on super market walls to names, addresses, telephone numbers and descriptions of your cars, etc. etc., saying this person was CIA and that person was CIA and they were helping to destabilize the country or government. Luckily it happened at the end of my tour. So we were able to get out pretty much unscathed but we became so concerned that people who were near the end of their tours were sent home, particularly family members. So my wife and son left about a month before I did. So it got pretty ugly at the end. Jamaica had a tendency to get violent at times.

Q: So comparing your experiences in Jamaica to South Africa, South Africa was relatively mild?

SEGARS: A lot of violence in South Africa. We didn't talk about it but Johannesburg was one of the most violent cities in the world. Really! I mean, there again I don't want to backtrack too much but there again, it was emotion. It was fed by emotions. People just did not meet into each other. Whites on whites, blacks on whites, whites on blacks yes a lot of violence. Not uncommon and occasional terrorism too. Not uncommon to maim and brutalize each other and, of course, the newspapers tended to sensationalize these kinds of things.

Q: You were in Jamaica for two years?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: Your son is in school. Attending school in Kingston.

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: American school, international school?

SEGARS: The school, the American school at the secondary level. He was in primary school and he attended a Jewish school, EL. This is one of the few private schools that was there and a very good school.

Q: Jewish school in the sense of sponsorship from? -

SEGARS: A Jewish organization.

Q: A Jewish organization. An American Jewish organization?

SEGARS: No! No! Local.

Q: A local Jewish organization. Significant Jewish population in Jamaica?

SEGARS: I wouldn't say significant but it was obvious. The Jews, the Lebanese, the Chinese, the Asians and the Indian-Asians they were all there. It is interesting how Jamaicans are a blend of all of these groups and you see what happens when you blend them all together you come out with a very beautiful person. Jamaican women are absolutely the most gorgeous I have ever seen, much to my wife's dismay. But no, and Jamaica was the only place I have every been where you could go to Jimmy Lee's house or Jaime Feo's house or Patrick Lawrence's house or Condor's house for Sunday brunch and you will have the same food, no matter what the ethnic background. They all ate the same food. If you went to Sunday brunch you would have probably fried biscuits and blackened cod fish and a little rum, of course, and some mannish water or goat stew.

Q: With the demographics of Jamaica I would imagine that politics as well as social economic conditions run on racial ethnic lines is what I am hearing. Is that a true or fair

characterization?

SEGARS: For the most part, yes. I think that you would find that the people of Lebanese background were fairly well off. The Asians were also. Politically the Chinese were Americans and also very well off. There were some Jamaicans, indigenous Jamaicans who were fairly well off too but the people with overthrowing backgrounds tended to be in the upper echelons and in business.

Q: How did you fit into the social patterns as an American diplomat? Particularly as an Black American diplomat?

SEGARS: Before I was that I was a guy who ran the visa section.

Q: All right! Ha! Ha!

SEGARS: So, fitting in was never, never a problem for me. As a matter of fact, I fit in too well. And people get to know who you are and they seek you out for visa favors or visa requests. It is constant, constant. People go to great lengths to sort of convince you that they deserve visas. They offer you anything. And you have got to be very, very careful about that. But, no I had no problems about that but aside from that I think it is more my style. I don't go overseas to hang out with Americans. I go to speak as if I am interested in the country. I want to meet the people, to know what they are doing, to see what interests them. Travel, and certainly Jamaica is small enough that travel was not a problem and we had long weekends that were always well received. And we so we had a group of people that we did everything and spent most of our time traveling around in the country meeting people. We did everywhere we went and went everywhere that was not just unique to Jamaica. I sort of went out of my way to meet them and well as their trying to get to know us.

Q: It was more important to them and I am getting the feeling that the economic overrode the social tendencies. Economic, of course, that brings any kinds of business or professional interest. What was the makeup of the US mission as far as demography was concerned, what percentage was minorities?

SEGARS: It depends on what day of the week. With our rotational system, you go to an embassy and you mention country team and you are sitting there and you are the only black there and you go next week and there are probably six or seven. People rotate in and rotate out. So occasion point in Dar es Salaam, when I first arrived and I was chargé and I was the only black in the whole group. Six months later that changed because people came in and left. Nigeria was the same way. So with the rotational system sometimes you find that they are more and sometimes they are less. In Kingston when I arrived I would say there were probably in the mission staff ten percent black and non white and we don't have that many blacks in the Foreign Service anyway to begin with. So ten percent you are either talking about fifty people so you are talking five or six people maybe, out of the whole mission. But it depends on the rotational process, so entirely.

Q: What do you consider the highlights of your assignment as Consul General to Kingston, Jamaica?

SEGARS: Highlight?

Q: You can translate that into your most significant accomplishment or the most significant experience or indelible experience that stayed with you in your profession?

SEGARS: I think we worked out a pretty good management tool for running a very busy consular section. And so, rekindling public faith in us and the fact that we were doing a good job, we had a very good working relationship with travel agents. And, of course, travel is a big part of the Jamaican economy, a big part of the Jamaican physic. I think providing a product that they could use in an efficient and courtesy way and sort of getting us back on even keel with the government I think was probably it. I took particular pride in training a cadre of young officers who ate like horses and we had them often out to the house. Most of them were single and we had a great, great time with them. I am very proud of the fact that several of those people from that era have gone on to become very productive and successful Foreign Service officers. One young lady now runs a substantial portion of the Foreign Affairs Training Center. We have another young man who is ambassador, David Dunn. Who else? Steve Mann, is now an ambassador. Steve was one of my real problems but he got his act together and things have worked out very well for him. So another young lady became very, very well organized in the Admin sector. Dennis Hayes who is now retired came through Kingston and worked with me. So we had some very good success out of that crop of officers and I would like to think that something I said had a hand in it.

Q: Were you at this point concerned about where your career was taking you? You have now served mostly in the consular cone abroad. Your two years in Kingston, you have already spent two years in the consular field in South Africa. Were you at this point thinking about what is next for Segars, were your personnel managers, were they starting to suggest any kinds of patterns for you?

SEGARS: Well you remember I spoke earlier about my five year tenure plan. I still had it nailed to my chest and I referred to it quite often. And, yes I was thinking very much about my career, feeling pretty good about my progress up to that point. I looked next to what I needed to do to continue my movement up that ladder and certainly training was very, very, important to that process. I had come back to the United States during my stint in Kingston to do some advance consular training. So I opted to go to the university. I was eligible, I think I had proven myself to that point. So getting in was not really an issue, just a matter of which school I wanted to attend. And, of course, I had colleagues that I kept in touch with along the way. So we sort of discussed our track records and how we were doing. How we thought we were doing and what we thought we should be concentrating on so we had some conglomeration and several of us decided to go off to the university that year. So I was accepted in the university training program and I mentioned earlier my fascination with Africa. So I wanted to do some more in that area.

So Indiana University was an ideal point to look at. We looked at the University of Southern California as well and one of my colleagues did indeed go there but it was so far away and the accommodations perhaps were easier to handle in a smaller place like Bloomington. Logistically, it was better for us and my family plus my wife's family was not very far away. So Bloomington was not too far from South Bend. That was also a factor. So we decided to go off to Indiana for a year, academic year.

Q: That was in between, that was when you finished up in Kingston you did a year there? Were there, how did the department react to that program? Did they facilitate it for you without any fight?

SEGARS: No problem. As a matter of fact my ongoing assignment after the university was tied into that. I knew that I was going to the Office of Southern African Affairs even before university training began. I would become the next Zimbabwe desk officer and that would happen in 1981. I met with the office director and he blessed it all and off I went. I am sorry I did not know that I was going to be the Zimbabwe officer but I knew I was going to the Office of Southern African Affairs. And when the director came out to Bloomington on a speaking engagement because he knew Professor Gwendolyn Carter very well, we decided then on which job I was going to have in that office. But I knew I was going there as part of my assignment process. I chose Indiana because of the logistics of it all and because of the faculty and staff. Professor Gwendolyn Carter was there who is a renowned Africanist. I had read some of her stuff while in South Africa and, of course she had heard about me. The director of the institute was a transplanted South African, Philip Ramara. So they were all interested in having me come out and spend some time and talk about Africa and Southern Africa. So it was a nice meeting of the minds.

Q: Did that produce a Masters Degree for you?

SEGARS: No. I did not do it for the degree program although my wife said why don't you? Well I am here to study and to relax and degrees would complicate that. And in retrospect I should have done it because I ended up with a 3.78 grade point average in graduate school. So that, I am sorry, it was a 3.97 GPA, so that would have been nice to do. I was having so much fun interacting with the younger student body and talking about my experiences and writing and researching that it was just relaxing for me, very relaxing.

Q: Then you find yourself coming back to Main State as the country affairs officer, the desk officer as we called it then. You were given Zimbabwe?

SEGARS: Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho and back up to the Botswana desk officer.

Q: And that meant, of course, an early orientation trip to those countries.

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: You had, of course, (you) already knew Swaziland and Lesotho from your days in South Africa, I assume.

SEGARS: Yes. Yes.

Q: Had you visited Zimbabwe before?

SEGARS: We were not allowed to travel to Rhodesia in those days. No, it was off limits as well as the homelands were. We did not go to any of those places. I had not been to Zimbabwe.

Q: When you said it was off limits, we put it off limits? It was the US mission?

SEGARS: Yes, Yes, Government officials.

Q: We didn't want to recognize?

SEGARS: When Ian Smith declared UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) we pulled out and we had no official presence there. So official travel, travel by American officials was strictly *verboten*.

Q: What do you recall as being some of the more significant issues that you were faced with that you had to grasp and deal with on assuming this position, responsibility as a country affairs officer?

SEGARS: Readjusting to the bureaucracy and having come from Indiana the very liberal institution with respect to Africa and very critical of US policies in Southern Africa and having this drilled upon you day after day by Carter and by Ed Keller and all the other social-economist, political-economist reading Walter Rodney and how Europe underdeveloped Africa and all that kind of stuff and the rhetoric and that sort of settling on your mind. Then, going back to Washington where Reagan had just appointed Chet Crocker as the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. Chet having been married to a Rhodesian and having helped Kissinger with the "Tar Baby" options, recently Southern Africa. I knew this because I had read it all at IU and having written several papers on a reluctant US policy in Africa, particularly in Southern Africa I had to adjust back in the real world. Ha! Ha! Ha! It was touchy at first but somehow I managed to reinvolve myself. I had to be productive. I didn't have to agree with everything that was being done but certainly I had my own private view. Also I had the responsibility to support and articulate US government policy. And that was what I had to learn how to do.

Q: Did you find that US government policy at that time was a 180, 160, 320 degrees diametrical personal? Ha! Ha!

SEGARS: Semi very much so. Going, getting my feet, getting my baptism again and then I recalled having to go to Howard University early on in that process and talked to a bunch of political scientist about US policy recently in Southern Africa was, oh very

brutal I tell you. And having to go with Chet to explain this and explain that but he had a good way of putting things into prospective. Very good spokesperson. So, yes, you learn how to put aside your personal differences and to do your job, which is to explain it. In a way, hopefully that it makes sense. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. And you have to be able to accept that. People just are not going to accept some things that you say because it is meaningless to them. But nevertheless this is the message which has to be delivered and that is your job.

Q: So now you are faced with your first real trial under fire to articulate US policy both to foreign as well to domestic audiences?

SEGARS: Yes, and to your African counterparts in Washington.

Q: So you have three audiences to deal with?

SEGARS: And then the Zimbabwe audience they were not very - although we were very, very supportive of Mugabe at the outset financially and morally, there were a lot of Zimbabweans who were from the guerrilla brigades who were still roughly honed who were still having problems with us. Although we did not support Ian Smith at all, we were still married to the South Africans. We were still on the wrong side of Angola. We were getting better with Machel in Mozambique but you don't get any brownie points for that. The fact is we were still married to the South Africans and apartheid was alive and well. And somehow the points we were making to the Pretoria government didn't have any impact on them at all. And although I was with Chet and some of our retreats in Virginia and places like that when we spoke very, very forcefully and frankly to the South Africans and left no doubt in their minds where we stood, we could not tell people that. But certainly you tried to make the point, well yes we understand your concerns and we share those concerns and the South Africans are aware of how we feel, the fact that we were still there and we did not pull out was upper most in their minds. We just couldn't pull out and I could understand that.

Q: Now because it is rather obvious that you as any country affairs officer are very involved in this challenge of articulating US foreign policy and as we often used as our mantra in the Thursday Luncheon Group, the formulation, articulation and implementation of US foreign policy, are you now being introduced to this new responsibility early - well yes, you are about midway into your career now. You are about 12 or 14 years into your career.

SEGARS: About eight - nine years?

Q: Nine years, well it is still early on and so you are deeply involved in the articulation, how about the formulation? Now you find your, I mean personal feelings about policy aside, are you at the position now where you are making any input into the formulation?

SEGARS: Yes, yes. But there again at the outset I was on the wrong side of the track because, I am coming from that very liberal institution which says we ought to be doing

this and that. Trade a much more conservative approach to it; I did not like the *quid pro quo* that we were forcing on the Angolans as we recently did on the Cubans. I couldn't disabuse him of the idea, so I had to go along with it. I don't know what my other solution would have been or my alternative would have been.

We had a very, very - shortly after I came on board and because of the tremendous amount of money we had set aside for Zimbabwe in development assistance, 225 million dollars, which infuriated Jesse Helms and his colleagues in the foreign policy apparatus on the Hill that we were required to report to the Congress every ninety-days on the status of the situation in Zimbabwe. So I had to craft those reports that Chet could sign off on and that would be appealing to the Congress, who had Alan Keyes who was working in UN Affairs and had his own views which were honed by Jeane Kirkpatrick on Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. They were sort juxtaposed against ours and contrary to our own views. So we had to craft these things in such a way that we could get them by Hughes, I mean by Keyes and on to the Congress without a whole lot of feedback at the same time. Chet had not been confirmed by the Senate. He was working but he had not been confirmed. And to show his anger and disgust with us in Zimbabwe, Jesse (Helms) sent us a list of questions, two hundred and twenty-five, to be exact, that we had to prepare responses for Chet to use in his confirmation hearing. So we had a very, very big part in forming his thinking on Zimbabwe in particular. In those days it was very, very dicey and at the same time trying to attract American foreign investment in Zimbabwe particular in the agriculture sector. There were some companies that were very interested in trying to get them in bed with the Zimbabweans on terms that they could both live with, was also very, very tricky. Particularly because of the government's reluctance to sign bilateral agreements such as OPIC agreements, ExIm Bank agreements and things like that, which our companies insisted that they do, otherwise there would be no business. Made more difficult by the fact that the Zimbabweans rebel forces kidnapped several foreigners including some Americans in early 1982. And keeping abreast of that and keeping people informed and describing remedies to the situation was very, very important.

Q: There is another wind blowing here that you bring out that in the bureaucracy the Bureau of International Organizations, more specifically Alan Keyes who played a significant role in our policy formulations in certain areas.

SEGARS: He certainly tried to. I don't think he got his way. I think we were more able to convince him that his misgivings notwithstanding, that we were doing the right thing and that the country was deserving of our support. There were very good reasons why Zimbabwe had to succeed because of the implications it had for South Africa. And we had to support that country no matter what we thought about Mugabe. He was the elected leader. Despite earlier misgivings he was not doing the things that they thought he would do at that point, at least, so we had to sort of keep the bulls away and allow the thing to nurture. Because of the significance it had for the entire region. It was not just a dislike for Mugabe's Communist-Marxist leaning but the implication for the country.

Q: So you were playing a very key role here in mediating divergent views. You were

playing a very key role in mediating different approaches to a very significant problem at that time and for that reason you were probably faced with one of the more significant problems which made you a very key player?

SEGARS: Well, I certainly think that it was a very important job and we had to be on top of everything. We had to make sure we were giving the right advice. It was pretty dicey, pretty dicey.

Q: You feel that the basis of your being prepared to accept the greater responsibilities that you were given later on in your professional development was due to earlier assignments?

SEGARS: Oh definitely, definitely. We had, and here again I refer back to the people that we had to answer too in addition to my own office director, we had the sixth floor and Chet was there and I referred earlier to Jim Bishop in my early incarnations in African affairs. But by now Bishop was one of the seniors, one of the Afro Americans in the African bureau. He was directly looking after our business. We also had Frank Wisner who was also a keen Africanist. So we had to be on top of our game.

Q: Today is December 23, my name is James Dandridge, interviewer for the Association for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training with the Ralph Bunch Legacy project the interviewee is Ambassador Joseph Segars. This is session 5 Tape 5, Side A. Ambassador Segars I would like to elaborate just a little bit about your responsibilities as a Country Affairs Officer for Southern Africa as far as your input to policy formulation and also the articulation to the triad of audiences that we have discussed, that is the domestic, the foreign and the local diplomatic corp.

SEGARS: With respect to policy formulation given that Zimbabwe was just into the early stages of its independence, we and the United States government wanted to assist with economic development to ensure that there was minimum white flight out of the country and to also demonstrate to South Africa which was always uppermost in my mind that there could be peaceful change. Whites and blacks could co-exist. There was enough for everybody to share and that levels of assistance required or needed and wanted (would be) provided on a continuous basis to Zimbabwe. Providing assistance was troublesome because there was so much resistance to the Mugabe government because of his previous stated Marxist philosophy. We had to make certain that our people on the sixth floor were kept abreast of the positive change that was going on. At the same time we had to provide input as to what kinds of programs we ought to pursue both then at the present and future to maintain US support for Zimbabwe. At the same time we had to make certain that American investment or interest in American's investing in Zimbabwe remained high. And that included providing guidelines to these potential investors on how we saw the prospects in that country. Military assistance was also a very important part of that. How could we downsize the military after the war was very important because it aided the countries stable development. We had to provide assistance to the military. We had to provide other kinds of things for them to do because there was no longer any wars to fight but at the same time there were the contending forces and how do you bring them

together. And we had to provide guidance input to our sixth floor on ways we thought this could best be done.

Q: Were there any particular policy issues that you could use to illustrate these points that you just made in specific areas?

SEGARS: At what level in the US government should the Zimbabweans be received, getting the White House involved, trips to the United States by President Mugabe, high level visits to Zimbabwe by US Government officials. Eventually the Secretary decided to go to Southern Africa. We had to provide policy guidelines to him, what he should say, areas of concern that ought to be expressed to the government by him. This all started at the Regional Affairs Officers level.

Q: Now this is a key point that I wanted to get to. It all started at the regional level and, of course, you were the focal point at the regional level which meant that you had to more or less pull in the input not only different parts within state but other agencies in other branches of government. I can imagine that there was congressional interest also. Can you just touch on that a little bit as to how you?

SEGARS: Of course, the Agency for International Development figured prominently in that and so we had to bring them in. We had to correlate their policies with ours. We had to take in input from the field from the embassy in Harare itself. How did they see things going. How could they play a role. Of course, the Defense Department, the Peace Corps, probably the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, (OPIC) Export Import Bank which guarantees for investors, American investors going into Zimbabwe. All these things had to be pulled together. And we did this via meetings, telephone contacts, etc. etc.

Q: That meant that you were very, very engaged. Did you have any kind of staff to assist you in doing this?

SEGARS: Didn't have a staff. I had a secretary and of course we worked very closely with the office director. They sort of managed the policy making apparatus and so whatever we thought was practical or applicable or workable we vetted with them. And with their guidance we provided... we began to put together our policy papers.

Q: Were there any significant events that you would like to use to illustrate the responsibility, the enormous responsibility you had before you went to your next assignment?

SEGARS: One thing that, well the fact that Zimbabwe was independent, UDI had been defeated.

Q: The UDI is?

SEGARS: Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) which Ian Smith brought about

in 19... in the mid 60's. We say unilateral because Rhodesia was a British Colony. Smith took it upon itself to declare independence from Britain. So a lot of time was spent trying to put the forces back into place. At the same time you had the civil war outbreak which was contended by ZANU, Zimbabwe African National Union - ZANU and ZAPU, Zimbabwe African People's Union, who were the main contenders. There were other fragments but these were the main bodies. They fought against the Rhodesians. It was a bloody war. The government was eventually defeated and Smith was put out of office. There were elections. We supported the elections thinking that Bishop Abel Muzorewa or Joshua Nkomo both of whom were people we thought would be ideally suited to run an independent Zimbabwe and would win. But surprisingly Mugabe won out and became Prime Minister. He was not our first choice but he was the devil we had to deal with and we did as best we could. So although there was independence, the main factions ZAPU and ZANU were still at each other's throats. ZAPU was upset because ZANU won out. And ZANU was not prepared to share power. So it was a question of our convincing that government, Mugabe's government, that there had to be a sharing. Each had fought in the war and each was entitled to a stake in running the country. So how could you bring those forces together peacefully, because both still had relative large armies and the potential for trouble was there. There was always that tender box. One of the highlights, one of the tragedies of that era, of my era, was the kidnapping of several tourists by forces hostile to the government. Several of those were Americans. I don't remember the exact number. And, of course, one of the main functions of the embassy abroad is to protect some American citizens. So the embassy became involved in that in a very big way. And at the same time there was considerable interest here regarding the welfare of those kidnapped victims. As I said some were Americans, so naturally the concerns were very high. As I recall several were from Washington State. So Senator Scoop Jackson became involved in a very, very prominent way in that. So we spent a lot of time on the Hill briefing Senator Jackson and staff so he in turn could keep the families informed on the welfare, whereabouts of their people.

Q: Were you getting any kinds of co-operations back here with the diplomatic community while you were in the process of putting together all these policy options addressing these situations?

SEGARS: With respect to the kidnapped victims?

Q: No, no, in general as far as US policy on the UDI as an example?

SEGARS: The Zimbabwe embassy here in Washington was not that helpful. No. For some reason they, although they welcomed our support, they were not very supportive of us. For example, when President [Canaan] Banana was granted an award by American University and he came here to receive that award. Well, he is the president although a de facto, he is a president but he has no power. And the prime minister president situation is ceremonial. But still we felt since he was the president, this was a newly independent country that we ought to do something nice for him, a White House visit or the high level visit. So we went to the Zimbabweans and said that we were prepared to offer him such and such as President of Zimbabwe. They refused to have anything to do with it. They

did not want him to do anything. So I don't know. In retrospect it was probably their concern that his status not be elevated beyond what would happen beyond Hare. But at any rate he came, received his award and he left. That was the extent of that. So they were not all that helpful to us.

Q: Did you receive any particular personnel, favorable personnel actions while you were in this position? I realize you were already a Class 3, the equivalent of a Class 1 officer at the time which was the top of the mid-level grade system before going into the Senior Foreign Service. Did you receive any recognition with any awards for your contributions during that period as a Country Affairs Officer?

SEGARS: I was recommended for promotion, I received a meritorious pay increase which is indicative of acceptable performance which was very nice. I might say that in addition to Zimbabwe that I also had responsibility for two other countries, Swaziland and Lesotho. Of course, the level of activity in those two countries was miniscule compared to the things going on in Zimbabwe so there was less need to focus on them. Not necessarily focus on them but reactions to things in those countries. The most significant event in Swaziland was the passing of King Sobhuza. My job as regional affairs officer for Swaziland was to work with Protocol in organizing a White House delegation to go to his funeral and to actually accompany that delegation to the funeral. At the same time we were beginning to talk with the Mozambicans with President Marcel because he was beginning to do the kinds of things we thought ought to be done in Mozambique. So as an aside from the visits to Swaziland we also had talks with the Mozambicans during the few days we spent there after the funeral.

Q: Who headed up that delegation?

SEGARS: The delegation was headed by someone named Cortez. Of course, all of these were all Republicans because it was a Republican administration. And Lionel Hampton was also a part of that delegation.

Q: Was Cortez... he was not in a political position within foreign affairs agencies, State Department or other agencies, he was selected by the White House?

SEGARS: Yes, he was selected by the White House, yes. We make suggestions for people who ought to be included in the White House visits. Sometimes they accepted our recommendations, sometimes they do not.

Q: And that delegation also participated as you say in some discussions with the Mozambicans, who else?

SEGARS: The delegation did not. We also had senior State Department and White House people in that, as a part of that. The senior State Department and White House people were the ones who engaged the Mozambicans, yes.

Q: Do you recall what level the State Department was represented in those discussions

with the Mozambicans?

SEGARS: Our senior NSC staffer from State representing Africa traveled with the delegation.

Q: Who was the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs then?

SEGARS: At that time, Chester Crocker. And I am not certain...Yes, it was Chester because he was at the same time we had a new ambassador appointed to Swaziland and I recall that Chet participated in his swearing in ceremonies and delivered a beautiful eulogy which I took great credit for writing on the occasion of King Sobhuza's death and the swearing in of my new ambassador.

Q: At that time what kind of country team did we have in Swaziland? We did not have a... we had a chief of mission, we did not have a DCM?

SEGARS: Well, we didn't have up to a point because it was considered...Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho were considered to be lesser countries. And at one point it was only one ambassador to represent all three countries. But eventually they separated and we named ambassadors to each country. We had a political appointee who because of contributions made to the presidential campaigns was rewarded with an ambassadorship and this person became our new ambassador to Swaziland. There was DCM because of the size of the mission. But because of the unique situation regarding this ambassador the Senate Foreign Relations Committee insisted that a DCM be a fairly senior officer designated to go out with that new (political) ambassador.

Q: Is there anything you can share on the record as to why the Senate was predisposed to supporting the establishment of a DCM at that time?

SEGARS: Because they felt that the person designated by the President did not have sufficient background in foreign policy or administration to be able to run the mission without that assistance.

Q: How about in the other countries that you also represented Lesotho and Botswana, also? Not Botswana but Lesotho.

SEGARS: Well we had also a non-career officer, a non-career person appointed as ambassador to Lesotho. This was a gentleman from the Colorado area who was also a major contributor and was awarded that job because of that contribution, but with no previous foreign policy or African experience.

Q: Did that mean that you found yourself with additional responsibilities as a regional affairs officer in backing up the missions there? Did you for instance have to do more frequent travels to those areas? Did you have to do more coordination among the staff on our policy in those areas?

SEGARS: Well, fortunately my tour came to an end just after they both were appointed. I was taken off of the Swazi desk because of conflicts with the new ambassador. He had problems with people of color and so this was very obvious so the powers to be in my office and the bureau thought it best that someone else be named desk officer. Hopefully, that would help him get along. But in the end it didn't work because he was, he really had serious problems with people of color and was eventually, he eventually left Swaziland.

Q: So he did not complete a full tour there?

SEGARS: No, he did not.

Q: This was directly attributable to his problems with diversity or his problems and his attitude towards minorities.

SEGARS: Well the problems he had were all with people of color including his Peace Corp Director at Post and his Information Officer at Post and the problems we had during his confirmation period and because of statements he made.

Q: Did he make these statements in open hearings, in open sessions? Or were these statements that were attributed to him?

SEGARS: Oh he said them openly. Ha! Ha! At the times that they were said, of course I knew what was going on but it took a while for others to really understand the problem. But once those problems were understood, the necessary actions were taken.

Q: So that then explains the crystallizing, I shouldn't say crystallizing the catalytic action that the Senate took, I thought that sounded a little better that the Senator's sort of suggested (how) our missions (be run) up and beyond the advice and consent.

SEGARS: I would say more than 50% of the cases, political appointees are people of pretty high quality, caliber. In some cases that is not the case. And this was certainly true. I don't know if it was the size of the Post that they were competing for or the lack of interest by the White House in those missions which led them to give those jobs to people who were not really qualified to have them. It happens in all administrations, Republicans and Democrats. You get good political appointees and sometimes they are not so good.

Q: So you left, unfortunately because of this attitude that was exhibited by this chief of mission well, yes. What was your next assignment?

SEGARS: I was asked to go to Nigeria, to Lagos to the position of Consul General. At the time I was not interested in Nigeria. Our embassy did not have a good reputation. People were not happy in Nigeria because of crime, because of poor housing. Lots of problems. Initially I refused the assignment but then no one else was available. I had Consular experience and when asked the third time about the job, I did not feel comfortable saying no at that point. So I had a very serious discussion with my wife and I told her that pressure was being brought to bear on my going and I did not feel

comfortable saying no again. So we talked about it and we decided that two years would not be all that bad and let's give it a whirl. So we decided to go.

Q: So this is the second time that there was direct domestic consultation?

SEGARS: Oh yes! Oh yes! I felt it very important to make certain that the family was aware and were reasonably comfortable with the assignments that I took, because I could kind of shield myself behind the work but they still had a life to live. Their concerns were factored in. But, to make a long story short we went and things were always worst then they were perceived to be at the outset and we made the necessary adjustments and turned a two-year assignment into a three-year assignment.

Q: Now you say that you were asked, pretty insistently, that you consider this assignment favorably. Can you share by whom, from what level?

SEGARS: The Regional Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa approached me and he said we don't have anybody to fill this position. The current officer's tour is over. He is leaving and there are no people who bid on the job. Lagos is a tough environment, the Consul General means that you are running the visa session. There is a heavy demand for visas. The Nigerians had insatiable appetites for travel to the United States and I had just come from a place, Jamaica, where we had the same situation and I did not want to do that again. And even here on a much greater scale and more pressure. You hear these things through the grapevine. So I told the Deputy Assistance Secretary that I was not interested. There were other jobs, I can't recall what they were that were more attractive to me. And he said, "fine". And a week or so later he came back again and he said Joseph we still don't have anybody to bid on the job. I said, I thank you for your interest in my ability but I have no interest and wife doesn't want to go. So, a week or so passed and the DCM in Lagos was in town and I guess he got wind that I had been approached and said no, so he came by to see me. I was still in my Regional Affairs job. Talked about the Post and I said "Thank you, but no thank you." I prepped my wife, you know this Lagos thing just won't go away and if they ask me again I don't think I can say no.

Sure enough I was approached a third time. I say this because the African Bureau is very supportive of its people. It has a reputation for supporting them. And I...and they had certainly been supportive of me thus far. I felt that I owed them something. And if I expected that support to continue for future assignments, because you have to think about the future, at least you ought to... I think it is very wise that you do so. That, I had to take this into consideration. So, accepting what I thought was an unpleasant assignment was something that I needed to do and that is how I got there.

Q: Now you were interested in other posts. Would you care to share what your interest, where your interest were? Did you share those interests with the Deputy Assistant Secretary? And were there any kinds of understanding that I take this post then you would consider me for a certain direction in my career development.

SEGARS: Well it was probably never stated openly, publicly but certainly that was the

perception or the expectation that if I do this I am going to expect some numerations for that. And certainly given the Bureau's reputation for looking after its people I felt pretty confident that something positive would come as a result of my going there. With respect to other assignments, if they were not African assignments I suspect that our African people were not that interested.

Q: How about the ambassador in Lagos at that time? Had he weighed in at all on persuading you to accept the assignment?

SEGARS: I suspect so because I knew the present ambassador, we had worked together, I wouldn't say worked together but we had been a part of his support team, you recall I talked about the Operations Center. Well the Director of the Secretariat at that time, Thomas Pickering, was by this time Ambassador in Nigeria. He knew me and I knew him. And whether or not he weighed in I can't say but certainly the fact that the DCM came by to see me would lend suspicion to the concept that he may have.

Q: Now Thomas Pickering had several assignments in Africa leading up to this assignment as Ambassador of Nigeria is that correct?

SEGARS: Um hum! Yes, he did. But I really can't say. He had a very good reputation as an Africanist. But, I really don't know where else he served in Africa. It is sort of vague at this point.

Q: But he was a very knowledgeable Foreign Service officer on African affairs.

SEGARS: Oh yes! Yes!

Q: That he could be considered an Africanist? So you arrived at Lagos. Warmly received?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! Yes, of course. Lagos was my first exposure was unlike any African experience I had, had before. Prior to going to Nigeria, I spent three days in New York as part of the orientation program set up for me to look into things having to do with Nigerian visa fraud and other kinds of malfeasance that the Nigerians were involved in. I had never seen so many yellow cabs in my life. I thought my God they are all here in New York. But then I got to Lagos and then I found out that no they were not all in New York, there were equal numbers in Lagos.

Q: Tape 5 side 2 December 23, I am Jim Dandridge the interviewer. Would you continue on your impressions of the numbers of yellow cabs you thought they were all in New York.

SEGARS: I thought they were all in New York until I arrived in Lagos and I discovered that no there was an equal number In Lagos City, hustling, bustling metropolis of some eight million people-plus at that time. The ride in from the airport was quite an adventure. I had never seen such congestion and so many people. My God! Where did they all come

from? That was my introduction to Nigeria. We arrived in June which is during the rainy season which did not help my impression. I arrived in advance of my family. Just a sort of look see and see what is available and they came about two weeks after I was there. We moved into temporary quarters because housing was not available at the time. And so we spent the first six months actually in temporary quarters before we finally moved, were able to move into something that was much more attractive and we enjoyed.

Q: One of the concerns that you had before you accepted this assignment was the problems as you put it that were known that dealt with, particular in the visa section, and I hesitate to say visa fraud but could you just elaborate a little bit about your initial perception of the problems and then what were the real problems that were there after you arrived?

SEGARS: Well, if I were aware of the real problems initially I probably would have still said, no! It was not until I spent a few days in New York working with the task force on visa fraud that I became aware of the magnitude of the problem, particularly as it related to the Nigerians. They were very much involved in visa fraud, credit card fraud all kinds of schemes to acquire merchandise illegally. Send it to Nigeria, quite an elaborate scheme and also the bogus marriages being perpetrated by Nigerians in the United States. Marriages solely for the purposes of immigration.

Q: You said task force, what kind of task force was this and what emphasis?

SEGARS: A task force which comprised immigration authorities, the FBI, drug enforcement agency, the visa office, yes. They were all working at the Federal building in New York.

Q: Was this unique because obviously there were visa problems in other parts of the world also?

SEGARS: I imagine it is probably is not unique. I am sure it is not. There are probably other areas where there are high concentrations of malfeasance and fraud that have similar task forces.

Q: So then you arrived in Lagos. You undertake your responsibilities and you confirm that you have a real problem on your hands.

SEGARS: It wasn't the problems in Lagos were solely related to visa fraud, visa malfeasance attempting to gain entry into the United States via the non-immigrant process with the intentions of staying there. Staying here as long as they could get away with it, we had a special shore unit. The Nigerians were not very, very adept when it came to preventing passport fraud for example. There were lots of problems with stolen Nigerians passports, those passports being manipulated, photographs being substituted. And it was quite common, the record keeping was not up to standards. So there were very little avenues for keeping track of who got passports, how many passports, how those passports were doctored or altered and the Nigerians visa applicant had no concerns with

presenting us with these fraudulent documents, often times, one today and another one the next day. The desire to get into the United States was just so great that they went through considerable lengths to gain entry. So we spent a lot of time on visa interviews and our refusal rate was well over 50%. Because people just could not establish that they were not non-immigrants. As was prescribed by the law, here again this caused a public affairs problem because of the perceptions by the Nigerians that we were being unfair. Of course, we had our own documents to prove that our actions in refusing people were clearly warranted even to the point of my going on TV to explain how these procedures, to give them the figures, of how many people actually go and don't come back. And with these statistics getting this message across was easier but receptivity was not any better. We explained the problem and that is all that you can do, involving the foreign office, foreign ministry in this at a very, very high level. The head of the Consular Affairs Department, for example, and I had constant exchanges over the problems and some of the fraud even perpetrated by some of his own ministry.

Q: When you say constant exchanges, were these pleasant, professional exchanges or otherwise?

SEGARS: Sometimes, yes, sometimes, no, because we were very concerned that the government was involved in this and more concerned about pleasing their constituency than in complying with immigration law. So these were fairly significant, sometimes, pretty heated exchanges.

Q: So you now also had responsibilities for, I believe you had a consulate in Ibadan and Abuja?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: Same problems?

SEGARS: We had a, we didn't have in Abuja we had US Information Service . I can't recall, they were not issuing visas at that time. We did have an office in Kaduna. A smaller office and visas were issued there. Ibadan, they may have collected passports for us. People that were reliably informed were good applicants and they probably passed them down to us for processing. But they did not process any visas themselves. In addition we had Nigerians who were qualified for immigration and oftentimes on the basis of substantial investments in the United States or the ability to do so. So we did process immigrant visas.

We also had a considerable number of American citizens living in Nigeria. Oftentimes these were spouses of Nigerians who had been studying in the United States who brought the wife back to live, oftentimes the wife, back to live in Nigeria. They did not realize at the time the marriage was consummated that the chap had a spouse or several spouses back home. And once this fact became known we had some interesting scenarios to contend with because American women are not ready to accept the concept of several wives. And we had some interesting issues regarding repatriating these people to the

United States because they just could not adjust to that, to those traditions.

Q: When you arrived, did you have the opportunity to be briefed by the ambassador on the magnitude of these problems? Did you have a chance to get an early assessment from the ambassador's perspective and maybe guidance from him on dealing with these types of problems?

SEGARS: Well not the ambassador but certainly the DCM because the ambassador, Ambassador Pickering was, as I was arriving, he was leaving. He was being replaced by Ambassador Smith who was coming from Guyana. So, no not by him, I just met briefly with him prior to his departure. But I did have extensive briefings by the DCM and I was aware of the problems, had a pretty good idea what was going on before I even arrived as a result of my time spent in New York. And with the visa office in Washington, DC and my deputy arrived about a month before I did. I selected him as my deputy. And that was nice to have someone that I handpicked for that job. He also was briefed so he also had the knowledge of what was going on there. I arrived fully aware of what I was getting myself into.

Q: Now you obviously, since this was our most populated country in the African continent and with the magnitude of the types of problems we were having there you obviously had a fairly sizeable consular section. How many officers did you have assigned?

SEGARS: With respect to the size of the operation, Nigeria had the largest and still has largest consulate operations in all of sub-Saharan Africa. During those days we had myself, a fairly senior deputy and a host of junior officers which at that time numbered eight or nine. We had Nigerian staff that was smaller but we began to build on that staff shortly after I got there because we just did not have enough people to keep up with the work. And we also had one officer who devoted his entire time, one officer and one Foreign Service national in what we called a fraud unit. One was our primary investigator and visa fraud. Just before I got there the embassy had gone through a fire so we were under extensive repairs when I arrived. And this also hampered operations but we managed to work it all out. And we had tremendous visa crowds every day. We figured how best to manage. We could not possibly interview everybody who appeared so we had a cut off and our cut off was ten o'clock. Backing up a bit, prior to my arrival a decision had been made to begin issuing Nigerians multiple entry visas valid for four years. In hindsight that was not probably the best thing to do. That increased the desire of the people to go because "gee whiz" I can come and go as much as I want and I don't have to come back. Some people got the impression that a four year visa meant they could stay in the United States for four years. Of course, that is not the case with US visas. The visa is valid for travel to the United States within that four year period. But immigration at the port of entry determines how long you can stay based on why you applied for entry. So it was not a good idea and that increased the number of applicants we believe. The decision was made based on the belief that the Nigerians would reciprocate on a more favorable visa policy by giving the large number of American business people and tourist who travel to Nigeria more than the single entry visa which

was standard at that time. It did not happen that way and this was another part of my responsibilities, was to be in constant touch with my counterparts in the foreign ministry to relax their visa regime. And they promised, they promised, they promised that they would and they did indeed begin to be nicer to the business people. Instead of giving them one entry valid for 30 days, they would give them multiple entry valid for 90 days. That does not really address the problem. We had a constant go around, negotiating the visa regime. Finally I recommended to the DCM and the ambassador that we rescind our visa policy, that we at least make it more consistent with what they were doing to us. We are not going to get them to have a more favorable visa policy unless we apply more pressure. We approached the prime ministry along those lines. They said well fine but they really weren't concerned because it did not affect them. They were getting A and G visas which we gave to diplomats and their visas were much more liberal than - it wouldn't affect them. So finally, I decided that we ought to limit visas that we give to these people. If we really want to get their attention, that struck a chord.

Q: Now aside from the visa operations, which certainly were a unique challenge, you also had as you have already suggested in your American interest section, unique problems there. I believe you were involved with negotiating the release of the repatriation of US citizens that were held by the Nigerian military?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! Oh, that one. Yes. But even before that we had some very interesting repatriation cases because we mentioned the fact that women married Nigerians. They came to Nigeria. They were often unhappy. They were kicked out of the home or the family or they ran away without funds with no recourse but the embassy. We did some repatriations of those people. We also had a very interesting case of a young lady and her daughter. She was married to a Nigerian. They divorced in the United States. He came back to Nigeria. He left the ex-wife and the daughter in Chicago. Well, he maintained contact with her and convinced her to bring the daughter to Nigeria to meet his family. They had never seen their grandchild. So she said, okay fine. So she came out for Christmas. Well he absconded with the child just completely vanished. She appeared at the embassy, petrified because she lost her daughter and had no idea where she was and the daughter was 12 or 13 years old. She was concerned because girls at that age oftentimes become brides. It is not uncommon. So what could she do? She had no idea where he was. She was determined not to leave without her daughter, reminds you of the story. She stayed around, she stayed around. So finally he did contact her and she talked to him and at the same time she maintained contact with us. He contacted her over a period of several days or week and decided to bring the girl back to Lagos. She reconciled with her mother but he watched her constantly, had her watched constantly. She moved into his home and they were almost under lock and key because he knew that she would leave with the child if she had an opportunity. So he took the child's passport. The mother kept us informed and kept us informed and she had been there now about three weeks, needing to go back to her job in Chicago. So we suggested that she play along and cozy up to the guy, anything to gain his confidence. Gradually he relaxed his hold to make a long story short she arrived at the embassy one day with the daughter in tow. She had gotten away, taken a taxi and she knew she was being followed and her actions reported to the husband. We knew from past experiences that he would alert the

authorities at the airport if she tried to depart the immigration authorities. The immigration authorities would not let the daughter leave because she is a Nigerian citizen. If the father says she can't leave, she is his property, she cannot leave, her American citizenship notwithstanding. So we discovered a scheme where we would ceremoniously take them out of the country via land. We contacted the embassy in Benin and arranged for them to have her tickets rewritten to fly back to the United States, Air France to Paris and then on to Chicago. So we drove her and the daughter to Benin or Cotonou and they left that way. The husband, of course was enraged, contacted the authorities, the authorities contacted us, the newspaper contacted us and accused us of kidnapping and all kinds of things. They said, did you issue this person a passport? Of course we did. This person is an American citizen. They requested passport services and that is why we are there. The fact that she has a Nigerian father is of no consequence to us. Anyway we got them out. But if I may go on?

Q: Was this child born in Nigeria?

SEGARS: No.

Q: This child was born in the United States?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: Nigerian law is that if the father is Nigerian regardless of where the child is born, the child is Nigerian by virtue of the father's citizenship?

SEGARS: Yes. Yes indeed! And also done on the question of citizenship, many Nigerian expecting mothers who are trying to get visas and are trying to go to the United States and have their children born in the United States and they become automatic citizens by virtue of birth in the United States. We were accused of denying mothers the best medical treatment they could afford for those reasons.

Q: We will come back to this.

SEGARS: Okay. But, again the repatriation case which got the most attention and which consumed a lot of our energy up to and including the ambassador was that of an American citizen who was arrested shortly after the military coup in December of '83. That was the first of several coups that we went through during my tenure. One of the things brought about the downfall of the Shagari government was the manipulated elections and the rampant corruption in the country. So the military took over basically because of the corruption. People who were illegally involved in corrupt listed activities, involved with the government, money, etc. illegal transitions, were arrested. This woman was involved with Nigerian merchants and rice deals. She was given a sum of money by the Nigerians to bring in rice. Well, she turned tricks on the guy. She felt that he was going to rip her off, was setting her up. Anyhow, he accused her of stealing his 600 thousand dollars and not producing the goods. And she was arrested early in 1984 just after the military came on board and we were not aware of her arrest. We were not even

aware of the fact that she was in the country but we began to get inquiries from her family back in New York regarding their mother. Of course, the military was in control and when we approached them regarding that, they denied that she was in prison. They didn't know who she was. At the same time, the pressure from the family and now Congress began to mount on us to find out something about this woman. Finally, I think it was March, mid-March, the latter part of March the military government admitted that yes, there was a woman in jail by this person's name. At least that was the first hurdle for them to admit that she was there. We next had to gain access to her. To make certain that she was being treated in accordance with the Vienna Convention regarding the arrest of foreigners overseas. That proved even more burdensome because they were not about to give us access to her because the military government did not necessarily have to comply with the Vienna Convention. So thus, began the bevy, the onslaught of diplomatic notes, the ambassador meetings with the foreign minister, maintaining high level contacts with them. And because of the military government, the arrest case was being handled by the equivalent of our CIA. So everything had to flow through the State Office of Security. We were finally able to gain access to the young lady about four months after her incarceration. But we did not have free access to her because they insisted on being present. The security people trying to constrain what we could or could not say. Anyhow we were able to work through that and to get messages back and forth to this woman and to provide information to her family. Then it became a question of regular visits and making certain she was represented by attorney and that she was being meted the same treatment as a Nigerian arrested under similar circumstances would have. Well this went on for almost a year. And she finally came to trial. After trial the evidence did not suggest that she had done anything wrong. So she was eventually released without her passport. I was away in Germany at the time of her release and I was called and asked what to do. How should we handle it? I said, if she is there and she wants to travel by all means give her a passport. We had no restraining order from the Nigerian authorities, no request to not let her travel so our hands are free. So we eventually got her back to the United States. But the Nigerians were convinced that she was some super spy. Why else would we show all the high level interest including the ambassador making representation on her behalf? They did not understand our mandate to protect our citizens, didn't quite understand that. And this was all we were doing, is protecting her, making certain that she was treated fairly, was not abused in prison and that she had equal access to representation and got a fair trial.

Q: Tape Number 6, December 23rd, my name is James Dandridge, interviewer for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, part of the Bunch Legacy Project, the interviewee is Ambassador Joseph Segars. The experiences that you have related in the American Interest Section is a very, very important to explain the extent to which the US Government has committed itself to protecting US citizens and citizens rights wherever they might be. I said that we would come back to the incident of the mother from Chicago whose thirteen year old daughter had been taken back to visit with her grandparents in Nigeria and abducted, of course, by the father. The problem that you mentioned was a problem of unilateral recognition of citizen on the part of the Nigerian government. Could you explain what conventions exist that would arbitrate on these different positions of citizenship that makes it particularly difficult for our American interest sections in

recognizing the rights of American citizens, particularly in the case of abductions of minors?

SEGARS: The primary convention regarding the protection of American citizens abroad is a Vienna Convention and it stipulates what the receiving country's responsibilities are regarding foreign citizens with respect to citizenship. It is very difficult for us when we come across cases of dual citizenship. That is a person who is a US citizen and also a citizen of another country either by virtue of birth or by heritage. The mother or father being able to give citizenship to a child in the case of Nigeria. Children born to Nigerian parents are entitled to Nigerian citizenship and are treated as such. So in the cases of dual citizenship it is increasingly difficult to get the receiving country to acknowledge your citizenship, that is in the case of Nigeria getting a Nigerian to recognize and abide by the fact that the person involved is also a US citizen. The Nigerian citizenship applies unilaterally in all cases. So the fact that the child is born in the US by virtue of her father's birth as a Nigerian citizen, she is also a Nigerian citizen. So if it is a question of allowing that person to travel on American passport, if the parent, the father in this case says no, then the Nigerians will most likely abide by the father's wishes. So if the father said that and the mother is trying to take the child out of the country against his will, the Nigerian authorities will most likely not let that child leave, the fact that we are there at the airport with her and the fact that she has a US passport, notwithstanding.

Q: And the fact that also he did not have legal custody of the child at the dissolution of the marriage?

SEGARS: Well custody is something that would be resolved in the courts and the Nigerians would just play on that as much as they possibly could. So we don't even raise that issue because if a Nigerian father had a reverse claim and he had custody and the child was in the United States, the courts would just play it to death. It would take a long time for our courts to acquiesce although the father has custody.

Q: It might be a moot question but I will ask it anyway how about the confiscation of US property in the form of the passport of the child, which the father did?

SEGARS: It is illegal to do that but there again, in Nigeria you probably would not get very far with that issue. You could cite him for violations of US passport law and if he got back to the United States he might be prosecuted for that, but not in Nigeria.

Q: You were also involved in another high profile repatriation case of American citizens held by Nigerian military. Is that correct? Would you like to explain how this all came about?

SEGARS: Well that was the case we referred to earlier about the lady from New York.

Q: That was the case?

SEGARS: That was the case, yes.

Q: You were in the position of managing the largest US Consular and Visa Program in Africa. You are there for a two-year assignment which extends itself into three-years. Why?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! Well once we got settled and sort of got into the groove of doing business in Nigeria. Things, the grass was actually greener on the other side. Much greener than we thought. We were able to move into a very lovely home which my wife designed herself or she helped the architects design. Built to her specifications in record time, in a very lovely neighborhood. Believe it or not the things got better in Nigeria after the military took over. Things seem to operate more smoothly and that is no justification for a military takeover, of course. And the removal of democracy but we were able to get things done. There were considerable efforts to clean up Lagos, to make it more attractive, to remove the dead animals from the streets. To make certain if someone died the body was taken away and not left there as was the case when we arrived. So things began to improve. Housing, overall housing improved. Morale at post improved. The embassy's reconstruction after the fire went along very smoothly. We had a smooth functioning visa operation. Lagos became kind of a show piece for how consular accounts ought to run. Lagos indeed was a regional office for consular affairs for West Africa. My deputy did quite a bit of traveling throughout the region to oversee, to give suggestions on how visa consular operations should (be) maintained. We had several regional conferences in Lagos. People actually came to see what we were doing. We had visits by immigration authorities, we had regular meetings with the Nigerian Immigrations authorities and so we had good relations with them. I hope overall relationship with the government was workable. We did not always get what we wanted but certainly we got their attention. So as we preached the desire for them to be more concerned about visa fraud, things got better. Most of our offices were in rotational positions, therefore, they had chances of doing other things other than spend all day on the visa interview line. This made for a much more attractive working environment.

Q: What were some of the other countries involved in your regional responsibility.

SEGARS: Well all the countries in that zone, West Africa, Senegal, Guyana, Cotonou, I mean Benin, Togo and I think we may have gone as far as Chad., but most of the West African countries in that region.

Q: Your son, of course, is he of school age? He is in the International School in Lagos.

SEGARS: He spent, Ryan spent one year at the International School. He was a junior high student at the time. We felt that the curriculum which was basically built on the British system was not adequate to prepare him for college. So we decided to send him away to the United States for boarding school. I was a member of the school board for a while at the ambassador's request. So I served on the board basically, he, no I am sorry, I am sorry I am advancing myself. He did indeed spend all three years of school there and at the American International School. I am thinking about Tanzania. It was based on the American system of run by in conjunction with a school system out of Washington State

and they provided most of the teachers. So the school system there was fairly good and he spent his entire three years there in that school.

Q: Were there any areas that your wife was particularly interested in. You mentioned that she was involved in the design of your new residence/quarters there. Were there any areas that she was active in the community?

SEGARS: She became very much involved with our new ambassador, Ambassador Thomas Smith who came from Guyana. Elizabeth at that time, they were just introducing the concept of spousal employment. But they, for some reason, were reluctant to pay them decent salaries. My wife just said, no. She was cited by one of the inspectors as being un-American because she refused to work for pithy sums and the work was not all that desirable. But anyway, when the new ambassador came, she struck up a very good relationship with him. I knew the ambassador, Ambassador Smith from my earlier incarnation as desk officer of regional affairs officer in the Office of West African Affairs. He was Office Director during much of that tenure. She became the ambassador's protocol officer and spent quite a bit of time revising the post protocol handbook. And she worked very closely with him and his wife and they had a very good working relationship. She also had a very good background in computers and was sent off to Paris for a training program which allowed her to come back and teach basic computer skills to the FSN staff. So she had a very busy time there and a very, very happy time. At the same time she began, because she had worked previously in protocol in Washington, was called upon from time to time to do advance trips for VIP's for the Vice President and the President's travel.

Q Now she had worked in protocol before.

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: When did she start working in protocol?

SEGARS: She began working protocol when we got back to Washington following our year of University.

Q: Of Indiana?

SEGARS: Yes. As a matter of fact she was working in protocol when we put together the trip to Swaziland for King Sobhuza's funeral. She worked with Selwa (Lucky) Roosevelt who was then the Director of Protocol.

Q: So she was able to put those skills and knowledge to use there and establishing and rewriting the protocol handbook in Lagos. Was she recognized for that, other than the fact the IG dinged her earlier? Ha! Ha!

SEGARS: The Ambassador and Mrs. Smith certainly appreciated her efforts as did the post because it became sort of a standard for how the embassy should handle protocol

issues, dinners, the auto precedence all kinds of things. As a matter of fact she has just been approached by the Foreign Affairs Training Center for input for a program A Class they are putting together. She may do that. She is considering after she retires.

Q: Now I would assume that because of the size of the mission and her skills in protocol that was quite a bit of high level interest coming through Lagos, high level interest in Africa? That is and was the focal point of State visits, congressional delegations and other high level visits within the executive branch.

SEGARS: With respect to high level visits, the first occurred after the inauguration of Shagari for his second term of office. This was prior to the coup. The inaugural ceremony was held in September or October I believe and the US delegation included Andy Young.

Q: Who was then?

SEGARS: He may have been the representative at the UN.

Q: The US permanent representative?

SEGARS: Yes, yes. He led our delegation to the second inauguration of President Shagari who was overthrown that following December, December 30th by the military. I suspect that there was a hiatus pile of visits pending the early entrance of the military into politics. But certainly there were CODELs of high level visits that took place during our stay. Probably took place during the Babangida era. Babangida mounted a second coup about eight months into the initial coup, the one that was staged by Idiagbon and Babangida and we suspected that another coup was imminent. We just didn't have the timing worked out. And eventually that did happen. Then there was an attempted overthrow Babangida that was unsuccessful, of course. Another thing that we, the American Services Section, were preoccupied with doing these military takeovers, was the safety of American citizens. As you mentioned earlier we did have a large population in Nigeria and basically our advice to them during these periods of unrest was to sort of keep a low profile. There was no history of Americans or foreigners being attacked during these periods. So we felt they were fairly safe as long as they kept themselves out of harm's way. We had a Wardens network. Every area was headed by a Warden. We had regular meetings with these people. We sort of kept them informed and told them what was best that they do during periods of unrest. And by the grace of God we had no incidents whatsoever involving Americans either private or official.

Q: Near the end of your, as you were approaching the end of your assignment in Lagos and obviously you were professionally and personally enjoying the area, the fact that you had extended, had you started to express your interest in your subsequent professional career development in the form of what your next assignment might be?

SEGARS: Oh yes, very much so. Planning ahead has to figure prominently in your career and aspirations and certainly you think about what happens next after Nigeria. That was certainly a factor. I felt that I was moving closer to program direction jobs. Programs

with increasing management responsibilities, directing activities. So the next level would be deputy chief mission. I had done fairly well as a manager of people and resources. Having managed two fairly large Consular operations. And people look down their noses at Consular operations at times but certainly from a management point of view they ideally place you for positions of increasing responsibility. So I saw a deputy chief of mission as a next and desirable assignment. And my DCM and Lagos were very supportive of that. They thought that was the ideal way to go and encouraged me to do so. And certainly I had learned a lot from his stewardship. He was Chargé for a considerable period because Ambassador Smith became ill and had to leave post unexpectedly so. So getting a replacement for him was something that had to be thought through. So the DCM became Chargé and we worked quite closely together particularly with the junior officers. He was primarily responsible for their overall welfare and because we had a large junior officer contingent in our office he was very much interested in how we handled them. So we had a very close, very profitable working relationship. So yes, and the fact that I was given the Consular Service Award which he recommended me for, also was very, very helpful.

Q: Who issued that award? Was that from CA, Consular Affairs?

SEGARS: Yes

Q: Would you explain the level of that award and what was the definite criteria?

SEGARS: It is an award which recognizes outstanding performances by Consular Officers during a one year period. And, I suppose the visa operation and the American citizen, that one that was in detention for a long time, figured prominently in the decision to grant me that award. I was very pleasantly surprised that I was even recommended for it. When these recommendations go in instead of saying there are so many people competing and you send it in and sort of hope and pray, and I was selected and the announcement was made totally out of surprise to me at the Marine Ball by the ambassador. So that was quite nice. When we came home during the Christmas holiday, Thanksgiving./Christmas holiday for home leave, I came to Washington and was given the award by the Director of CA, which was quite nice.

Q: Obviously while you were here you had an opportunity to look at the prospects of your subsequent assignment?

SEGARS: Yes. I applied for, I am sure they were all DCM jobs that I applied for. There may have been some principal officer positions as well but I am sure there were a host of DCM jobs. And much to my surprise, Dar es Salaam came through. I was awarded the DCM job in Dar es Salaam. Just backing up a bit, I also would like to mention, I was also awarded that same year a Meritorious Honors Award. And there again, it had a lot to do with the way we managed the Consular operations in Nigeria. One of my greatest rewards was not monetary or any piece of paper, but I had a very long relationship with the local director of immigration in Lagos. Sometimes our sessions were contentious because I was always asking him for treatments of American citizens for recovery of

passports and he was always after me about Nigerians being retained in New York and being searched by our local authorities. They were being searched because they were carrying drugs or bogus passports and those kinds of things. Anyway we managed to work our way through that and as I was about to leave Nigeria he invited me to his office for breakfast. And he was Moslem. We had a very good exchange and we ate as in tradition in Moslem with good friends out of the same plate with our fingers. And to me that was, I was very impressed with that and very rewarding for him to sort of reach out to me in that way given the battles we had over the years. I guess it was out of mutual respect. I respected him. He was a man of integrity and I guess he felt the same way about me. So to have him do that for me, I thought, was quite nice.

Q: So, you now Deputy Chief of Mission in Dar es Salaam?

SEGARS: Yes. After Lagos we were assigned to Dar es Salaam and I was assigned as Deputy Chief of Mission. Of course the wife had no problems going to East Africa to Dar es Salaam, the haven of peace. I did not realize it when I was assigned that there would be an exchange of ambassadors. Ambassador Shirley was leaving and the new ambassador had been named but it would be some while before he would be arriving. I guess he had looked at my file and thought I would be an acceptable DCM and had no problem with the assignment. So when I arrived I learned that Ambassador Shirley was leaving as well as the DCM that I was replacing. I arrived in June and the new ambassador was not expected to arrive until later in the year, December maybe January. So right away I was faced with the prospects of being Chargé. Well I had been prepared for DCM but not to run the mission. But anyway I accepted the challenge. And according to the ambassador when he arrived I did a pretty good job of keeping the mission together during that six month period.

Q: When you say Ambassador Shirley are you referring to Ambassador Shirley Temple?

SEGARS: No! Jock Shirley.

Q: Jock Shirley!

SEGARS: One of your colleagues.

Q: I knew that Ambassador Shirley Temple had also been in that area but at a different time.

SEGARS: Yes, yes, I know.

Q: So obviously you had an opportunity to talk to the ambassador before going in, talking about Ambassador Shirley. I am assuming this was a melding of the egos, full understanding of the potential of your being able to carry out the duties that were required?

SEGARS: Yes, I met with the ambassador-designate in Washington and we sat down and

we had a long discussion with Ambassador Petterson. He said he looked at my file and I am confident that you can handle the job during my absence or until I get there. Then when I got to post I had a brief overlap with Ambassador Shirley, I think about five days and with my predecessor about an equal number of days.

Q: With Ambassador Shirley, it was just an interim?

SEGARS: Oh yes, oh yes, three or four days. With the DCM maybe a week and then they were both gone and I was left to run the mission. Ha! Ha! A total stranger.

Q: So when you say run the mission, that included several other agencies?

SEGARS: Yes. The usual actors within the mission and AID mission and the Peace Corp. The Peace Corp was just being reinstated in Tanzania. So we had those to look after and officially a large American missionary community.

Q: How were you received by the Country Team?

SEGARS: Well, the Country Teams are professional. The new guy is there and you have to deal with the new guy. You go through your briefings at the outset. You get a good lead-in from the ambassador. The ambassador knows what to say and says that. The Country Team responds accordingly and there were no problems. There were a few problems which I inherited which had nothing to do with me as a manager but with basic embassy problems, housing, some peoples perceptions that the housing is not what it ought to be, it ought to be better, that kind of thing. The usual array of problems, the commissary budget, the new commissary manager those kinds of things. These are all management issues that you are taught to deal with, because prior to going off to assume that position you go through an extensive training period in Washington, it is called the DCM course. You and the other people who have been so designated sit there for a week or so and you go through all kinds of scenarios.

Q: You were Chargé how long before Ambassador Peterson came in?

SEGARS: About six months.

Q: About six months! Any unique experiences during that period?

SEGARS: We were beginning to liaise with the, unofficially, with the ANC (The African National Congress) and the PAC (The Pan African Congress) both of which were South African organizations who were in refugee status in Tanzania. So we were beginning to make entrees to these people and talking about, you know things regarding South Africa and their roles in South Africa. And then you had the ongoing situation and US position in South Africa. Now I say this because in Tanzania there was much more hostile rhetoric regarding our Southern Africa policy. They were much more critical of our positions in all of these issues. They felt very suspicious of constructive engagement. They didn't like our Assistant Secretary, Mr. Crocker. So the demarches on issues regarding Southern

African issues were very contentious and sanctimonious and always frank exchanges of ideas. They didn't see opposition, didn't accept opposition all that much. They were not happy with our position. Judiciary was sort of still on the periphery and his views were still pretty dominant throughout the government. We had to contend with that and sort of keeping relations on an even keel with them on these issues was always interesting. We managed to sort of get through it all and the fact that my - from time to time - I was reminded of my South African background. Several times we had temporary people coming in to Dar es Salaam for temporary periods to embrace their sense of duty often times had traveled in or through South Africa and getting the Tanzanians to be sort of accommodating was very interesting. As I said before they just did not trust us on many issues relating to Southern Africa.

Q: Why?

SEGARS: They thought we were waffling on supporting Namibian independence. As a matter of fact, in the days leading up to the actual independence there were some border scimmages. The foreign minister saw that as proof that we were up to no good and was actually surprised when Namibians got their independence. They did not trust us on Cuban troop withdrawals from Angola, on anything.

Q: Why was that, the lack of trust in us and our policies?

SEGARS: They didn't see any need for *quid pro quos*. We shouldn't insist on Cuban troop withdrawals as a prerequisite for independence in Angola or Southwest Africa. This should not be a prerequisite for the ending of apartheid over South Africa to at least seize control over Southwest Africa.

Q: I asked the question because there seems to have been a history of mistrust in American policy in that part.

SEGARS: They thought basically that we were in bed with the South Africans and that we were not really pushing the South Africans on issues that they considered important. And some things you could reveal and others things you could not reveal. So you had to waffle through it as best you could and convince them of our sincerity. That you know we were concerned about the removal and the dismantling of apartheid. We were concerned about Namibian independence, at the same time we were concerned about the Cuban involvement in Angola and that the South Africans were not going back on Namibian independence without that *quid pro quo*. And if we really wanted independence, that is what they would have to go along with.

Q: So Ambassador Petterson arrived, the transition was, I am quite sure a welcome one by you.

SEGARS: I took the advice that I had gotten in DCM school and I said be careful because being Chargé for such a long time could be damaging, it could be dangerous and once the ambassador arrives, you are no longer in charge, he is. And so, I took that advice

to heart and when he got there and after a week I took off for some time. It was his mission, no effort on my part to maintain my power. It is his mission and “It is yours and I am going to take a few days off”.

Q: Obviously you were in touch with him during this interim period?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: Would I assume that communications were frequent so that he realized that you were acting in his place?

SEGARS: No I did not communicate with him; I communicated with him through the desk, through the office director. He was certainly reading all of my traffic, all the cables and all so he knew what was going on. There was very little direct contact with him. More, if there were personal issues that he wanted me to follow up, up on the residence or Mrs. Petterson then, of course we did that. His arrival, the arrival ceremony, the presentation of traditional and things like that we coordinated very closely on those things, but on the actual running of the mission, no.

Q: Where was he before this?

SEGARS: He had a job in Washington, I think in FMP. And his previous ambassadorial position had been in Somalia.

Q: So this was not this first ambassadorship?

SEGARS: No, second. And I knew him from earlier; he also served in South Africa. .As a matter of fact he was probably one of the persons I spoke to prior to my going to South Africa.

Q: How did your wife, Elizabeth, how did she like the experiences in Dar es Salaam?

SEGARS: Elizabeth, I think that she really enjoyed being there. She was received warmly by the official diplomatic community. She was received warmly by spouses of senior government officials. She got to know them. They accepted her as the wife of a Chargé. She filled in I think quite nicely as the wife of the Chargé in the ambassador’s wife’s absence. And they invited her to participate and do all the things that it would normally invite the ambassador’s spouse to do. And at the same time she was kept busy because our house was undergoing major renovations, so this took up a lot of her time as well. She was kept busy.

Q: Did she have the opportunity to carry over some of her protocol function experiences there in Dar es Salaam?

SEGARS: Professionally, no, but certainly as an entertainer, as a hostess, yes. The diplomatic wives held weekly social events and she did her share of entertaining.

Q: What unique experiences did you have there in either, the formulation, articulation or implementation of US policy?

SEGARS: Articulation, implementation certainly because as I said Tanzania was a key player in the group of five in the negotiations on Angola, Southwest Africa so there were always demarches to be made regarding oppositions and requesting their support. We were also at the same time looking at ways to be of greater assistance to Tanzania with respect to AID economic assistance. Particularly in the areas of food aid and the rebuilding of the Tan-Zam railroad, needed to be rebuilt, engines refurbished and all. So we went to a very modest aid program which was nearing close out when I first arrived to well over a 50 million dollar program in a space of less than six months. So there was quite a lot of activity in that regard. Of course, the Tanzanians were very delighted to see that happen. So we went from a close out, a near close out, to a massive influx of economic assistance to the Tanzanians. But in terms of a formulation, policies were pretty much set when I got there. Of course, we had our mission program plan which is revised on a yearly basis and that was something that we undertook in October after I arrived. Basically just sort of re-crafting of what was there before. Not very much to do except in the area of economic assistance. Our basic messages to the Tanzanians were that we were consistent on our policies in Southern Africa. We were concerned about the same issues that they were concerned about. There had to be a certain acceptance of the South African position and vision in certain issues and without that understanding and acceptance there would be no peaceful resolution on the conflict. So a constant reinforcement of those messages, at the same time getting them to allow us free access to the refugee camps, freer access to the refugee camps and to have consultation with both the ANC and the PAC.

Q: And they acceded to giving you that freer access to the refugees?

SEGARS: Yes, yes.

Q: Directly attributable to your efforts. I realize it was a team effort but I am looking for your specific.

SEGARS: It's their acceptance of our sincerity. Our expressions of sincerity and the fact that I been so much involved in South Africa, I think may have helped.

Q: You must feel at this stage of the game that you are probably ready, now that you have demonstrated your capabilities as Chargé for a six month period and you have carried out the duties and responsibilities as deputy chief of mission with the smooth transition on the arrival of the new ambassador, you must be now thinking about your five to ten year program plan; That there must be a chief of mission position on the horizons for me?

SEGARS: Ha! Ha! That certainly, certainly came to mind. I was in Nigeria, I decided to take the opportunity to open my window into the senior Foreign Service. That is to

announce my attention to compete for the senior Foreign Service. I could have waited. But I decided this was a good time to do it. I had six years in which to transition and if I was not lucky than I would be at the age I could retire and with the number of years necessary to retire. So I would take my lumps and move on. Fortunately, I was successful in making the transition. As a result, I was promoted into the senior Foreign Service and that promotion came shortly after my arrival in Dar es Salaam. So I was a member of the senior Foreign Service but not occupying a senior Foreign Service position. I was told by personnel that that would have no impact on onward and upward possibilities. And so I said fine if that is what you say, okay I will believe that. Then my career did not move as well as I had hoped that it would move as a result of Tanzania. The kinds of jobs I wanted to move on to were not available. I don't believe that my ambassador felt that I was worthy and didn't do a good job, I believe of rating me, evaluating me or making the necessary recommendations. Our relationship wasn't as meaningful as I had hoped that it would be.

Q: Legacy Oral history project, Dec 23rd, my name is James Dandridge the interviewer with Ambassador Joseph Segars, interviewee. Would you pick up again about the relations not being quite as close as you had hoped they would have been, you and the ambassador and also the relationship with ambassador's spouse and your spouse and how this might have affected your subsequent, immediate subsequent assignments in your career assignments?

SEGARS: On the relationship issue I took my job as DCM very seriously and I saw myself as the ambassador's alter ego. I was there, I thought, to give him sound counsel and good advice. Honest counsel, honest advice and to steer him along the straight and narrow. If I saw something that was inconsistent with our laws and regulations, I felt obliged to say so. And in retrospect I suspect I would have been better off if I had let things go. The same was true with respect to requests made by the ambassador's wife which we believed and I say we, myself and the admin officer, the budget and fiscal officer, the GSO felt we were consistent with existent regulations. I felt it my duty to steer them away from these kinds of things. Well in doing so, I offended people. My honesty was not rewarded as I thought it would be and I felt that I was unduly criticized and perhaps gotten the reports I had received. They were not as good as they could have been had I been servile and turned a blind eye. Anyhow I came away feeling good about myself because I did what I thought was the logical thing to do. As a matter of fact, he cited me for my probity which on the one hand was good and on the other hand was not so good. Unfortunately, my wife is easy to get along with. If you can't get along with her you can't get along with anyone. She will go out of her way to do the right thing. So when the ambassador's spouse arrived, she told her about the bridge club and the weekly gatherings etc., etc. Of course her place was there for the taking. She chose not to become a part of that group. And so my wife said, well do you have any objections if I continue. She had no objections. What she did instead was form her group on the same day and then expected my wife to join her. She chose not to and I supported that decision. Many people say, well you probably should have encouraged her to do so. Well, I said, it is her life. I did not realize at the time that the impact it would have on the relationship but it went gradually downhill. It became increasing worst and some things happened at post I

was not responsible for. It was circumstances way beyond my control had nothing to do with me but I believe that she thought that I squealed on some of the activities in which she was involved. Of course, I did not. As a matter of fact, I went out of my way to protect her. The inspectors came out and asked questions and I answered questions. I answered all the questions they asked me. I did not volunteer anything. But the suspicion is that I squealed on her and I did not. Things were so bad between her and my wife at the time we left, she did even invite her over for a cup of coffee which is the customary thing to do. My wife came away from that experience very hurt and didn't feel that she done anything to deserve that. She is a fiercely independent woman and she would respect the ambassador's wife but she would not go beyond respecting her. She would not cower to her and I would not want her to do that. Anyhow we came away from that fairly tarnished. No one said that to me but in the double talk you get the feeling that, you know, things did not go well. This guy did not have a lot of nice things to say about you. So the jobs I thought would be available were not available. I interviewed for jobs and didn't get any.

I ended up in personnel, Human Resources in the senior officer division. And my job was counseling and assigning senior officers to senior positions, including my former ambassador. Ha! Ha! Anyhow I spent two years in personnel and devised new guidelines for DCM ambassador tenure and overlaps.

Q: It was your initiatives?

SEGARS: Yes. Yes. Well Ivan Selin suggested when he came on board that their ought to be greater overlapping between the ambassador and the DCM not having both of them arrive new at Post at the same time and ask us to put together a plan for doing that. I put together a plan which was eventually approved by the Director of CDA for that purpose and making it operational. Also under Ambassador Perkins put together a plan to insure that more minorities were considered for DCM principal officers.

Q: Now was this when Ambassador Perkins who was the Director General?

SEGARS: Yes. He was sworn in early in my tour in personnel.

Q: You devised a plan for him on more minority accessions into DCM positions?

SEGARS: Minorities and women, yes.

Q: And women. Were you recognized for that?

SEGARS: No. The management of personnel felt that people working in personnel should not take advantage of their positions to land themselves good jobs.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the culture of human resources as we call it now, personnel then, because this is the locust of careers?

SEGARS: Yes, it is interesting. You have a system in place and if it was rigidly enforced it would work. But the people in positions of influence and power intervene and it brings chaos into the system. The idea of stretch assignments, given to officers who were one or two grades below and the outcome of that is that senior officers in grade go lacking. They don't have jobs. So they end up in temporary positions or certainly jobs they do not desire. And it is because of the pressures that are brought to bear by the seventh floor on the sixth floor, the Director General's Office and in turn the people at the working levels. And sitting on panels once a week you see this pressure being brought to bear and there is a tremendous desire on the part of the people working at the assignments level to keep it consistent with the law. This is oftentimes corrupted by an unnecessary influence from higher ups. It is a pity that the sixth floor does not exercise more authority over the assignment process. This way there is no hang-up over or lump of people sort of always waiting, wondering what kind of job they are going to get or finding themselves accepting jobs that are less than desirable and certainly career enhancing whereby a person at a lower grade is given the job and oftentimes these are quality people but if system wants to maintain discipline you have to heed to the rules and regulations. So we spend a lot of time in personnel trying to keep things going smoothly and trying to make certain that the officers under your wings are given the kinds of career enhancement assignments that would insure onward promotions and longevity.

Q: This is an interesting revelation because there is a perception that much of the mild assignments or favoritism originates in the Office of Personnel or Human Resources but what you are saying, on the contrary, it is more pressure from higher levels through the sixth floor through the Director General's Office. Well I shouldn't say the Director General but through, but it is imposed upon the system?

SEGARS: But it is imposed upon the system via the Director General's Office by the seventh floor by the Deputy, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs by the Director for Near Eastern Affairs by some office director who has a prized officer who has been promised rewards. So the system has to pay off. A lot of pressure is brought to bear on these jobs and the temptation to resist wanes with the increasing pressure.

Q: Did you have any personal or professional experiences that you found particularly aggravating in this regard since you are responsible for counseling very senior officers for assignments as DCMs and Ambassadors worldwide?

SEGARS: We were constantly

Q: This is tape 7 - Side A December 23rd Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training my name is James Dandridge interviewer for the Bunch Legacy Project the interviewee is Ambassador Joseph Segars. I would like to pick up again on the question that I asked as far as your own professional frustrations, any level of concerns as far as exercising your responsibilities as a counselor to the most senior positions in the Foreign Service. Those of the DCM's and the Chiefs of Mission in regard to the pressures we have talked about were exercised outside of the system?

SEGARS: Well, one of my responsibilities during my tenure in Human Resources was putting together recommendations for DCM's and principal officers. DCM jobs were at the OC and the O1 level for the most part, mostly at the OC level which is a senior Foreign Service level. Oftentimes you would get the various bureaus that have favorites who are not necessarily qualified in terms of grade who are aspirants for these jobs. You want to make certain that your officers who are at grade get as many of these jobs as possible. That sort of keeps the system in balance and to insure that there are jobs for all these people. You oftentimes and the Director General's Office are pressured to push people who are not necessarily qualified. Each bureau can select a certain number of applicants for each of these positions. Personnel puts together its own list based on the bids that are received. And my job was to put together a DCM book, a DCM Principal Officer Book to send to the Director General and they have their DCM committee meetings and they make assignments based on the recommendations that we put forward. Oftentimes it goes trouble free but when there are pressures brought on that office by the various bureaus sent by seventh floor, then there are efforts made to tamper with the system. So, there is always the pressure to maintain your integrity and to guarantee that the offices under your watch are given the jobs of their choice. There was a constant battle, constant battle. And the same thing applies to putting together the list of positions for Chief of Missions. The same kinds of pressures are brought to bear. So there is always tremendous pressure there for people to sort of aspire to jobs, many of which they are not qualified in terms of grade. In its...its easier when there is a real stretch, a double stretch that is, a person who is two grades below. It is easier to say no then it is with those who are closer to grade.

Q: How did this impact on the plan that you had put together for the Director General on increased accession from minorities and women?

SEGARS: Well, it is easier with respect to minorities and women because you can make the case that they are under-represented at the senior-most levels. So in the efforts to have a more diverse Foreign Service that is what everyone's stated goal is, it is easier to push along candidates who are not at grade in terms of supporting that program, that is what we oftentimes did and in our messages to the ambassadors once the DCM committee makes its list of recommendations for various jobs. We send out a cable to the ambassador at each Post saying these are the lists of candidates we want you to consider. We want you to give special consideration to John Doe who is a minority candidate or who, you can always tell who the women are, in view of the secretary's commitment toward a more diverse Foreign Service. The ambassador will make a choice. I have seen it happen that well did you really consider the other candidates. Why did you make that choice as opposed to the others to make certain that ambassador did consider and to say why that person was not chosen. On a few occasions I have seen the Director General get on the phone and call the ambassador and say are you certain you have given all the candidates fair perusal. Because he has had the ambassador come back and come back in response why this candidate is more acceptable than that candidate. So there was an effort made to ensure that minorities and women were given an equal hearing in the process.

Q: Did you feel this was a rewarding experience for you in your own career development? Did you consider it a sidetrack in your career track?

SEGARS: It was a useful learning experience. I learned a lot more about management and how the system operates and I gained confidence so that I could give the kind of good advice to my clients which sort of made certain that they got the best jobs available or made the best decision possible regarding their career or career aspirations.

Q: You were there for three years?

SEGARS: Two years. Yes. That was a two year assignment.

Q: What happened next?

SEGARS: The opportunity presented itself to enroll in the Senior Seminar. The Director General recommended that I be considered and I was considered. So I spent one academic year with my colleagues. Seventeen of us were senior State Department officers and the other seventeen came from the various other government agencies, the FBI, the CIA all the branches of the military service, the Department of Agriculture.

Q: What percentages of the officers in the Senior Seminar were not yet in the senior Foreign Service?

SEGARS: It is only one out of the Foreign Service contingent they will pick one very impressive (Class) O1, only one, only one. The others are all Senior Foreign Service.

Q: Any unique experiences while you were in the Senior Seminar?

SEGARS: Everyday was so unique. It was a fantastic period, getting to know your colleagues from the other agencies, getting to interact with them, having a closed forum for foreign policy and incorporating their perspective. The military people were very interesting. Getting the people from the CIA to sort of open up and talk about them and some of the things they do, some of their operations. We also had a member from the NSA as a part of our group and during my session. And, of course, dividing yourselves into groups, units, organizing early on, electing a president and carrying on business.

Your agendas were given to you and you basically plan your year's activities. We discussed topics, issues are represented and we built a program around those including travel. Travel figures very prominently in the whole process. The first trip is usually to Alaska to look at issues there involving natural resources and human resources and the plight of the Native Americans and that sort of thing. That is always done early on in September while the weather is still pretty favorable in that part of the world. And then we visit all the military constituencies, the Air Force, the Navy, the Marines and the Army and the Coast Guard. We focused a lot on domestic issues, poverty, education, malnutrition all those domestic issues in addition to foreign policy issues. We also got a prospective of how the other agencies work, the CIA, the NSA, and the FBI including

visits to these establishments and to talk to people. Programs are all worked out. We do all of the programming planning ourselves.

Q: Since this was for the foreign affairs agencies at the senior Foreign Service and senior executive service level, the military participants, were they also at the flag level? How many military did you have?

SEGARS: We had a member from each branch of the service. In the case we had a Marine Colonel, Air Force Colonel, Army Colonel, National Guard Member, Air National Guard in this particular case, Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander, Navy whichever is more senior I am not sure.

Q: Navy Captain.

SEGARS: Navy Captain at that level.

Q: But no Flag level?

SEGARS: No, no. We met a lot of flag officers though on our visits, including some very interesting officers. (At) Fort Hood, General Abrams son for example, in the Joint Operations Command was a very interesting General there. So you met a lot of flag officers on visits.

Q: There were certain parts of your travel where you broke down into groups, but not everyone went to all regions?

SEGARS: In my tenure we all traveled together. Yes, we did. We traveled, only our foreign trip was to Canada. We did go to Puerto Rico that was a National Guard trip. Yes, National Guard. And we were planning to do the Pacific Rim but because of budgetary reasons the then director of (the) Foreign Service Institute decided that we really shouldn't travel. So we cancelled our trip to the Far East, to the PAC Rim. We went to Alaska, the State of Washington, California, of course, San Diego to look at the Navy and the Marines in California. We went to Texas. We went to Mexico as well. Albuquerque, we went up to Los Alamos spent some time in Texas. We went to Nebraska, Illinois. We did a farm trip to the Mid-West. We went to Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, of course. Pretty much all over...New York.

Q: Well you were one year in the Senior Seminar and of course during that year there is a lot of anticipation among all of the participants as to what is next?

SEGARS: Actually, I knew what was next even before going into... I expressed my desire to have my own mission so I made Africa's list for several jobs. There was some horse trading done and rather than getting my, one of my first two jobs I was given came early because they had to manipulate and give other people some jobs too. I was told that probably assigning a person to the job that I really wanted would be less contentious than assigning me to Cape Verde. So I was assigned to Praia which I readily accepted. It was

no problem. But I knew before going into the Senior Seminar that I was going to get that job. So in terms of planning it was already planned for me. I would go to the Senior Seminar, at the conclusion go into Portuguese language training and then on to Cape Verde. So that was all laid out. So despite the snag and the delay I did get my chief of mission job.

Q: Just to reflect back on your entry into Foreign Service, if you can recall from your A100 course, what percentage of your colleagues preceded on to ambassadorial status?

SEGARS: I was the first, I was the second, I was one of the first three to get ambassadorial jobs. After the first three we had to date one, two, that I can think of that went on to become ambassadors. There may be others but I can only think of two more.

Q: So you would say that your career progression was above normal, above the average?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: In spite of the slight hiccup?

SEGARS: Yes. I think now in retrospect I probably was too mercurial and at a much slower pace. I often question myself about my decision to apply for the Foreign Service when I did and wondered what would have happened if I had waited a few more years. I don't know if it would have worked out as well. I am going to leave it like that and think that I made the right decision. It was a good ride for me, I think, despite that small hiccup.

Q: Let's talk about your Posting as the ambassador to Cape Verde?

SEGARS: When the Director General called me and said he wanted me to consider, I said by all means. Thank you and will do so willingly without any hesitation. Once that was decided, then it made the Senior Seminar certainly much more fun, less hectic and certainly made our lives much easier for planning. That move was enhanced by that decision.

Q: Did your colleagues know that you had already been selected for an ambassadorial assignment?

SEGARS: There were five of us in the Senior Seminar who were and we knew no one else knew including the course director, so, that day in the Spring when Karen Bisyne came over with all of the packages of information following the White House's acquiescence and once we could get the paper work started and all no one knew until she came over with the five packages of stuff. And, of course, the Director said, well "Gee whiz, Gee whiz" Who is it? Who is it? Who is it? Once he knew everyone else knew. But they didn't know. No. And we couldn't tell them, of course.

Q: So that made the Senior Seminar more fun. You are now planning, you are now in a

position to select, did you have the option of selecting your own DCM?

SEGARS: There was no DCM.

Q: There was no DCM?

SEGARS: There was no DCM position. The number two officer normally the Consular Officer, myself, Admin Officer, Secretary, Peace Corp Director, an AID Mission Director but there was no DCM. The Consular Officer was the de facto DCM. I did select my secretary, though.

Q: This was someone, with whom you had worked in the Department before? Or someone you had known?

SEGARS: No, no. People with whom I had worked previously asked about the job and I certainly considered them but this was a total stranger to me. And she came across as the person best suited for the job and so I hired her and indeed I had no regrets about that decision. She was a wonderful secretary. Provided me all the kinds of support I needed.

Q: Let's talk about your preparation to go out as the ambassador. The Director General has already asked you to consider and you have said, yes. So then it is a matter of the bureaucratic processes. Talk about your experiences in getting ready to go out to include your fifteen, you did get your ten or fifteen minutes with the President before going, did you not? Did you have a chance to go in and get the requisite photo taken with the President?

SEGARS: What happen with our photo ops? We did not do photo ops. I don't know if it was because of the uniqueness of the situation going from one administration to the other. There was an election in which the incumbent was defeated. I was nominated by Bush, President Bush, Sr. but then he lost the election to President Clinton. Well anyhow the photo ops did not transpire. After the Senior Seminar, of course, language was the next hurdle. I had no prior Portuguese. So I had to go into language training. And I did about four months of language. And then at the end of August the beginning of September we decided to do away with language. I felt that I had enough that I could get by initially and I could follow up at post. I needed to get myself ready for my Senate Hearings and for the eventual swearing-in because we were thinking; we knew that Ambassador McNamara wanted to leave. We did not want that long overlap given the fact that there was no DCM that I should plan to arrive reasonable soon after he left. Once we got that sorted out.

Q: Which Ambassador McNamara is this?

SEGARS: Terry McNamara, was not Robert McNamara, Terrance McNamara. So he was sort of waffling about when to leave and so the new DG was Genta Hawkins, you know, said when do you want to go. I told her I wanted to get there early in January hopefully I can present my credentials before the change in administration and so on the basis of that she told McNamara he had to leave. He served his three years and it was time to go. After

language training I decided to start reading and making my calls and briefings, etc. etc. etc. And started to write up my speech and because of the large American community in New England that I should visit them and meet with them and talk with them and see what their concerns were and so that was a part of that as well. Of course the business accounts in New York for several days there and it was just a general round of briefings, calls that you should make. I am getting ready for the Senate Hearings. That takes up a lot of time, more time than you can imagine. And then you are thinking about you have got your Arts and Embassy Program and all kinds of other things that need to be addressed. Your photographs, your final medical records and there are so many things you have to do. And it is just a time consuming process. Getting the house, finding a renter and finding an agency, packing up what to take, what not to take, etc. etc. it is time consuming.

Q: Anything significant about your hearings?

SEGARS: No we figured given Cape Verde's position there would be very little to get people excited about. There are no real burning issues. The only thing we were concerned about was the food situation and giving food aid to Cape Verde and they were considering cutting back on food assistance and the political implications of that. So I had to go see Senator Pell who has a large constituency there and we talked about that and his desire to make certain that Cape Verde remained high on our list of priorities in terms of food aid. So getting that together and talking to the people in Agriculture to see what the possibilities were was a big part of that. We had a good idea of the major issues, the kinds of questions that were going to be asked by the people on the Hill. Because there were no interesting issues that was fairly easy to do. And with the desk officer and the office director we prepared a list of questions and answers. Once I got to Hill we pretty much followed the script except that my desk officer... I had looked at McNamara's, we still had his file and I went through that. The sort of questions they asked him, I noticed one that they asked him about decimalization and how we could help out in that area. I read his responses and I discovered the kinds of things that he talked about were still going on. So when the question came up in our hearing, my Desk Officer almost hit the ceiling because he had not done a question on that but I had, so I had the answer. He said he almost croaked when, he said, oh my God! I did not put that question on. But when I answered the question he felt relieved that I had done some research on my own. It was not an issue at all, it went through very nicely. Of course my wife went and my son went and so that was fine. And then we reported out and it was time to go on and prepare for the swearing-in. In addition to having the swearing-in, we had lots of people coming from out of town so we wanted to have a very nice affair for them so we arranged an evening affair at DACOR House for them. That was very well received.

Q: You arrive in country, you present your credentials and you are on your way.

SEGARS: I arrived in country but I did not present my credentials right away.

Q: You didn't do the photo op and you didn't present your credentials?

SEGARS: I am probably one of the few people whoever has done this with credentials from two Presidents. Because as I said, because of the change in the administrations I arrived in Cape Verde I had to go through Europe, spent some time in Stuttgart and then Lisbon. That made my arrival at Praia until about 15th or 16th of January. Of course, there is no way I could get (my presentation) because the President had a habit of accepting credentials in bunches, groups of five. And so we were waiting for five people to arrive and that didn't happen before January 20th. So I made my courtesy call on the Foreign Minister to give him the credentials. They had been signed by President Bush, we now had a new President. So he didn't think they could be accepted. He did not accept my explanation that I was not one of those people not affected by the political change. I was a career officer and I was going to be expected to serve my full term. Well they weren't sure and just to make sure they said why don't you ask them to send you credentials signed by President Clinton. So I did. Meanwhile President Mascarenhas felt very badly that I was being delayed so he invited me to his office and we sat down and had a very nice chat. He said, "don't take this personal and we accept you as ambassador it just a formality that we are going through, please carry on your business. Do whatever you have to do to make your mission run and to carry on relations with our government, so that was very nice that he did that. So eventually my credentials came and I made my presentation.

Q: With your group of five or did you do it?

SEGARS: There was myself and the Hungarian Ambassador who was resident in Nicosia; there were two of us I believe?

Q: This is the Bunche Legacy Project, my name is James Dandridge, I am the interviewer with the interviewee Ambassador Joseph Segars. Now that you have arrived in Cape Verde and you have finally presented your credentials and you are officially the President's emissary and what are your first experiences?

SEGARS: It was a small mission and there are few other foreign diplomats there. And once making courtesy calls on your diplomatic colleagues was a lot easier than it would normally be. We had the French presence, the Portuguese, of course, the Senegalese, the Russians and the Chinese were the only official diplomatic missions. Of course you had the UN agencies there, Food for Peace, World Health and those various others. Making courtesy calls on them, talking to them about the state of their bilateral relations with Cape Verde, and seeing what their major concerns are. Their major issues were with the government and carrying on with business. In addition, during my part of my early tenure Cape Verde was a member of the Security Council. There were many issues that were being debated back and forth in which the US was very much involved and very much interested. This included Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Globalization and the constant Libyan problem and the question of the Libyan detainees. The Libyans arresting people and sanction you and sanction Libya. Of course, we were required to make a number of demarches on these issues to our local host. In most cases we found the Cape Verdeans quite willing and supportive of our positions. At least in Praia, this was not always the case with their representative in New York who was sort of a maverick. And although the

foreign ministry would tell me one thing at other times he would be voting in a manner which did not reflect their true feelings. So there was always a constant back and forth over Cape Verde and its positions. Revisiting these issues, but it made for very lively times during that first year of my tenure. Then, of course, Cape Verde is an archipelago of eleven islands, eight of which are inhabited. Some of my early desire was to get out and see and visit each of the islands. I eventually did this. We had to fly from point A to point B. Of course, that was very interesting. I was probably the only ambassador who ever visited all the inhabited islands. So that was a very, very interesting thing to do, to get out and see the local governments. Meet the local mayors and talk about local politics, very political place, size notwithstanding. (There was) lots of political activity. By way of background, I would like to point out that Cape Verde became independent from Portugal in 1975. It was one of five former Portuguese colonies that gained its independents in 1975. Cape Verde of the five, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome... Anyhow of the five, Cape Verde was the most destitute at independence. But by my arrival there in '93 it was much more advanced in terms of assets and development, with meager resources notwithstanding. Cape Verde is a very, very arid country of very little rainfall. And so vegetation is sparse. There is very little ground water. The amazing thing about it, that once water is added to the land it springs to life. So you have these oases where lots of water and lots of growth takes place but otherwise it is sort of arid. It doesn't get much rain. I think that we had maybe four or five considerable thundershowers during my three years there. But once it rains it sort of springs to life. It has been dormant for several years and with a little bit of water everything turns green, it is amazing to see that happen.

So, visiting the islands and talking to people and getting to know the lay of the land and we also had a very, very active Peace Corp and getting out visiting the volunteers on site and visiting self help projects... It was very big on self help in Cape Verde and to see the various AID projects on the way also was very interesting. Then, bilateral relations were effected somewhat by the decision back in Washington to close down the AID mission there. Here again the part of the cost cutting efforts on the part of the USAID, international development, they somehow figured that it would help them budget-wise if they shut down a ten-million dollar program. It made no sense to us nor to the Cape Verdean. The only thing we were able to do was to not let them cut it off as quickly as they had hoped to. If you are going to close your mission here that is a decision you have made and despite our best efforts to keep it open. Our best efforts, meaning the Department of State notwithstanding the decision was still made, don't close the program down abruptly. All these programs have a life span. Let them run their normal course and once they are finished then you can sort of phase out that way. But they just wanted to sort of cut us off, you know, at the head. which did not make a lot of sense to us. They agreed not to do that. Then a decision was made prior to my arrival to give Cape Verde a Coast Guard patrol boat because after the "war for independence" was over the Cape Verdean very wisely said that we don't really need a large Army we have nothing to defend. Nobody is going to attack us probably. So let us convert our military assets into coastal security, maintain our police force. Have a modest Army but devote our assets to coastal security because commercially we are losing money to illegal fishing. The Russians, the Spanish, the Greeks were all fishing in their territorial waters and they had

no real way to control it. They began to look at coastal security and we decided to give them a ... the first boat, patrol boat and that was delivered just after I arrived. But then somebody back in Washington decided to cut off the military assistance program. Well if you are going to give them coastal security assets you are going to have to train them. So you need money to train them. So maybe you shouldn't cut out the program. They said, "Oh! Okay, fine". Then the United States Information Agency (USIA) didn't have a presence there but we were supported by first by Lisbon and then by Dakar. And we had a modest program which allowed us to send IV's to the United States. Well! Here again, in a cost cutting effort to save money they decided to cut that program out. I think I made very reasonable arguments which were accepted by people in the Africa Bureau but the higher ups had the final say. So that program went by the way as well. We did maintain some other programs which allowed us to reach out to the Cape Verdeans. We were beginning to wean them away from the Portuguese. The Cape Verdeans saw themselves more aligned with Africa as a part of the Africa. Not a part of the Portuguese empire anymore. The Portuguese didn't like it that way but it was nothing they could do about it. So the relationship between them was sort of weakening, relations with the United States on the other hand was growing stronger mostly in part because of the large Cape Verde American community in the United States who were beginning now to show some interest in the country and to insure that our levels of support were maintained.

It is interesting that Cape Verde had a diplomatic mission before Liberia. People don't realize that. But the first diplomatic mission was established in Cape Verde in 1817, I believe. Now Liberia was more like 1820 or 1824. And because of the whaling tradition of New England going out to Atlantic waters for whaling purposes they began to bring in crews of Cape Verdeans and eventually they started migrating to the United States and the community got its basis from that. So we have a long tradition, of historical, cultural ties that are now really coming to the fore. Cape Verde Americans now are more educated. They are no longer working in the cranberry barges and canning factories. They are lawyers, and doctors and politicians. They are beginning to pay attention to things that are happening in their country and how the United States reacts to those things. It was interesting to see that going on during my tenure. We also had a visit by a large delegation of Cape Verde Americans to Cape Verde for a two-week sort of get together. We had a big party at the residence and they came and they had a great time. So the relationship is being maintained. It is growing stronger.

Q: So you would say, that in spite of the reduced government agencies presence you continued to contribute the enhancement of the people-to-people programs?

SEGARS: Very much so and we also provided modest support to the second round of elections. We talked about independence and after independence elections were held and the PIGC won, they were contested and they had one of the few countries in West Africa where you have had a free and peaceful change of governments. The PIGC was defeated by President Mascarenhas' Party. It was a peaceful transition and they had a second round of elections which were free and fairly free and peaceful transition. And now the PIGC is back in power, just reclaimed the throne so to speak. But here again this is all by orderly process of voting, no riots, no coups or anything of that nature. So the country has

a proud history of peaceful transitions of governments.

Q: Are there any other highlights in Cape Verde when you were ambassador that you would like to put in the record?

SEGARS: Well we had a volcanic eruption on one of the nearby islands. Of course, there were several outbreaks of yellow fever which we were able to get assistance from CDC in helping to arrest. The volcano didn't do an awful lot of damage. There were not a lot of lives lost. People's homes were destroyed. Of course we were able to get emergency disaster relief assistance for that as well as the services of the United States geological survey to come out and survey the site. We did a... We the diplomatic agency, diplomatic community and the relief agencies, UN agencies were invited by the government to come and survey the damages and to actually visit the volcanic activity site, see the devastation that had been caused and then sort of plan a strategy for helping the country to assist with that. We were able to get some quick money through disaster relief to assist people who were impoverished by the devastation. Other than that and the constant need for food and making certain that we were able to maintain food levels, consistent food levels throughout my tenure, we were able to do that. And with Cape Verde's track record and its democratic governments its attempts to privatize the economy, they were doing all the good things that we thought emerging democracy's ought to do and considered it a model for others. We were able to maintain that level of cooperation and we also beat out the French on the leasing of aircrafts to the government. They wanted to expand their air routes into Europe. They would require jets to do that. So we were able to get them to lease several Boeing planes rather than the French airplanes for that. The French threatened to not allow them to fly into France if they did not buy their airplanes. But, of course they ignored that and took ours anyway.

Q: Then you do three years in Cape Verde?

SEGARS: Three wonderful years. It is tiny and the islands are quite small and it is easy for me to busy myself because I get around a lot. So what happens to the other mission personnel? How do you keep them happy? Well, we managed to get some money from AF/EX to we had a vacant lot they were saving to build an ambassador's residence. Well, that was not going to happen anytime soon. So we convinced AF to give us some money to make it into a recreation park. So we improved the tennis court, resurfaced it, put in better netting, put in a basketball court and a picnic area and swings and volleyball areas and things like that. So this became our sort of home away from home. And we encouraged people to use it. We had weekend barbecues and parties and all kinds of things. So we got the people out and involved in that. And every day we had tennis going on or something going at the site.

Q: Next to your residence at the time?

SEGARS: No, no, it was up on the hills away but very convenient to everything. So we got a chance to do that. And then we had a sailboat and we encouraged people to take up sailing. A few people who just couldn't take it because they would look at the water and

get seasick, so they could not avail themselves to that. But practically every weekend we were out on the water sailing. It was a great thing to do. You had to make your own things to do. My wife was very useful in putting things together and also including the Cape Verdeans. Her favorite thing became the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. We had enough youngsters involved so we could have a Halloween Party and a Christmas Party and things of that sort. So it was very interesting thing to do.

Q: So where are you in your career track now. You have hit the pinnacle; you are finishing up three years in Cape Verde, what was next?

SEGARS: Retirement, Sad but true the ... It was time to move on. It wasn't my decision, of course, the system sort of involved itself, saying, Segars your time is up. You have run out of time and you have to move on.

Q: The closing of the window?

SEGARS: Yes. So I decided, well I had no choice. It was made for me. I reluctantly accepted that decision and decided to move on.

Q: What class had you moved to? Did you move to Minister Consular?

SEGARS: No.

Q: Counselor?

SEGARS: Counselor, yes.

Q: They closed the window on Minister Consular?

SEGARS: Yes. You have seven years and I suspect that you have a fairly rapid progression up to Senior Foreign Service and then one hit can represent a sort of death kneel and I suspect that the assignments that I perhaps needed, the progression of assignments that I probably needed to insure continuity... Everybody was convinced that I would be promoted, everybody said don't worry about it, you are going to be promoted, you have been named ambassador, and you have been to the Senior Seminar. I suspect that the hiatus between the assignments to personnel and then to the Senior Seminar, then to language training took up a lot of time. By the time I got to Cape Verde, there is really nothing glowing. I mean, he has done a good job, he has done everything he has been asked to do but people, if there is no crisis in your country and they are not at war and you don't have a Kuwait or something like that on your hands, nothing you can say, he has done...this to sort of ensures that you are going to move on. It is uneventful and you just don't get the kind of recognition that others would normally get. Had I been in Sierra Leone and there had been a coup and somehow I was identified with that or somewhere in Liberia these kinds of things would have almost guaranteed onward movement. But, without any events going on and being ambassador in a very peaceful country where nothing is happening and having come from language training... well you did language

training, well he is expected to do language training. He is a senior Foreign Service officer... The Senior Seminar, what can you say about that? He participated, etc., etc., etc. And without any glowing reports from Dar es Salaam...Decent reports but nothing magnanimous. It is sort of an indication. And having, I knew about the personnel system and I had seen other officers' evaluations and knew what kind of work they were doing and who was being promoted and who was not.

Q: So your window was closing at the end of your assignment in Cape Verde?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: So did you come directly back to retirement or did you have an interim assignment?

SEGARS: No, I came back for the retirement seminar and retirement after that. So I came back here at the end of March and my retirement was effective April 30, 1996 that same year.

Q: So you retire. But you maintained contact?

SEGARS: Oh yes.

Q: How did you do that? Did you participate in any special projects continuing projects with the State Department?

SEGARS: Yes, I signed on as a WAE with the Africa Bureau. (I) Expressed my interest in maintaining contact. I felt that was very important to my own ego. Accepting the decision to leave the service was not very easy for me to do. I was a little bit bitter by the whole episode. I was bitter by the incidents which precipitated that. I felt that I was unjustly treated, unfairly treated. The decision was not really warranted. I had done a good job, I thought. I represented my country, our issues very well, I thought and adequately. Anyhow fate dictated it so I have to accept that and move on. So I got over my initial disappointment and felt that my life had to go on. I had to do something. And so I initially went back to work as a WAE and Information Management, The Freedom of Information Section. And after a few months of that, I said, well gee I don't really, this is not me. I am doing this and I really don't want to do this. So I didn't do it much longer.

Then I heard about the NATO Summit. And they would need people for that, getting ready for the 50th Annual NATO Summit. So I signed on with the Admin Bureau and was able to get a job as Site Officer for the Mellon Auditorium and getting that ready for the Summit. I started in August of '98 and worked pretty much through the end of April the following year. That was a pretty exciting challenging work. Because I had never done admin work before not pure admin work. A lot of the language was new to me. So I had to learn that whole new vocabulary. It was a very interesting job and we got the place organized. I think my negotiating skills were very helpful because we had a tremendous battle (between) GSO and the State Department on the sites. So we had to make peace with them and get on with the job. The President chose the site, the Mellon Auditorium

which was the site of the original signing ceremony fifty years ago. And so he wanted this as commemorative ceremony taking place there. The only problem was that, that site as well as the Old Interstate Commerce Building and the Customs Building were undergoing renovations. Everything had been ripped out. No air-conditioning, no heat very little light and all. You have to convince GSO to stop the renovations and make the sites ready for the celebration for a three day event and once it is all finish, tear it all up and go back to your renovations.

Q: What about, I believe you continued to work back to your contacts back in Nigeria.

SEGARS: Not at that point. I didn't get back to Nigeria until July of 2001. So at the end of the NATO program, what did I do? At the end of NATO I sort of sat around for awhile and did something with the Office of Personnel Management, did some evaluations of the new alternative hiring program and a brief stint with BEX on the oral examination process. And then went back to Nigeria in July and spent three months working on special projects for the ambassador. That is really how I really became involved with Nigeria and the EDI Program (The Education for Development Democracy Initiative).

Q: Was US Steele involved in it?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: So the three month project was really an extension of temporary work with State Department?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: Which has now developed into a, would you say as a consultancy now?

SEGARS: Yes.

Q: And that is on a regular basis.

SEGARS: Yes. I have been to Nigeria four times this year and I will be going back in early January for another four or five weeks, probably again in March/April and then again in May. We hope to finish the project at the end of May.

Q: In summation of your rich Foreign Service career what are the - in two minutes - what can you say has been the most significant experience that you have had in making contributions to American policy abroad in the enrichment of your own development?

SEGARS: I enjoyed my entire years of service. Every experience was rewarding to me. Perhaps the most significant, of course, was South Africa. I think we made a very, very positive contribution there. That would be the highlight I suspect. And, also being able to rise to the top, not as high as I wanted to go but certainly to make ambassador was a dream fulfilled. I feel very much, I feel that I have accomplished quite a bit by obtaining

that level. It was a very, very rewarding year/years for us and (I) look back with no regrets, absolutely none. I wish that we would attract more minorities to the service and hopefully the Department will make a sincere effort, a more sincere effort to do that. I think they would find it most rewarding.

Q: Ambassador Segars it has been a real pleasure. Thank you very much for this contribution to the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project and in specific, the Ralph Bunch Legacy documentary.

SEGARS: It has been a pleasure.

End of interview